

Mato Zovkić

DIALOGUE BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND
MUSLIMS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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FOREWORD

In this book I offer readers my essays and presentations on the Dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Bosnia, written or delivered in English and German from 1998 to 2018. By Bosnia I mean the whole country, Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), as it emerged from the former Yugoslavia through a referendum on independence on 1st March 1992, becoming a UN member state on 22nd May 1992. Various organizers of interreligious conferences and theological symposia in our country and abroad have provided me with the opportunity to research and reflect on these themes, and in each of the texts I have indicated the time and place of their original presentation.

As a priest of Sarajevo Archdiocese, I found a new approach to non-Catholic Christians and to followers of other religions while studying the concept of Church renewal in the documents of the Second Vatican Council as the topic of my doctoral dissertation prepared for the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Zagreb in 1965-1968. During my studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome I had several Protestant professors and took a course in modern Hebrew under a Jewish rabbi. When H. E. Vinko Puljić became Archbishop of Sarajevo in January 1991, he asked me to maintain contact with Muslim, Orthodox, Jewish and Protestant faith ministers in Bosnia as we Catholics should stay open to our fellow citizens of other faith affiliations. When in June 1997 the Interreligious Council was established by senior religious leaders who have their seats in Sarajevo, Archbishop Puljić nominated me as his delegate in the Council, a position I held until my retirement in May 2012. This was a learning mission, because we had to discover each other's way of thinking and each other's way of contributing to the development of a tolerant civil society in our multiethnic and multireligious country.

I am familiar with Bible Hebrew and New Testament Greek but not with the Arabic of the Qur'an. To understand the sacred book of Muslims I

have depended on translations into Bosnian, German, English and Italian and on commentaries by Muslims for non-Arab Muslims and by Christian Islamologists who have sought to present the Qur'an to Western readers. During the 25 years of my modest study of Islam in general and in Bosnia in particular, I have been generously assisted by several professors of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo and by two of their doctoral candidates. Professor Ahmet Alibašić gave me the inspirational book *A Common Word Between Us and You*, which contains the 2007 Open Letter of Muslim *ulemma* to Christian leaders offering a dialogue based on love of God and love of neighbor according to the Qur'an and the Bible. He also helped me with his books in English on Islamophobia and Muslims in Europe. Professor Enes Karić, in addition to giving me his books on Bosnian Muslims as Europeans, gave me e-texts of two encyclopedias in English and lent me his copy of *The Study Quran*, translated with commentary by Muslim scholars in America (New York, 2015) for Muslims living in Western countries. I was also enriched by the writings of other Bosnian Muslim theologians: Smail Balić, Dževad Hodžić, Fikret Karčić, and Adnan Silajdžić. I thank them not only for their books but also for their openness to me as a Catholic theologian in the country where, despite recent interethnic armed conflict, Christians and Muslims share many common values and hopes.

My English has been improved by Kevin Sullivan, born in 1957 in Glasgow, Scotland, a journalist and novelist who lives in Sarajevo with his wife Marija and their daughter Katarina. He first visited Bosnia in September 1991 on his way to Croatia to cover the fighting in Dubrovnik, and returned in October 1992. At the beginning of 1993, he was wounded in a land mine explosion in Gornji Vakuf in Central Bosnia and taken to the UK for medical treatment. After living in Singapore and Spain, he returned to Sarajevo, together with Marija and Katarina, in 2001 as a spokesperson for the Office of the High Representative (OHR). Since 2007 he has worked for the OHR and the International Commission on Missing Persons as well as writing novels. I thank Kevin and Marija for their time and their professional efforts in correcting my Bosnian English.

While studying Islam and learning from Muslims about their sincere faith affiliation I have become more aware of my Christian identity, and I am grateful to the Catholic magisterium for encouraging us to stay in dialogue with Muslims and to build with them a more humane civil society.

Sarajevo, June 2018
Mons. Dr. Mato Zovkić,
Professor emeritus, University of Sarajevo

THE INFANCY AND MINISTRY OF JESUS IN THE QUR'AN AND THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS¹

To this faith in God, which draws Muslims close to the believers of other monotheistic religions, is added the consideration that the Islamic tradition preserves great respect for the memory of Jesus, esteemed as a great prophet, and for Mary, his Virgin Mother.

John Paul II to Muslims in Sarajevo, 1997

In quoting this Address of John Paul II to the Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the reception of the Muslim delegation in Sarajevo on April 13, 1997, I would like to suggest that, despite significant differences in what Christians and Muslims believe about Jesus, this belief can and should motivate us to foster inter-religious dialogue and engage *as believers* in building up a tolerant civil society. I was encouraged in this conviction by translating the book *Bibel und Koran* by J. Gnilka into Croatian². Using Gnilka's book and other works of Christian islamologists available to me, I felt it was also essential to read commentaries on the Qur'an by Muslim theologians and other Muslim works on this topic, regardless of whether they treat the Jesus of the New Testament polemically or simply compare the two

1 This was my presentation at the Conference *Bible and Qur'an* in Budapest, September 2008. All presentations were published in Hungarian.

2 J. Gnilka, *Bibel und Koran. Was sie verbindet, was sie trennt*, Freiburg, Herder⁴ 2004. Croatian translation: *Biblija i Kur'an. Što ih povezuje, što razdvaja*, Zagreb, Kršćanska sadašnjost 2007.

different traditions³. But before I proceed to compare these two traditions about Jesus I would like to present briefly the belief and teaching of Muslims about the origin and content of the Qur'an.

WHAT MUSLIMS BELIEVE AND TEACH ABOUT THE QUR'AN

Unlike the 27 texts of the New Testament, which were written between AD 50 and 110, the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad between 610 and 632 AD, the year of his death. Muslim scholars agree that the first five verses of the Ninety-sixth Surah were first revealed during the month of Ramadan (July-August) in 610 in a cave on Mount Hirā' near Mecca⁴. Disillusioned by the speechless, thoughtless and powerless idols of his Arab contemporaries, the Prophet was seeking the truth in solitary retreat in this cave. "After years of preoccupation with such problems, Muhammad began to see in his dreams visions of the truth he sought. Contrasted with these visions, the illusory character of this life and the vanity of its ornaments became especially apparent. He has become perfectly convinced that his people had gone utterly astray and that their spiritual lives had been corrupted by their idols and the false beliefs associated with them"⁵. As he later explained to his friends, the Angel of Revelation appeared to him holding a sheet and told him three times to read. Twice Muhammad replied that he could not read. After seizing him and pressing him to himself a third time, the angel relea-

3 In Bosnia, dozens of pamphlets and books against Christianity in the period 1993-2005 were published, most of them translated from Arabic. The polemical work of a former Western Christian who converted to Islam, M. Bucaille, *La Bible, le Coran et la science* was translated and published in Sarajevo in 1978 and in 2001 by El-Kalem, the publishing House of BH Muslim community. A polemical monograph by a Bosnian Muslim: H. Pekarić Dino: *Isus/Isa (a. s.) u kršćanstvu i islamu* (= Jesus in Christianity and in Islam), Tuzla, PrintCom 2005. Polemical elements are to be found in some works by professors at the Faculty of Islamic Studies (Fakultet islamskih nauka) in Sarajevo, such as R. Hafizović: *Muslimani u dijalogu s drugima i sa sobom* (Muslims in dialogue with others and among themselves), Sarajevo, El-Kalem 2002.

4 Cf. Muhammad Asad: *The Message of the Qur'an* Translated and explained, Gibraltar, Dar al-Andalus 1984, 963-965 (commentary of Surah 96). The Muslim author M. M. Al-A'zami: *The History of the Qur'anic Text. From Revelation to Compilation*, Leicester, UK Islamic Academy, England 2003, p. XX has a positive view of Asad's translation, but he adds: "... Qur'an is in Arabic, and the translator's duty is to distil some of the shades of meaning in the text; the end product is not Qur'an but simply a translation (just as a shadow is merely a shadow), and so long as nothing is misquoted or taken out of context, there is no need to follow one particular translation or another".

5 M. H. Haykal: *The Life of Muhammad*, American Trust Publications, Plainfield, Indiana 1997, 72.

sed him and said: "Read in the name of thy Sustainer, who has created – created man out of a germ-cell! Read – for thy Sustainer is the Most Bountiful One" (96: 1-3)⁶. The Prophet recited these verses, "repeating them after the angel who withdrew after they were permanently carved upon his memory... Stricken with panic, Muhammad rose and asked himself, 'What did I see? Did possession of the devil which I feared all the long come to pass?' For a while he stood there trembling with fear and stricken with awe"⁷. Back home again, he told his wife Khadijah of his experience expressing his fear that "his mind had had finally betrayed him". She answered respectfully: "Joy to my cousin! Be firm. By him who dominates Khadijah's soul I pray and hope that you will be the Prophet of this nation. By God, He will not let you down. You will be kind to your kin; your speech will all be true; you will rescue the weary; entertain the guest and help the truth to prevail"⁸. The Muslim scholar M. M. al-A'zami points out that Muhammad never prostrated himself before the idols of the Quraish, but worshipped the one God "in whatever manner he thought best, his complete illiteracy precluding any knowledge of Jewish or Christian practices... and Allah prepared him for his task gradually. First he started beholding true visions. He noticed a rock saluting him, he also observed the Archangel Jibril calling him from the sky by his name, and observed a light... For six months he witnessed visions so accurate that they seemed to materialize from the very fabric of reality... This was first descent of the *wahy* (revelation), the very beginning of the Qur'an. And so, unexpectedly at the age of forty, Allah summoned Muhammad with a simple message, sharply outlined and crystal clear: 'There is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger'. And with this he was given a living eternal miracle, something to satisfy the intellect, capture the heart, and give rebirth to stifled souls: The Holy Qur'an."⁹

In his mystical experience Muhammad received God's call to understand and convey the revelation to the Arab nation. His wife had known him for many years to be the exemplar of truthfulness, fidelity, honesty, charity and compassion. She became the first to believe in him. Mystical experiences of revelation were not repeated at regular intervals, but they did continue for twelve years in Mecca and for ten more years after the Prophet's emigration to Madinah in AD 622. The Surahs revealed at Mecca speak of God's oneness and mercy in combating the idolatry of the city's

6 From the translation of M. Asad, *Op. cit.*, 963, including his orthography.

7 M. H. Haykal, *Op. cit.*, 73-74.

8 M. H. Haykal, *Op. cit.*, 75.

9 M.M. al-A'zami, *Op. cit.*, 25.

population, including the divine sonship of Jesus professed by Christians, while the Surahs revealed in Madinah contain ordinances and guidelines for organizing the Muslim faith community and Muslim state.

Muslims believe that God's messengers, such as Moses, David, Jesus and others, did receive revelation from the same Creator "intended for a particular community at a particular time. These were all invariably corrupted or lost, nullifying the message and leaving its followers in the throes of idolatry, superstition, or fabrication. With Muhammad however, the time was ripe for a message that would not be hedged by national boundaries or a particular epoch, a faith that could never be nullified because it was intended for all people and for all time"¹⁰.

Upon receiving any new revelation Muhammad kept memorizing and reciting it in front of his disciples, asking them to write down the sacred text on various kinds of material available to them (*suhuf*). M. M. al-Az'ami lists 65 specific names of the Prophet's scribes and concludes: "Based on the total number of scribes, and the Prophet's custom of summoning them to record all new verses, we can safely assume that in his own lifetime the entire Qur'an was available in written form"¹¹. Because of his proximity to the Prophet's Mosque, Zaid bin Thabit was often summoned as scribe whenever the *wahy* commenced. At the same time as the revelation was preserved in writing, the Prophet's companions memorized and recited the revealed chapters and verses (*hafiz* – one who preserves by memorizing) so that in the time of Prophet's death four Muslims of Madinah knew the entire Qur'an by heart. While Muhammad was alive the scribes personally preserved the *suhufs* and gave them to others to be transcribed and disseminated. In the first year after the Prophet's death his son-in-law, Abu Bakr, became the first caliph (632-634) and entrusted Zaid with collecting all these first-hand Qur'anic fragments and arranging them into a master volume called *mushaf*. In 644, 'Uthman was elected as third caliph. He provided a new and critical edition of the *mushaf* and sent official copies to the various provinces of the young Muslim state to be carefully copied and used in worship or in schools. The careful preservation and faithful transcription of the Qur'an is considered a miracle by Muslim

10 M. M. al-A'zami, *Op. cit.*, 41.

11 M. M. al A'zami, *Op. cit.*, 68-69.

scholars¹². "A Book that has resisted any universal alterations for fourteen centuries is living proof that the text within belongs to Allah, Who has appointed Himself as Guardian. The inviolability of the original, immaculately preserved for so long, is not to be suffered the tempering and adjustments meted out to the Biblical Scriptures"¹³.

The Christian scholar Hans Küng entitled his chapter about the Qur'an: "Gottes Wort ist Buch geworden," and drew attention to five qualities it possesses: it is a book, it is *one* book, it is an Arabic book, it is a living book used in public recitations, and it is a sacred book. As a Western scholar, he admits a certain presence of Jewish and Christian traditions in it, respecting the belief of Muslims about its direct revelation to Muhammad. Recalling the very early codification of its canonical text, he concludes: "Jedenfalls steht zweifellos fest, dass unter dem dritten Kaliphen 'Utman (Osman: 644 bis 656), ein autoritativer Text des Koran erstellt wurde. Ein Einheitskoran, der in Zukunft der einzig verbindliche Text sein sollte und damit so etwas wie 'koranische Vulgata'. So gibt es denn auch bis heute keine Ausgabe des Koran, die nicht im wesentlichen eine Kopie des 'utmanischen Koran wäre".¹⁴

Christian islamologists point out that in the Muslim faith the word of God has become a unique book, and in the Christian faith God's Logos has become Word, in the sense that all New Testament books echo the first Church's preaching of Jesus' words and deeds. In Christian teaching, the sacred authors were God's instruments, retaining their freedom, mental processes, faculties and traditions while writing. In Muslim teaching, God dictated to Muhammad word for word; Muhammad was the mouthpiece of God in the sense that he could not choose the words and sentences. By comparison with the many and different literary genres in the Jewish and

12 "In serving the Qur'an Abu Bakr acquitted himself most admirably, heeding its mandate of two witnesses for establishing authenticity, and applying this to the Qur'an's own compilation. The result, though written on rudimentary parchments of varying size, constituted as sincere an effort as possible to preserve the Words of Allah. Decisive victories beyond Arabia's desert boundaries pushed the frontiers of Islamic education to Palestine and Syria; 'Umar's reign witnessed the blossoming of the schools for the rich soil of the fertile crescent... The efficacy of 'Uthman's endeavours is clear in at least two ways. First, no Muslim province remained but that it absorbed this Mushaf into its blood stream; and second, that a span of fourteen centuries has not been able to corrupt or dent the skeletal text of his Mushaf. Truly a manifestation of the Holy Qur'an's miraculous nature; any other explanation fails. Later caliphs, perhaps seeking a foothold in the chronicles of posterity, commissioned and dispatched further official copies, but nothing was ever sent forth which contradicted 'Uthman's universal standard" – M. M. al-A'zami, *Op. cit.*, 86.107.

13 M.M. al-A'zami, *Op. cit.*, 149.

14 H. Küng: *Der Islam. Geschichte, Gegenwart, Zukunft*, Piper, München 2004, 92-112, quotation from p. 103.

Christian Bible, the Qur'an is a long prophecy or exhortation spoken by God (or by angels) and addressed to Muhammad or to believers or to humans in general. Christian Troll points out: "From the conviction that the Qur'an is direct dictation from God the Muslim will conclude that the Qur'an is absolutely perfect, divine as to content and style. The beauty of the Arabic style of the Qur'an and the clarity of the content of its message (with its focus: unity of God and brotherhood of humankind) will be perceived as, and believed to be, a miracle of ultimately irresistible convincing power...It is not so much the Muslim claim of the corruption of the Bible that challenges Christians, but rather the fact that a book like the Qur'an, which entered history about six hundred years after the birth of Christ, continues to nourish a vibrant faith with more than one billion adherents. What does it mean, these Christians may well wonder, that the God of Jesus Christ has allowed or even caused this to happen?"¹⁵

THE INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD OF 'ISĀ IBN MARYAM

The Qur'anic form of Jesus' name is 'Isā, and it occurs 25 times. In addition, he is called 'Isā ibn Maryam 16 times, and simply ibn Maryam 17 times. He is called al-Masīh eleven times, Nabī once and Rasūl three times¹⁶. The Arabic form of the name 'Isā may derive from the Syriac forms of Yeshū or Ishū, but Neal Robinson suggests: "The attempts to derive that form from an Arabic root are, however, far-fetched and show, if anything, that it had no obvious associations for the native speaker of Arabic. It is

15 Ch. Troll: "The Word of God in Dialogue with Islam", www.answers-to-muslims.com, I use several monographs where the Qur'an and the Bible are compared by way of dialogue rather than polemics or refutation, like Gric (Groupes de Recherches islamo-chrétien): *Ces Écritures qui nous questionnent. La Bible et le Coran*, Éditions du Centurion, Paris 1987. Maurice Borrmans: *Gesù Cristo e i musulmani del XX secolo. Testi coranici, catechismi, commentari, scrittori e poeti musulmani di fronte a Gesù*, Edizioni San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 2000. Joachim Gnilka: *Bibel und Koran* (cf. n. 1). Michael Ipgrave (ed.): *Scriptures in Dialogue. Christians and Muslims studying the Bible and the Qur'an together. A record of the seminar 'Building Bridges' held at Doha, Qatar, 7/9 April 2003*, Church House Publishing, London 2004. Javier Melloni: "Mediazione e opacità delle Scritture e dei dogmi", *Concilium* XLIII (2007), 1, 84-93.

16 See G. C. Anawati: "'Isā", *Encyclopédie de l'Islam. Nouvelle édition, Tome IV*, Leiden, E. J. Brill 1979, 85-90. Neal Robinson: "Jesus", *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an, Volume Three*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2003, 7-21. S. Balic: "Jesus Christus 3. Islamisch", *Lexicon religiöser Grundbegriffe*, Graz, Styria Verlag 1987, 542-546. M. Bauschke: *Jesus im Koran*, Köln, Böhlau Verlag 2001. J. Gnilka: *Bibel und Koran*, 2004.

just possible that 'Isā was actually Jesus' original name, although it seems likely that it is an Arabicized form of the name current among Syriac-speaking Christians as was recognized by a number of classical authors. This Arabicized form may be pre-Islamic but there is no compelling evidence that it is. Nor are there grounds for thinking that its purpose is polemical¹⁷. He also draws attention that in Arabic culture, familial attribution (*nasab*) is normally the name of the person's father. When the *nasab* denotes a person's mother this usually means that the maternal family is more distinguished than the paternal line. During the Meccan period (Q 43:57 and Q 23:50) "the son of Mary" was used merely for ease of reference. "Bearing in mind that in the earliest reference to Jesus (Q 19:16-33) the principal character was Mary, with Jesus figuring as her unnamed child, the brief allusions to Jesus as Mary's son in the subsequent revelations concerning Jesus (those in Q 43 and 23) are entirely understandable. In the Medinan period, however, many of the revelations about Jesus were concerned with countering Christian claims about him. Hence, the expression 'the son of Mary' took on polemical overtones; it was an implicit reminder that Jesus is not the son of God as the Christians allege. The classical commentators do not distinguish between the Meccan and Medinan usage. They interpret the expression as a counter-thrust to Christian claims but also regard it as an honorific title because of the high status that the Qur'an ascribes to Mary"¹⁸.

Surah 19 is entitled *Maryam*, and experts agree that it belongs to Meccan period, in the fifth or sixth year of the Prophet's mission. About one third of this Surah is based on the story of Mary and Jesus. A. Th. Khory in his one volume commentary of the Qur'an differentiates several smaller units in this surah: Mary and Jesus (19:1-40), Abraham (19:41-50), Yishmael and Idris (19:51-63), God's reign (19:63-64), threatening unbelievers (19:74-98)¹⁹. In verses 2-15, the birth of his son John, who will be precursor of Jesus, is announced to Zachariah. In verses 16-22 is announced the miraculous birth of a son to Mary:

¹⁶And call to mind through this divine writ, Mary. Lo! She withdrew from her family to an eastern place ¹⁷and kept herself in seclusion from them, whereupon We sent unto her Our angel of revelation, who appeared to her in the shape of a well-made human being.

17 N. Robinson, *Art. cit.*, 10.

18 N. Robinson, *Art. cit.*, 11.

19 *Der Koran Arabisch-Deutsch* übersetzt und kommentiert von Adel Theodor Khoury, Gütersloh, Chr. Kaiser 2004, 403.

¹⁸She exclaimed: "Verily I seek refuge from thee with the Most Gracious! (Approach me not) if thou art conscious of Him!"

¹⁹The angel answered: "I am but a messenger of thy Sustainer, (who says) 'I shall bestow upon thee the gift of a son endowed with purity.'"

²⁰Said she: "How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me? - for, never have I been a loose woman!"

²¹(The angel) answered: "Thus it is; (but) thy Sustainer says, 'This is easy for Me; and (thou shalt have a son,) so that We might make him a symbol unto mankind and an act of grace from Us.'"And it was a thing decreed (by God):

²²and in time she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a far-off place.

"This divine writ" in v. 16 is the Qur'an. M. As'ad reminds us that "in this surah as well as in *Al 'Imrān* (ch. 3) the story of the birth of John is followed by that of Jesus – firstly, because John (called 'the Baptist' in the Bible) was to be a precursor of Jesus, and, secondly, because of the obvious parallelism in the form of the announcements of these two births"²⁰. The "eastern place" where Mary "kept herself in seclusion" is explained by Muslim interpreters as an eastern chamber of the Temple where she grew up according to Muslim tradition, echoed in Q. 3:35-37. In v. 17 the "angel of revelation" is Gabriel, mentioned also in Lk 1:26. Since the Arabic text here contains the term *ruh*, there is another possibility of translation: "... then We sent unto her Our Spirit"²¹. As'ad points out that this term often denotes "divine inspiration," as in 2:87 (Jesus, son of Mary, strengthened by holy inspiration) and in 16:2 where God causes angels to descend with divine inspiration. Here *ruh* is the medium through which inspiration is imparted to God's elected. God causes the angel to appear to Mary "in a shape accessible to her perception"²². In v. 18 Mary appeals to the unknown man who has appeared before her not to treat her with violence, in the hope that he fears God. v. 20 reminds Christian readers of Lk 1:34 where Mary, told by the angel that she would give birth to the Messiah, answers: "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" In v. 21 "This is easy for Me" is identical with V. 9 where the angel talks to Zachariah announcing John's birth. As'ad explains: "In both these cases, the implication is that God can and does bring about events which may be utterly unexpected or even unconceivable before they materialize. In connection with the announcement of a son to Mary, the

20 M. As'ad: *The Message of the Qur'ān*, 458.

21 *The Koran Interpreted, Translated with an Introduction* by Arthur J. Arberry, Oxford University Press 1982, 303.

22 M. As'ad, *Op. cit.*, 459.

Qur'an states in 3:47 that 'when He wills a thing to be, He but says unto it, 'Be' - and it is': but since neither the Qur'an nor any authentic Tradition tells us anything about the chain of cause and effects (*asbāb*) which God's decree 'Be' was to bring into being, all speculation as to the 'how' of this event must remain beyond the scope of a Qur'an-commentary"²³. In v. 21 Mary's son will be an *ayah* to mankind, a sign or vehicle of God's message to humans, a prophet. The classical Muslim interpreter Rāzī (d. 1210) thought that v. 22 might contain an allusion to Mary's and Joseph's journey to Egypt²⁴. By withdrawing with her new born son to a far-off place Mary wanted to avoid slanderous questions from her neighbors.

The conception of Mary's son is also announced in 3:42-47. In 3:46 Mary is told that her son "shall speak unto men in his cradle, and as a grown man, and shall be of the righteous". In 4:171 Christians as followers of the Gospel are admonished not to raise Jesus to the rank of divinity, because the son of Mary "was only God's Apostle - (the fulfillment of) His promise (*kalimah*) which He had conveyed unto Mary and a soul (*ruh*) created by Him". Among different nuances of *kalimah* and *ruh* in the Quran, M. As'ad explains why he chose to translate these words here as "promise" and "soul": to stress the purely human nature of Jesus which is the subject of this verse²⁵. This is the way the birth of Jesus is presented in 19:23-34:

²³And [when] the throes of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree, she exclaimed: 'Oh, would that I had died ere this, and had become a thing forgotten, utterly forgotten.

²⁴Thereupon [a voice] called out to her from beneath that [palm-tree]: 'Grieve not! Thy Sustainer has provided a rivulet [running] beneath thee; ²⁵and shake the trunk of the palm tree towards thee: it will drop fresh, ripe dates upon thee. ²⁶Eat, then and drink, and let thine eye be gladdened! And if thou shouldst see any human being, convey this unto him: 'Behold, abstinence from speech have I vowed unto the Most Gracious; hence I may not speak today to any mortal.'"

²⁷And in time she returned to her people, carrying the child with her. They said: "O Mary! Thou hast indeed done an amazing thing! ²⁸O sister of Aaron! thy father was not a wicked man, nor was thy mother a loose woman!"

23 M. As'ad, *Op. cit.*, 459.

24 A. Th. Khouri: *Der Koran Arabisch-Deutsch, Band 9 (Suren 16/23)*, Gütersloher Verlagshaus 1998, 192, n. 9 gives concrete reference; he rejects possible allusion to *Protoevangelium of James*.

25 M. As'ad, *Op. cit.*, 137. A. Th. Kohoury: *Der Koran Arabisch/Deutsch, Band 5*, (1994) 271 brings out four ways how Muslim theologians explain the title *ruh* for Jesus in this Verse.

²⁹Thereupon she pointed to him.

They exclaimed: "How can we talk to one who [as yet] is a little boy in the cradle?"

³⁰But he said: Behold, I am a servant of God. He has vouchsafed unto me revelation and made me a prophet, ³¹and made me blessed wherever I may be; and He has enjoined upon me prayer and charity as long as I live, ³² and [has endowed me with] piety towards my mother; and He has not made me haughty or bereft of grace.

³³"Hence, peace was upon me on the day when I was born, and (will be upon me) on the day of my death and on the day when I shall be raised to life [again]!"

³⁴Such was, in the words of truth, Jesus the son of Mary, about whose nature they so deeply disagree.

Muslim interpreters see in this text the miracle of the infant Jesus who speaks in defense of his mother and presents himself as God's servant. Shaikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali (1917-1996) in his *Thematic Commentary on The Qur'an*²⁶ draws his readers' attention to the fact that in Surah 19 God's name Ar-Rahman (the Merciful) occurs sixteen times and that in it the birth of Isa son of Maryam reveals God's supernatural power in creating this noble Messenger of faith. The infant 'Isa speaking in his cradle clearly demonstrates his mother's innocence, refuting the slanderous accusations of her fellow Jews and the claims of Christians that Maryam's son is the son of God. Muslim commentators in Bosnia reflect this traditional interpretation but the degree of their polemics against Jews and Christians concerning Isa's infancy depends on the extent of their commentary²⁷.

In v. 23 birth pangs compel Maryam to cling to a palm-tree. Since labor pains are the lot of all women this means to Muslim believers that her childbirth was natural and normal. In this v. Maryam's wish to have died and "have become a thing forgotten, utterly forgotten" is based not only on her birth pangs but also on the suspicions and accusations of her relatives. In v. 24-25 God miraculously provides for Maryam's needs by sending her a spring from beneath the palm tree to quench her thirst and by giving her ripe dates to eat. Classical Muslim interpreters suppose that

26 *A Thematic Commentary on The Qur'an* translated by Ashur A. Shamis, Publisher The International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon 2000. I use the translation into Bosnian entitled *Tematski tefsir kur'anskih sura*, translated from the Arabic by Dž. Latic and Z. Mujkanovic, Obzorja, Sarajevo 2003, 335-343.

27 Here I use the translations of the Qur'an with exegetical footnotes by Omer Riza and Dzemailudin Causevic (eighth edition, 1990), Besim Korkut (1984 and later editions), Enes Karic (1995), Ramo Atajic (2001, ten volumes with 2729 pages), Mustafa Mlivo (2004, third edition).

this happened in winter time when fresh dates were not reachable on any palm-tree (al-Baydawi, quoted by Enes Karić, 1995). In v. 26 Maryam is exhorted to take heart and not to explain in words how she became pregnant but to point to her son in the certainty that Isa will speak up for her.

In v. 27-28 Maryam returns to her people, who criticize her sharply for having given birth to a son without being legally married. She comes from a highly reputable priestly family, her parents were an honorable couple. A. J. Arberry translates v. 27: "Mary, thou hast surely committed a monstrous thing" because the equivalent Arabic word can mean "something abominable, ugly". In pointing to her baby son she expects an explanation granted by God, but her relatives say in response that a baby in the cradle cannot speak (v. 29). In 3:46 the Qur'an mentions that Maryam's son "shall speak unto men in his cradle". Similarly in 5:110 God reminds Jesus son of Mary: "I strengthened thee with holy inspiration, so that thou couldst speak unto men in thy cradle, and as a grown man". Classical Muslim interpreters explained this as the infant Jesus actually in defence of his mother's innocence. One of these was ar-Razi (865-925) who in his commentary on the Qur'an accused the Christians and Jews of Jesus' time for having passed over this fact in silence, so that it remained unknown until God revealed it to Muhammad²⁸. Explaining this section of surah 3 in his *Thematic Commentary on the Qur'an*, Shaikh M. Al-Ghazali insists that Maryam did not conceive her son by intercourse with a man, but sharply disapproves of the statements of those who claim that Isa was the son of God, not watering down the fact that he spoke in his cradle. M. Asad sees in 3:46, 19:30 and 5:110 a metaphorical allusion to the prophetic wisdom which was to inspire Jesus from a very early age: "Although the Qur'an mentions in 3:46 that Jesus would 'speak unto men [while yet] in his cradle' – i.e., would be imbued with wisdom from his early childhood – verses 30-33 seem to be in the nature of a trope, projecting the shape of things to come by using , for the sake of emphasis, the past tense to describe something that was to become real in the future... However, the whole of this passage (verses 30-33) may also be understood as having been uttered by Jesus at a much later time – namely *after* he had reached maturity and been actually entrusted with his prophetic mission: that is to say, it may be understood as an anticipatory description of the ethical and moral principles which were to dominate the adult life of Jesus and particularly his deep consciousness of being only 'a servant of God'"²⁹.

28 A. Khoury: *Der Koran Arabisch-Deutsch, Band 4*, Gütersloher Verlagshaus 1993, 109 quotes in German from Beirut 1990, vol. IV edition in Arabic.

29 M. Asad: *The Message of the Qur'an*, 460; cf. p. 73 concerning Q 3:46 and p. 167 concerning Q 5:110.

Among recent Bosnian Muslim interpreters Ramo Atajić explains these passages as the infant Isa actually speaking, and connects this miraculous phenomenon with Luke 2:40.46 where the child Jesus “grew filled with wisdom” and, as a boy of twelve in the temple, was “sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions”³⁰. Mustafa Mlivo sees in 3:46 a “metaphorical allusion to the wisdom of God’s Messenger with which Isa was going to be inspired very early”³¹.

In 19:30 the infant Jesus presents himself to his fellow Jews as a servant of God and a prophet who has been given the revelation. A. J. Arberry and three Bosnian translators have here: “God has given me the Book”³². Enes Karić has: “He will give me the Book” which means that despite the use of the past tense, the future prophetic and preaching activity of Isa is envisioned. In v. 31 Isa is charged by God with performing the ritual prayer (*salat*) and to give alms from his income (*zakat*) throughout his life; these are two of the five pillars of faith observed by pious Muslims. To Muslim interpreters this is another proof that Jesus was God’s creation, not his son. In v. 32 Isa’s submission to and respect for his mother, in the view of some Muslim interpreters, contradicts the Synoptic incident on the tense relationship between Jesus preaching and his family delegation, headed by his mother (Mk 3:31-35; Mt 12:46-50; Lk 3,19-21). R. Atajić quotes these three Synoptic texts. V. 33 repeats what was said in v. 15 about John the Precursor: God will protect Isa in his childhood, during his ministry and raise him up on the Day of Judgment. This includes what is expressly pointed out in 4:157-158 where the death of Jesus on the cross is categorically denied³³. This is a fundamental difference concerning Jesus in the Qur’an and in the Gospels, which should be respected as a matter of faith³⁴.

30 R. Atajic: *Prijevod Kur’ana sa tefsiirom i komentaram na bosanskom jeziku*, Knjiga 1, 160.

31 M. Milvo: *Kur’an*, Bugojno 2004, 59.

32 *The Qur’an*. Translated by M. H. Shakir, Tahrike Tarsile Qur’an, Inc., Elmhus, New York 1999, translates V. 30: “He said: Surely I am a servant of Allah; he has given me the Book and made me a prophet”.

33 “There exist, among Muslims, many fanciful legends telling us that at the last moment God substituted for Jesus a person closely resembling him (according to some accounts, that person was Judas) who was subsequently crucified in his place. However, none of these legends finds the slightest support in the Qur’an or in authentic Traditions, and the stories produced in this connection by the classical commentators must be summarily rejected. They represent no more than confused attempts at ‘harmonizing’ the Qur’anic statement that Jesus was *not* crucified with the graphic description, in the Gospels, of his crucifixion” - M. Asad, *Op. cit.*, 134.

34 Cf. M. Bauschke: “Das Geheimnis des Kreuzes” in his book *Jesus im Koran*, Böhlau Verlag Köln 2001, 83-103.

In 3:49 Jesus speaks to his fellow Jews³⁵:

“I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I determine for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allah’s permission.”

Bosnian interpreters Riza-Causevic and Atajić believe that God enabled His Prophet and Messenger Jesus to create birds from clay but they do not say at what age. Atajić also adds that “in some apocryphal gospels the miracle of clay birds is mentioned”³⁶. The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, a Greek apocryphal gospel which consists of legendary episodes designed to show the miraculous power of the child Jesus from the age five to twelve, narrates also the miracle of birds made from clay. In 2:1-5 it says: “When this child Jesus was five years old, he was playing at the ford of a stream. He made pools of the rushing water and made it immediately pure: he ordered this by word alone. He made soft clay and modeled twelve sparrows from it. It was the Sabbath when he did this. There were many other children playing with him. A certain Jew saw what Jesus did and announced to his father Joseph: ‘See, your child is at the stream and has taken clay and modeled twelve birds; he has profaned the Sabbath.’ Joseph came to the place, and seeing what Jesus did, he cried out: ‘Why do you do on the Sabbath what it is not lawful to do?’ Jesus clapped his hands and cried to the sparrows, ‘Be gone.’ And the sparrows flew off chirping. The Jews saw this and were amazed. They went away and described to their leaders what they had seen Jesus do”³⁷. Christian interpreters see in 3:49 the influence of this Apocryphal Gospel without ignoring Muslim belief in the divine origin of the Qur’an, but there is still much to be explored on biblical or extra biblical Jewish-Christian traditions in the Qur’an³⁸.

Christian interpreters compare the palm miracle in Q 19:24-26 with a similar episode in the apocryphal *Infancy Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* ch. 20. Although there is no sound indication that the material contained in

35 M. Asad, *Op. cit.*, 74 says that the passage 3:49-51 may be understood as part of announcement made to Mary or as a statement of Jesus at a later time, and he prefers the second alternative. He does not translate the Arabic word *tayr* as “bird” to leave the Verse open for a metaphoric explanation. This is why I quote here Shakir’s English translation. A. Khoury: *Der Koran Arabisch-Deutsch*, Band 4, 110 translates this part of V. 49: “Ich schaffe euch aus Ton etwas wie eine Vogelgestalt, dann blase ich hinein, und es wird zu einem Vogel mit Gottes Erlaubnis”.

36 R. Atajic: *Prijevod Kur’ana sa tefsirrom I komentarom na bosanskom jeziku*, Knjiga 1, 161.

37 W. Barnstone (ed): *The Other Gospel. Jewish Pseudoepigrapha Christian Apocrypha, Gnostic Scriptures, Kabbalah, Dead Sea Scrolls*, Harper, San Francisco 1984, 399. A. Khoury: *Op. cit.*, 110-111 gives a German translation of this episode.

38 Cf. J. Gnllka: “Die Bibel im Koran’ in his work *Bibel und Koran*, 54-62.

this document was shaped in written form before the eighth century AD³⁹, its similarity with the corresponding Qur'anic tradition is significant: "It so happened that, on the third day after their departure, Mary was fatigued by the excessive heat of the sun in the desert and, seeing a palm tree, said to Joseph.... 'I wish if it is possible that I have some fruit from this palm... Then the infant Jesus, who was resting with smiling face at his mother's bosom, said to the palm, 'Bend down, tree, and refresh my mother with your fruit.' And immediately, at his voice, the palm bent down its head to the feet of Mary, and they gathered fruit from it by which all were refreshed. After they had gathered all of its fruit, it remained bent down, waiting so that it should raise up at the command of him who had commanded it to bend. Then Jesus said to it, 'Raise up, palm, and be strong and be a companion of my trees which are in my Father's Paradise. Open a water course beneath your roots which is hidden in the earth, and from it let flow waters to satisfy us.' And the palm raised itself at once, and fountains of water, very clear and cold and sweet, began to pour out through the roots. When they saw the fountains of water they rejoiced with great rejoicing and the beasts of burden were all satisfied, and they gave thanks to God."⁴⁰

Some Muslim and Christian interpreters see an allusion to the miraculous provision for Maryam and her son in Q 23:50:

"And [as We exalted Moses, so, too] We made the son of Mary and his mother a symbol [of Our grace] and provided for them both an abode in a lofty place of lasting restfulness and unsullied springs."

God has made Maryam and her son Isa an *ayah*, a sign or symbol, because they had to suffer persecution and slander like other prophets of Israel. The same expression is used in 19:21 where Maryam's son is to be "a symbol unto mankind" and in 21:91 they are both "a symbol [of Our grace] unto all people". R. Atajić sees in 23:50 the birth of Isa from the Virgin mother Maryam and explains it as decisive proof of God's omnipotence. Like other interpreters, he translates the expression "and provide for both an abode" as "We gave them refuge upon a height" and explains it as Egypt, in order to protect them from Herod's persecution, as in Mt 2:13-14⁴¹.

39 Cf. M. Erbetta: *Gli apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento I,2. Vangeli. Infanzia. Passione, Assunzione di Maria*, Marietti Editori, Casale Monferrato 1981, 56-70. W. Schneemelcher (ed): *New Testament Apocrypha I: Gospels and Related Writings*, James Carke and Co. Westminster/John Knox Press 1991, 456-465.

40 W. Barnstone: *Op. cit.*, 396-397.

41 R. Atajic: *Op. cit.*, 1435-1436.

Let us now mark the *similarities* between the Qur'an and the Synoptic gospels in presenting the birth and childhood of Jesus:

- An angel announces to a Jewish girl, Mary, the miraculous conception of a son (Q 19:16-22; Lk 1:26-38);
- Mary's son is presented as a sign from God to His people and to all mankind (Q 19:21; 21:91; 23:50; Mt 1:21-22; Lk 2:10-14.34-35);
- The son of Mary will be a sign contradicted by his fellow Jews, a contested Prophet (Q 23:50; Lk 2,34);
- Through miraculous intervention, God saves Mary and her child from mortal danger (Q 19:24-26; 23:50; Mt 2:13-23).

It is true that there are some not insignificant *differences*:

- Mary's legal husband Joseph is not mentioned in the Qur'anic infancy narrative;
- In the Qur'an the child Jesus is the servant of God and a Prophet, not a son of God or His only Son;
- According to the Qur'an the infant Isa speaks in his cradle to defend his mother's innocence;
- In the Qur'an Maryam and her baby son are miraculously provided by God with fresh water and food;
- From God's command to the child Isa to obey his mother (19:32) one could assume there was never a period of tense relations between the adult Jesus and his mother (cf. Mk 1:20-21.31-35 and parallel).

Despite these differences, in the Muslim tradition Isa ibn Maryam is Jesus son of Mary of Christian belief. M. Bauschke rightly points out: "Die Rede von der Jungfrauengeburt hat in der christlichen Theologie und Volksfrömmigkeit einen christologischen sowie mariologischen, im Koran hingegen einen theozentrischen Akzent: hier geht es nicht um eine Verherrlichung der Person Marias oder Jesu, sondern um Gott, dem allein Lob und Ehre gebührt... In einem entscheidendem Punkt aber sind sich alle christlichen Texte und Koran einig: Jesus ist in seinem Dasein als solches ein göttliches Wunder, das von Menschen nicht gemacht, geplant oder erzwungen werden kann. Sie können es nur empfangen, mit leeren, dankbaren Händen – jungfräulich"⁴².

42 M. Bauschke: *Op. cit.*, 33.

INJIL – THE GOSPEL REVEALED TO ‘ISA AND PREACHED BY HIM

The Synoptic gospels present the ministry of Jesus as preaching the good news and enacting the kingdom of God: “After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: this is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel (*euangelion*)!” (Mk 1:14-15; Mt 4,17). This included Jesus’ awareness that God was acting through him. In Nazareth he proclaimed to his relatives and fellow-townsmen that God had anointed him to bring the glad tidings (*euangelizesthai*) to the poor. When the crowds of Capernaum tried to prevent him from leaving them he answered: “To other towns also I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this purpose I have been sent” (Lk 4:18. 42-43). He was totally submitted to God’s sovereign reign and summoned his disciples to join him in doing God’s will and enacting His kingdom (Mt 6:9-10.33)⁴³.

There is a similar presentation of Jesus’ teaching and submission to God’s rule in the Qur’an. The expression *al-injil* (gospel) appears in the Qur’an twelve times, and in nine instances it is used in connection with the Torah as Scripture (*al-kitab*) sent by God to the Jews. “The Arabic word *injil* is ultimately derived from the Greek *euangelion*, but the exact philological path by which the term in its present form came into Arabic is unclear. Noting that all but one of the mentions of the Gospel in the Qur’an are suras traditionally designated as ‘Medinan’, some scholars have suggested that the Ethiopic form of the word, *wangel*, is not only philologically but chronologically the most likely ancestor of the Arabic term”⁴⁴. Griffith draws the conclusion from existing textual evidence that the earliest translations of the canonical gospels into Arabic “were made after the rise of Islam, from Greek originals, by Christian monks in Palestine, in the late eighth century”. Surah 3 was named *Al-Imran* (The House of Imran) because according to verses 33 and 35 the House of Imran (Amram in Ex 6:20), who was the fa-

43 In addition to consulting Bible dictionaries for the concepts of *eagelion* and *basileia Theou* in Jesus’ ministry, here are some other works I have referred to, H. Schrürmann: *Das Gebet des Herrn als Schlüssel zum Verstehen Jesu*, Herder, Freiburg 1981. H. Merklein: *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottes Herrschaft. Eine Skizze*, KBW, Stuttgart 1983. G. R. Beasley-Murray: “Matthew 6:33: The Kingdom of God and the Ethics of Jesus. ‘Seek first his kingdom and righteousness, and all these will be added to you.’”, H. Merklein (ed): *Neues Testament und Ethik. Für Rudolf Schnackenburg*, Herder, Freiburg 1989, 84-98. H. Giesen: *Herrschaft Gottes - heute oder morgen? Zur Heilsbotschaft Jesu und der synoptischen Evangelien*, Pustet, Regensburg 1995.

44 S. H. Griffith: “Gospel: *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an, Volume two*, Brill, Leiden 2002, 342-343.

ther of Moses and Aaron, is the House of prophets. In this surah, Zachariah, John, Mary and Jesus are of the House of Imran. The birth of Mary is depicted in v. 33-37, the annunciation to Zachariah of the birth of John the Precursor in v. 38-41, the annunciation to Mary of the birth of Jesus in v. 42-58, the identity of Jesus in v. 59-63, polemics with "People of the Book" about monotheism and Abraham in v. 64-115⁴⁵. We shall analyze v. 48-59 and 79 as they present the gospel revealed to Jesus and his prophetic activity:

⁴⁸ "And he will impart unto thy son revelation, and wisdom, and the Torah, and the Gospel",

⁴⁹ "and [will make him] an apostle unto the children of Israel."

"I have come unto you with a message from your Sustainer. I shall create for you out of clay, as it were, the shape of [your] destiny, and then breathe unto it, so that it might become [your] destiny by God's leave; and I shall heal the blind and the leper and bring the dead back to life by God's leave: and I shall let you know what you may eat and what you should store up in your houses. Behold, in all this there is indeed a message for you, if you are [truly] believers."

⁵⁰ "And [I have come] to confirm the truth of whatever there still remains of the Torah, and to make lawful unto you some of the things which [aforetime] were forbidden to you. And I have come unto you with a message from your Sustainer; remain, then, conscious of God, and pay heed unto me."

⁵¹ "Verily, God is my Sustainer as well as your Sustainer; so worship Him [alone]; this is a straight way."

⁵² "And when Jesus became aware of their refusal to acknowledge the truth, he asked: "Who will be my helpers in God's cause?"

The white garbed-ones replied: "We shall be [thy] helpers [in the cause of] God! We believe in God: and bear thou witness that we have surrendered ourselves unto Him!

⁵³ O our Sustainer! We believe in what Thou hast bestowed from on high, and we follow this Apostle; make us one, then, with all who bear witness [to truth]!"

⁵⁴ And the unbelievers schemed [against Jesus]; but God brought their scheming to nought; for God is above all schemers.

⁵⁵ Lo! God said: "O Jesus! Verily, I shall cause thee to die, and I shall exalt thee unto Me, and cleanse thee of [the presence of] those who are bent on denying the truth; and I shall place those who follow thee [far] above those who are bent on denying the truth, unto the Day of Resurrection. In the end, unto Me you all must return, and I shall judge between you with regard to all on which you were wont to differ.

45 Cf. A. Khoury: *Der Koran Arabisch-Deutsch, Band 4*, Gütersloher Verlagshaus 1993, 23-26.

- ⁵⁶ “And as for those who are bent on denying the truth, I shall cause them to suffer a suffering severe in this world and in the life to come, and they shall have none to succor them;
- ⁵⁷ whereas unto those who attain to faith and to good works He will grant their reward in full: for God does not love evildoers.
- ⁵⁸ This message do We convey unto thee, and this tidings full of wisdom:
- ⁵⁹ Verily, in the sight of God, the nature of Jesus is as the nature of Adam, whom He created out of dust and then said unto him, ‘Be’ - and he is.[This is] the truth from thy Sustainer; be not, then, among the doubters...
- ⁷⁹ It is not conceivable that a human being unto whom God had granted revelation, and sound judgment, and prophethood, should thereafter have said unto people, ‘Worship *me* beside God’; but rather [did he exhort them], ‘Become men of God by spreading the knowledge of the divine writ, and by your own deep study [thereof].’

Verses 48 and 49a are addressed by the angels to Mary as part of the “good tidings” concerning the son she was about to conceive in a miraculous way (cf. v. 42, 45 and 47 of this Surah). The Arabic text says that God will “teach him *al-kitab* – the Book”, the book containing revelation. “Wisdom” (*al-hikma*) is prophetic knowledge and corresponding behavior. Torah (*Taurat*) is Jewish Law or the Pentateuch, and the Gospel is the book revealed to Jesus. In a previous section we have analyzed the bird miracle of the boy Jesus, and we shall analyze later the other miracles of the adult Jesus mentioned in v. 49.

In the remaining text of 49 and the whole of v. 50-51, Jesus proclaims his authorization to bring new dietary laws to “the children of Israel”, new in relation to previous revelation promulgated by Moses in the Torah. Similar sayings of Jesus are to be found in the Synoptic gospels (Mt 5:17-19; Lk 16:16-17). In v. 51 Jesus points out the uniqueness of God as his Lord and the Lord of all humans, whom alone they should worship. In the Synoptic gospels the uniqueness of God is mentioned in the context of Jesus’ refusal to succumb to temptation (Mt 4:10) and of the greatest commandment (Mk 12:29-30 – loving God primarily involves doing His will!).

In v. 52 Jesus faces opposition in his prophetic ministry and asks for helpers in God’s way. As in the previous Verse the “straight way” and “God’s way” is faith and moral conduct in accordance with the belief in one God. The white-garbed ones (*hawariyyun*) who are ready to be the helpers of Jesus in his mission are disciples and other followers. E. Karić translates the word here as “disciples,” based on the Arabic word *al-hawar*

(whiteness, white clothes – metaphorically faithful friends) and sees in them the faithful disciples of Jesus. The Arabic expression *ila llahi* can be understood in several ways⁴⁶ and together with *hawariyyun* it influences the meaning of the saying. M. Asad sees here a possible allusion to *hawari* as the term “popularly used to denote a member of the Essene Brotherhood, a Jewish religious group which existed in Palestine at the time of Jesus, and to which, possibly, he himself belonged”⁴⁷. Unbiased researchers of the Qumran writings and Qumran sect admit that Jesus personally and his first century movement differed radically from the Essenes, who avoided mingling with Jewish crowds. In the Synoptic gospels Jesus personally appointed (*epoiesen*) the Twelve apostles “that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach and to have authority to drive out the demons” (Mk 3:14-15).

In v. 53 the disciples of Jesus profess their faith in the revelation given to Jesus as God's *rasul* – Apostle, Messenger. Jesus is also called *rasul* in 3:49; 4:157.171; 57:27: 61:6. “Wenn Jesus im Koran ‘Prophet’ und ‘Gesandter’ genannt wird, sind diese Titel nicht exklusiv, sondern *inklusiv* zu verstehen. Als Gottes Prophet und Gesandter steht Jesus in einer langen Tradition. Die Christologie des Korans ist eingebettet in die umgreifende koranische Prophetologie. Zweimal wird im Koran ausdrücklich die *gleiche Würde* aller Propheten und Gesandten betont (Sure 2:136 = 3:84) ... Das bedeutet nach allgemein islamischem Verständnis, wie es schon bei Baydawi anzutreffen ist: alle Gesandte sind immer auch Propheten, umgekehrt jedoch sind nicht alle Propheten auch Gesandte. Nur derjenige Prophet ist auch ein Gesandter, der ein göttliches Offenbarungsbuch empfangen hat”⁴⁸. But, of course, in the Qur'an and Islam, Muhammad is the final and most important Messenger of God, “the Seal of all the Prophets” (33:40)⁴⁹. The disciples of Jesus ask God to be inscribed among those who witness to the revealed truth.

In v. 54 the Jews of his time not only rejected the revealed truth preached by Jesus but also planned to destroy him. In insisting that “God is the best of planners” this verse rejects the conviction of Jews and Chris-

46 A. Khoury: “...auf meinem Weg zu Gott hin, - oder: während ich zu Gott gehe und bei ihm Zuflucht suche, - oder: auf dass ich Aufnahme bei Gott finde und zu seinem Wohlgefallen gelange, - oder: bis ich den Befehl Gottes verkünde, meine Sendung erfülle und die Religion Gottes deutlich mache, - oder: (wer sind meine Helfer) zusätzlich zu Gott und zu seiner Hilfe“ – *Der Koran, Band 4*, 113.

47 M. Asad: *Op. cit.*, 75.

48 M Bauscke: *Op. cit.*, 39.41.

49 M. Asad: *Op. cit.*, 647 in explaining 33:40 draws attention to the common root of the Arabic words *khatam* (seal) and *khitam* (end, conclusion).

tians that Jesus died a violent death. In v. 55 the eschatological destiny of Jesus, his contesters and his believers are presented: foreshadowing his natural death God promises to protect him from disbelievers and to set his believers above the unbelievers on the day of resurrection. The full meaning of "I shall exalt thee unto Me" should be understood in the light of 4:157-158 where the Qur'an emphatically states that Jesus was not crucified but that God took him up to Himself. "Nowhere in the Qur'an is there any warrant for the popular belief that God has 'taken up' Jesus bodily, in his lifetime, into heaven. The expression 'God exalted him unto Himself' in the above verse denotes the elevation of Jesus to the realm of God's special grace – a blessing in which all prophets partake, as is evident from 19:57 where the verb *rafa'nahu* ('We exalted him') is used with regard to the Prophet Idris. The 'nay' (*bal*) at the beginning of the sentence is meant to stress the contrast between the belief of the Jews that they put Jesus to a shameful death on the cross and the fact of God's having 'exalted him unto Himself'"⁵⁰. Muslim interpreters state that it would be improper for sincere believers to inquire in what way God took up Jesus to Himself (R. Atajić). At the end of v. 55 God announces the Day of Resurrection for all on the Day of Last Judgment. On that Day God will decide between Jews, Christians and Muslims concerning the beliefs in which they differ. Here we see an awareness of religious plurality as long as humans live. The same teaching is present in Q 2:113. God will judge the followers of different religions who now state that "only the followers of their denomination shall partake of God's grace in the hereafter. In other words, God will confirm the truth of what was true [in their respective beliefs] and show the falseness of what was false therein. The Qur'an maintains throughout that there is a substantial element of truth in all faiths based on divine revelation, and that their subsequent divergences are the result of 'wishful beliefs' (2:111) and of a gradual corruption of the original teachings"⁵¹.

In v. 56-57 God prepares punishment in this world for Jews or Christians who do not believe in the revelation proclaimed by Jesus, and reward for those who follow Jesus in obedient faith (R. Atajić). Others translate v. 59 as: "The likeness of Jesus, in God's sight, is as Adam's likeness" (A. J. Arberry, M. H. Shakir). The expression *mathal* also means parable, and is often used to denote the state or condition of a person or thing. By "Adam" is meant here the whole human race, mortals created out of dust. Muslim interpreters see here an argument against the Christian doctrine

50 M. Asad: *Op. cit.*, 135.

51 M. Asad: *Op. cit.*, 24.

of the divinity of Jesus. In v. 64 followers of the Book are summoned to serve only God, sharing with Muslims the belief in one God, and not to associate any being with Him⁵².

In v. 79 Jesus forbids his followers to deify him: they know the Book which he has received and transmitted to them, and this is why they should worship only God, not His messenger. Jesus is aware that he was granted revelation, sound judgment and prophethood and therefore he could never have asked his followers to "Worship me beside God". The verses of chapter 3 concerning the true identity of Jesus interpreters relate to a visit in the year 631 by Christians of Najran to Muhammad in Mecca, who tried to convert them from their belief in Jesus as the Son of God. "Although they refused 'the trial through prayer' (v. 61) proposed to them by the Prophet, the latter accorded them a treaty guaranteeing all their civic rights and the free exercise of their religion"⁵³. Here we should discuss what kind of Christians lived in Arabia during Muhammad's mission and, since the canonical writings of the New Testament had not yet been translated into Arabic, what kind of information about Christianity the first Muslims of Arabia may have had. This, though, would go beyond the remit of my essay⁵⁴.

In preaching the gospel he had received from God as a new revelation to the Jewish people, Jesus used images familiar to his historical audience. In the Synoptic Gospels we find forty parables of Jesus illustrating his preaching of God's reign and faithful submission to God's rule⁵⁵. Seven of them are common to Matthew, Mark and Luke; two are proper to Mark, ten are proper to Matthew and eighteen proper to Luke. In the Synoptics, Jesus works creatively with the religious tradition of his people, usually challenging revision of popular notions of the expected kingdom of God. His parables reflect the social and cultural setting of first century Palestine, but individual evangelists have incorporated material preached in parables to serve the pastoral and theological purposes of their gospel, keeping in mind the

52 In explaining 3:64 A. Khoury inserts, "Exkurs: Dialog zwischen Christen und Muslime", in his *Der Koran, Band 4*, 134-148.

53 M. Asad: *Op. cit.* 76 in explaining Q 3:61. A. Th. Khoury: "Exkurs: Muhammad und die Nadjraner", *Der Koran, Band 4*, 123-129. On pp. 126-127 he deals with the text of the treaty and discusses its authenticity. This event and treaty is the foundation on protection of Jews and Christians as the People of the Book within Muslim state.

54 Cf. H. Küng: „Juden, Christen, Judenchristen in Arabien“, *Der Islam*, 62-78. J. Gnllka: „Gegenseitige historische Wahrnehmung“, *Bibel und Koran*, 29-35.

55 Cf. D. Senior-J. Collins (editors): *The Catholic Study Bible*, Oxford University Press, New York 2006, 1341.

specific situation of their historical addressees⁵⁶. Christian interpreters point at parables in the Qur'an as similar to Jesus' parables in the Synoptic gospels. In Q 2:261-265 those who spend their possessions for the sake of God are "the parable" (Ar. *matal*, Hebr. *masha'*) of a grain out of which grow seven ears, of a smooth rock with a little earth upon it and of a garden on high, fertile ground. Christian interpreters see here an allusion to Jesus' parable of the sower (Mk 4:2-8) and of the Two foundations (Mt 7:24-27).

Q 104:2-9 has sharp criticism for persons who attribute an "almost 'religious' value to the acquisition and possession of material goods and facilities – a tendency which precludes man from giving any real importance to spiritual considerations"⁵⁷. Counting on material possessions in the present life as a lasting safeguard will bring such persons into "crushing torment" in hell. Similarly, in 18:32-44 an owner of two vineyards thinks that his abundance will last forever and mocks his neighbor who is inferior in wealth and children, but his gardens are suddenly destroyed and he regrets having associated material possessions with God, becoming aware too late that "God is the best to grant recompense and the best to determine what is to be" (v. 42). Christian readers of these two Qur'anic passages will soon think of Jesus' speaking against human greed and the following parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:13-21). According to Muslim interpreters, in the Qur'an the parable of the rich man and the poor man is an illustration of the statement in v. 7 of the same chapter: "We have willed that all beauty on earth be a means by which We put men to test" (M. Asad, R. Atajić) but they also connect it with 8:28. The historical background of this parable was the last period of Muhammad's mission in Mecca⁵⁸.

In Q 57: 12-15, believing men and women are promised that in the afterlife their light will spread rapidly before them and they will abide in

56 A survey article, cf. D. Hamm: "Parables, The", *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia* Edited by M. Glazier and M. K. Hellwig, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota 2004, 609-611. Classical exegetical monograph, J. Jeremias: *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, 8., durchgesehene Auflage, Göttingen 1970. Recent exegetical monographs, B. B. Scott: *Hear Then the Parables. A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis 1990. BR. H. Young: *The Parables. Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation*, Hendrickson Publishers 2000. A. J. Hultren: *The Parables of Jesus. A Commentary*, W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan 2002.

57 M. Asad: *Op. cit.*, 975.

58 „Dieses Gleichnis wendet sich an diejenigen Ungläubigen unter den Mekkanern, die über ihren Reichtum stolz waren und die Armen in der Umgebung Muhammads verachteten, ja sogar vertreiben lassen wollten. Das Gleichnis bekräftigt, dass der Reichtum vergänglich ist und durch ein hereinbrechendes Unglück vernichtet werden kann. Rechte Zuversicht verleiht die Gottesfurcht und der Gehorsam eines frommes Lebens“ – A. Th. Khoury: *Der Koran Arabisch-Deutsch, Band 9*, 232.

gardens with running waters while persons shaky in their beliefs and inconsistent in their moral behavior will cry out: "Wait for us! Let us have a [ray of] light from your light!' [But] they will be told: 'Turn back, and seek a light [of your own]'. And thereupon a wall will be raised between them [and the believers], with a gate in it: within it will be grace and mercy, and against the outside thereof, suffering" (v. 13). This scene of the Last Judgment in the Qur'an reminds Christian readers of Jesus' parables of the wise and foolish virgins (Mt 25:1-12) and of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31).

In conclusion to this section on the mission and teaching of Jesus, the Qur'an and the Synoptic gospels agree in stating that:

- Jesus preached *indjil, evangelion* – the good tidings;
- Jesus had historical witnesses who are called helpers in the Qur'an and the Twelve or the Apostles in the New Testament;
- Jesus was a Prophet and Messenger of God;
- Jesus was obedient to God and encouraged people to join him in accepting God's sovereign rule;
- Jesus was aware of his mission and in that sense of his special relation with God.

The Qur'an and the Synoptic Gospels *disagree* in presenting Jesus' transcendental identity:

- The Qur'an speaks of the Gospel in the singular and means the revelation granted to Jesus and the sacred book of Christians as People of the Book;
- According to the Qur'an any "deification" of Jesus is a sin against God's unicity;
- There is no suggestion in the Qur'an that Jesus could have called God his Father or said: "All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him" (Lk 10:22 = Mt 11:27);
- According to the Quran, as God's Messenger, Jesus did not die a violent death on the cross but a natural death, and will be raised on the Day of last judgment;
- Since the canonical gospels were not translated into Arabic during the mission of Muhammad, respecting the belief of Muslims that the Qur'an was dictated by God's angel, the suggestion

that before and during the receiving of the revelation Muhammad did come into contact with some Christians should not be an insult to Muslims; here we touch on the question of traditions which may have influenced some formulations in the Qur'an⁵⁹.

MIRACLES OF 'ISA AS GOD'S PROPHET AND MESSENGER

The traditional Catholic definition of miracles as actions beyond the ordinary laws of nature (Augustine) or actions surpassing the power of all nature (Thomas) does not fit miracles in the Bible as salvific actions of God through prophetic mediators in favor of individuals and the community, internally connected with the faith of sufferers or of the respective mediator. The Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels believed in miracles and performed miracles for the sake of suffering persons as signs that God's kingdom was at hand. The miracles of Jesus were revelation stories manifesting God's merciful love for human sufferers⁶⁰. Miraculous healings were an integral part of Jesus' ministry, which was centered on the establishing of God's imminent reign, as were exorcisms, especially in the Gospel according to Mark. John P. Meier in his second volume of *A Marginal Jew – Rethinking the Historical Jesus* groups Jesus' miracles as exorcisms, healing interventions, raising the dead and the so-called nature miracles⁶¹. Jesus used his miraculous power to destroy Satan's rule over individuals and the cosmos; his miracles are called by the Synoptics *dynameis* – actions of power (Mk 6:2, 5, 14; Mt 13:54,58; 14:2; Lk 4:36; 5:17; 8:46). Besides enacting God's kingdom through his actions of power, Jesus occasionally gave them other symbolic meaning. In his answer to the disciples of John the Baptist he explained his mi-

59 Christians had been living in Arabia since the fifth century, but they gave the impression of disunited communities of Jewish and Gentile converts permeated with heretic tendencies. Cf. J. Gnilka: *Op. cit.*, 14-20. Some Muslim theologians from Turkey try to accept Western hermeneutic principles in explaining the Qur'an – cf. F. Körner: "Historisch-kritische Koranexegese? Hemreneweitische Neuansätze in der Türkei", M. Mezer-G. K. Hasselhoff (Hrsg.): *Krieg der Zeichen? Zur Interaktion von Religion, Politik und Kultur*, Egon Verlag 2006, 57-74. F. Körner: *Alter Text – neuer Kontext. Koranhermeneutik in der Türkei heute*, Herder, Freiburg 2006. This book contains translation of seven articles written by three Turkish Muslim scholars.

60 Cf. D. Senior: "The Miracles of Jesus", *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Geoffrey Chapman, London 1992, 1369-1373.

61 Cf. J. P. Meier: *A Marginal Jew. Rethinking the Historical Jesus, Volume Two: Mentor, Message, and Miracles*, Doubleday, New York 1994, 509-1038.

acles as the fulfillment of the “days to come” prophesied in Is 61:1-3 (Mt 11:4-6 = Lk 7:22-23). The first preachers of Jesus’ words and deeds may have amplified the symbolic meaning of some miracles in making them “signs” (*semeia*) with new nuances in the community of Jesus’ followers, as we can see in John’s presentation of seven miracles.

“In sum, the statement that Jesus acted as and was viewed as an exorcist and healer during his public ministry has as much historical corroboration as almost any other statement we can make about Jesus of history. Indeed, as a global affirmation about Jesus and his ministry it has much better attestation than many other assertions made about Jesus, assertions that people often take for granted. Looming large in the gospel and no doubt in his actual ministry, Jesus’ miracle-working activity played an integral part in his being able to attract attention, both positive and negative. His miracle-working activity not only supported but also dramatized and actuated his eschatological message, and it may have contributed to same degree to the alarm felt by the authorities who finally brought about his death. Any historian who seeks to portray the historical Jesus without giving due weight to his fame as a miracle-worker is not delineating this strange and complex Jew, but rather a domesticated Jesus reminiscent of the bland moralist created by Thomas Jefferson”⁶².

The miracle-working activity of adult Jesus is also reflected in the Qur’an. In 19:21 Maryam’s son is announced as a sign (*ayah*) from God to mankind, while in 21:90 and 23:50 both the mother and her son are a sign. Muslim interpreters see here miraculous conception and the mission of Jesus as a prophet who will face persecution and slander. In 3:49 “a sign from the Lord to the children of Israel” (Shakir’s translation, Asad has ‘a message’) are miracles which the child Jesus and adult Jesus will be able to perform. In 5:110 there is a summary of the miracles of the adult Jesus: by God’s permission he healed the blind and the leper and raised the dead. Here and in 3:49 “the blind, the leper and the dead” are presumably in the plural⁶³. But nowhere in the Qur’an are these miracles narrated.

62 J. P. Meier: *Op. cit.*, 970.

63 I rely on the translation by A. Khoury: “... und ich heile Blinde und Aussätzige und mache Tote wieder lebendig mit Gottes Erlaubnis” (3:49); “... und als du Blinde und Aussätzige mit meiner Erlaubnis heiltest und Tote mit meiner Erlaubnis herauskommen liessest” (5:110). Among Bosnian translators E. Karic has the singular in both cases, while R. Atajic uses the singular in 3:49 and the plural in 5:110.

In 5:112-115 the miracle of the food is vividly depicted:

¹¹² [And] lo, the white-garbed ones said: 'O Jesus, son of Mary! Could thy Sustainer send down unto us a repast from heaven?'

Jesus answered: 'Be conscious of God, if you are [truly] believers!'

¹¹³ Said they: 'We desire to partake thereof, so that our hearts might be set fully at rest, and that we might know that thou hast spoken the truth to us, and we might be of those who bear witness thereto!'

¹¹⁴ Said Jesus, the son of Mary: 'O God, our Sustainer! Send down upon us a repast from heaven: it shall be an ever-recurring feast for us for the first and the last of us – and a sight from Thee. And provide us our sustenance, for Thou art the best of providers!'

¹¹⁵ God answered: 'Verily, I [always] do send it down unto you: and so, if any of you should henceforth deny [this] truth, on him, behold, will I inflict suffering the like of which I have never [yet] inflicted upon anyone in his world!'

Surah 5, called *Al-Ma'idah* (the table, food, repast) has its name from v. 114, where the disciples of Isa ask for food from heaven⁶⁴. It begins with a call to believers to fulfill their spiritual and social responsibilities and ends with the complete dependence of humans on God. It contains ordinances relating to religious rites and to various social obligations. According to Atajić, who quotes Yusuf Ali, verses 112-123 of this surah "end with miracles of Isa and in what way they were misused by the bearers of his name"⁶⁵. Khoury gave the passage in v. 112-120 the title: „Über Jesus Christus – Jesus: seine Sendung, seine Person und seine Wunder“.

"The white-garbed ones" in v. 112 are the disciples of Jesus. In v. 111 they confessed their belief in God and in Jesus as God's Messenger. Their question in v. 112 is not clear: do they doubt in God's power to do all He wills or in Jesus' ability to request from God the food they need. After having discussed several opinions and possibilities M. Asad concludes: "The manner in which the disciples are said to have asked for the 'repast' – and particularly their explanation given in the next verse – rather seems to point to a request for a *miracle* which would assure them of God's acceptance of their faith"⁶⁶. He concludes from verses 112 and 115 that God

64 Cf. M. Asad: *Op. cit.*, 139. A.Th. Khoury: *Der Koran Arabisch-Deutsch, Band 6*, 25. Asad translates the title as "the repast", Arberry as "the table", Shakir as "the food", Khoury as "der Tisch". Among Bosnian translators Atajic, Karic and Slijivo have "table". Atajic explains that *ma'ida* means "a table laid with dishes" and also "dishes, courses without a table".

65 R. Atajic: *Prijevod Kur'ana sa tefsирom i komentarom na bosanskom jeziku, Knjiga 2*, 330.

66 M. Asad: *Op. cit.*, 168.

does provide physical and spiritual sustenance but that He condemns humans who presume in their arrogance that they are self-sufficient and independent. V. 115 would also imply a condemnation of any demand for a miracle as a 'proof' of God's existence.

Arberry and four Bosnian interpreters translate the final sentence of v. 112 as: "Fear you God, if you are believers!" In his answer Jesus first declines his disciples' request because it manifests their lack of faith and naïve desire for miracles as a proof of God's mercy (Atajić). In v. 113 the disciples insist on a miraculous repast as God's confirmation of Jesus' activity and express their readiness to spread his teaching. According to this v., the primary wish of the disciples was to take part in and be witnesses of God's blessing bestowed by the miraculous repast. In v. 114, after becoming convinced that there was no disrespect or arrogance in his disciples' request, Isa asked God for food from heaven and for daily sustenance. The miraculous repast will be celebrated by "the first of us and by the last of us". The first are the contemporaries of Isa as direct beneficiaries of God's special favor and the "last" are the generations to come who will celebrate the memory of the favor granted to their ancestors (Atajić). In v. 115 God gives his firm promise to grant daily sustenance to the believers and prepares severe chastisement for unbelievers.

In the disciples' request "Will your Lord consent to send down to us food from heaven?" (tr. Shakir), Asad sees "a possible echo of the request for the daily bread contained in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:11), since, in religious terminology, every benefit that accrues to man is 'sent down from heaven – that is, by God – even if it comes into being through man's own efforts'⁶⁷. R. Atajić, after reminding his Muslim readers that the New Testament accounts are not identical with the gospel revealed to Jesus by God, quotes Mt 15:32-38 and John 6:5-13 in his exegetical note explaining v. 112. He also mentions the miraculous "transformation" of water into wine in John 2:1-11, the "allegory" of the body and blood of Isa in John 6:53-57 and the miraculous catch of fish in Luke 5:4-11. In explaining the request of v. 114: "... send down to us food from heaven which should be to us an ever-recurring happiness... and a sign from Thee," he admits that this text is reminiscent of the Last Supper and of Peter's vision in Acts 10:9-16. The principal addressees of his translation and commentary are Bosnian Muslims living in the countries of Western Europe where they might meet Christian partners in everyday life and in dialogue workshops.

67 M. Asad: *Op. cit.*, 168.

In conclusion, the Qur'an and the Synoptic Gospels agree depicting the miraculous deeds of Jesus as:

- healing the blind;
- healing the leper;
- raising the dead;
- giving food from heaven.

They differ in the way they present the miracles of Jesus:

- in the Qur'an we find only summaries of these miracles, but in the Gospels there are vivid accounts of the events in question;
- in the Gospels some miracle narratives affirm Jesus' transcendental identity (paralytic in Mk 2:1-12), while in the Qur'an the miracles of Jesus are strictly monotheistic: "Jesu Macht in Koran ist stets Gottes Macht, die durch ihn wirkt – Jesu Macht im Neuen Testament ist darüber hinaus aus manchen Stellen auch die Macht eines göttlichen Jesus... Die Wunder Jesu dienen nicht seiner eigener Verherrlichung, sondern geschehen der Nöte der Menschen wegen und zur höheren Ehre Gottes"⁶⁸.

CONCLUSION

A Muslim theologian in Sarajevo who supports dialogue between Muslims and Christians in pluralistic societies told me that the image of Jesus in the Qur'an and in the New Testament is so different that one could wonder if it is the same person. Muslim interpreters of the Qur'an unanimously answer: indeed, this is the same Jesus, son of Mary. The Qur'an, Muslim scholars and believers treat Jesus and his mother with reverence, but they reject any "deification" of Jesus as *shirk* – the sin of ascribing divinity to anyone beside God⁶⁹.

68 M. Bauschke: „Die Wundertaten Jesu“, *Op. Cit.*, 54-64.

69 "... and thou wilt surely find that, of all people, they who say, 'Behold, we are Christians,' come closest to feeling affection for those who believe [in this divine writ]: this is so because there are priests and monks among them, and because these are not given to arrogance" (Q 5:82). Asad explains: such Christians are not *consciously* guilty of *shirk* which equals idolatry.

Despite this difference, which remains as a matter of faith, Jesus of the Qur'an and of the New Testament is God's Servant (Mt 12:18!), Prophet and Messenger, who should inspire us to mutual respect. In commenting the section on Jesus as a model for dialogue in the 1991 document *Dialogue and Proclamation* of the Holy See, a Catholic expert in dialogue and Islam says: "These paragraphs need to be expanded, and this is in part at least the aim of a further document being prepared by the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue on the spirituality of dialogue. Christians who are engaged in relations with Muslims can find a stimulus to their meditation in the Islamic view of Jesus, not only according to Qur'an and classical tradition, but also in approach of certain contemporary Muslims. Moreover, the mystery of Jesus, though understood differently by Christians and Muslims invites to further dialogue"⁷⁰.

70 Archbishop M. L. Fitzgerald: "'Dialogue and Proclamation'. A Reading in the Perspective of Christian-Muslim Relations", D. Kendall-G. O'Collins (eds): *In Many and Diverse Ways. In Honor of Jacques Dupuis*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 2003, 181-193. He was coeditor of the illustrated monograph, *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds which Unite Us 16 years of Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Vatican City 1994.

HOW CAN CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS DEFEND THEIR OWN FAITH RATIONALLY WITHOUT RESORTING TO MUTUAL MOCKERY?¹

According to the census of 2002, 48,266 Muslims lived in Slovenia, which represented 2.4% of the population. Mufti Dr. Nedžad Grabus has pointed out that the first mosque in Slovenia was built in 1917 for Bosnian Muslims in the Austro-Hungarian army². At that time, Bosnia and Slovenia were integral parts of the same state, the Danube Monarchy. In 1918, after World War One ended, Bosnia and Slovenia were included in the new state of the South Slavs, Yugoslavia. The fact that the present-day Republic of Slovenia accepts Islam as one of its registered and recognized faith communities comes from that period; it is based on a 1912 Austrian law. Christianity and Islam are two monotheistic religions that claim their origin in divine revelation and justify their worldview on the basis of rational human reflection³. Performing my ministry as a Catholic theologian in Sarajevo, which is now a city with an absolute Muslim majority in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country in which 50% of the population is Muslim, I support with all my heart and mind the dialogue with Muslims undertaken in the spirit of Vatican II.

1 Author's presentation in Ljubljana, on 25 October 2017, at interreligious conference of Mešihat of Slovenia, commemorating hundredth anniversary of first mosque built in Slovenia in 1917 for Bosnian Muslims who were Austrian soldiers in World war one. Croatian original of the presentation will be published in *Crkva u svijetu* 1/2019.

2 Nedžad Grabus, "Otkrivanje zaboravljene muslimanske i bošnjačke prisutnosti u Sloveniji", in *Preporod (Religion Magazine for Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina)*, 1 May 2017, p. 23.

3 See Giuseppe Rizzardi, "Islam tra autocoscienza islamica ed islamologia cristiana", in Mariano Crociata (ed), *Teologia delle religioni - la questione del metodo*, Roma 2006, 167-201. Marcello Di Tora, "Teologia delle religioni e islamologia. Osservazioni sulla relazione di Giuseppe Rizzardi", *Ibidem*, 203-211.

Keeping this in mind, I have tried to combat Islamophobia among those from my own ethnic community and my own faith, convinced that Christians and Muslims can contribute to peace, justice and mutual understanding in a plural society and a secular country.

In this presentation I would like to show that we can rationally explain our own faith without resorting to polemical caricature where the faith of others is concerned. Religious leaders, priests and imams who preside at weekly worship services in their local communities, and teachers of confessional religious instruction in public schools (allowed in BiH since 1993) can educate their own believers for peaceful living and civil solidarity. They should not write pamphlets against “the others” or translate polemical brochures and books, although they cannot prevent some members of their congregations from doing this on their own⁴.

ADULT BELIEVERS, WHEN THEY HAVE ACQUIRED SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE OF BELIEF IN DIVINE REVELATION, CAN RATIONALLY EXPLAIN IT

Christians believe in God who has revealed himself in the deeds and doctrine of Jesus, and this revelation has been written down in 27 New Testament writings, written in Greek between AD 50 and 120. The key themes of the New Testament are in the four canonical gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) which reflect three phases of development:

- Historical Jesus calls people to conversion in obedience to God’s reign and as a sign of his conviction that God has empowered him to heal the sick and perform other miracles;
- Historical witnesses of Jesus, the Twelve Apostles and their collaborators, preach to the Jews of Palestine and to people of Greek culture in the Roman empire the teaching and deeds of Jesus;
- Four evangelists selected from the preaching about Jesus and

4 A book deriding the Bible, written by former French Catholic Maurice Bucaille who converted to Islam *La Bible, le Coran et la science*, Paris 1976 was translated into Bosnian and published in 1978 and in 2001 by an official Muslim publishing house El-Kalem in Sarajevo. About a dozen brochures and polemical books translated by private individuals from English or Arabic and attacking Christianity were published in Bosnia from 1993 to 2010. Leaders of the Islamic community in BiH cannot control individual believers who finance the translation and publication of polemical books against Christianity.

write their respective gospels keeping in mind the spiritual situation and needs of their audience.

Jesus was a first-century Jew convinced that he was sent by God to purify and reform the faith of his people. He also made available God's goodness and mercy to strangers, the pagans of his time. He asked his disciples to witness to this through their preaching and conduct. Association with the movement of Jesus involves the faith in the God of revelation. In Jesus' time there was no theoretical atheism; most people as members of a family or an ethnic community practiced polytheism and they were expected to take part in the celebration of national festivals manifested through public worship, including the worship of the head of state as a divinity. Jews were exempted from the obligation to keep the statue of the ruling Roman emperor in their synagogues but were required to pray publicly for the head of the state and for prosperity in their country. This was the historical and cultural environment in which Christianity developed from the movement of Jesus as a new monotheistic religion. Jesus enjoined citizens to render unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar (taxes and respect for the civil order) and to God what belongs to God (authentic worship), when he was asked if monotheistic Jewish believers should pay taxes in coins that bore the head of the ruling emperor (see Mark 12:12-17).

The New Testament writings are called *euangelion* (gospel, good tidings) or good news and concern the common good of all human persons, accounts of the central events of Jesus' life, including his violent death on the cross and resurrection, confirmed through his appearances to historical witnesses. One can see this in the sermon of preachers who came from Jerusalem to Antioch of Syria, to address people of Greek culture: "There were some Cypriots and Cyrenians among them, however, who came to Antioch and began to speak to the Greeks as well proclaiming the Lord Jesus" (Acts 11:20). In the chapter of Acts preceding this narrative, Peter solemnly receives into the community of Jesus' followers the Roman army officer Cornelius, who was serving in Palestine at Caesarea. In doing this, Peter gives the activities of Jesus the name of the gospel (*euangelion* - Acts 10: 34-43). According to Church tradition, Peter asked Roman citizens who had accepted faith in God manifested in Jesus to be ready to justify their belief in front of other citizens; "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3: 15-16). This text reflects the practice in the early Church through which candidates for membership of the

Christian community through baptism and public confession of shared faith were instructed during their preparation period. They were expected to continue studying their faith after joining the community, live it and prepare to justify it. Paul was a Jew of the diaspora who studied Jewish theology in Jerusalem, but after his conversion he became a fervent preacher of the gospel among the gentiles. He asks adult baptized converts to make their practiced religion a *latreia logikē* – a worship of the mind and spirit, rational service (Romans 12; 1). The Christian magisterium and theologians were inspired for centuries by these texts to strive to justify their faith and religion rationally. It is true that in periods of inter-ethnic and interreligious hostility, this justification sometimes turned into depreciation and mockery of those who were different, and this caused some New Testament writings to depict Jews as a people rejected by God because their religious leaders handed over Jesus to the Roman authorities for a violent death. Although the historical Jesus intended to purify the Jewish religion, not to establish a new monotheistic faith, gradually a full separation of Judaism and Christianity took place based on the question of Jesus' transcendental identity. For an absolute majority of Jews, Jesus remained an ordinary Galilean of the first century, but for his historical witnesses headed by Peter he was the Anointed of God and promised Messiah, unique Servant of God and Lord (*Kyrios*) in a special sense.

Justin Martyr (AD 100-165) was a Palestinian philosopher who accepted Christianity and wrote in Greek *The Dialogue with Trypho*, an apologia for his faith, addressed to Jews of his time. He shows that Christianity is the new law for all humanity, and demonstrates from the Bible that Jesus is the promised Jewish Messiah. Scholars disagree about the identity of Trypho, a second-century Jew. Claudia Setzer in her 1994 *Jewish Responses to Early Christians* argues that Trypho is a fictional character invented by Justin for his literary goals and assumes that Trypho's words are largely put in his mouth by Justin⁵. Another second-century Christian apologia is the *Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus*. It denounces the vanity of idols and the superstitions of the Jews and extolls the manners of Christians in a pagan environment: "Christians live in the flesh but they are not governed by the desires of the flesh. They pass their days upon earth, but they are citizens of heaven". Christianity is worthy to be known and believed⁶.

5 English translation of Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* is available from Google.

6 English translation of *Epistle to Diognetus* is available from Google.

At the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) the Catholic magisterium adopted four documents on relations with followers of other beliefs in a pluralistic world: Decree on Ecumenism (UR), Decree on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (NAE), Decree on Religious Freedom (DH), and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (GS). In proposing to its own members, a stance of dialogue with those of different beliefs, based on accepting fundamental dignity of every human person, these documents highlighted the spiritual and theological need to transform earlier apologetics in defense of the Catholic faith, including attacks on non-Catholics and non-Christians, into fundamental theology as a rational justification of one's own faith while respecting the faith of others in a pluralistic world⁷. An American Catholic theologian, a professor at the University of Toledo in Ohio, points out that the new apologetics or fundamental theology should be marked by five basic characteristics:

1. Passionate and positive affirmation of one's faith;
2. Dialogical regarding those who believe in a different way;
3. Ecumenical in openness to other Christians;
4. Historically responsible keeping in mind past and present misuse of religion;
5. Culturally engaged⁸.

Catholic fundamental theologians, together with scholars from other theological branches, are convinced that they should be servants of their local community and of the universal Church and therefore open to the actual situations of their fellow believers in plural societies, not content simply to lecture in university classrooms or publish in academic journals.

To Islam as a great monotheistic religion, Muhammad's spiritual experience of the call to believe in one God and to become his Messenger among pagan Arabs of the early seventh century is central. From the publication of *The Life of Muhammad* by M. H. Haykal in Bosnian⁹ one can see that this 40-year old camel-caravan trader in Mecca was deeply disap-

7 See Heinrich Fries, Von der Apologetik zu Fundamentaltheologie, *Concilium* 6 (1969), 6-7, 442-447. Avery Dulles, The Rebirth of Apologetics, in his book: *Church and Society*, New York 2008, 430-442.

8 Richard R. Gaillardet, Do we need a new(er) Apologetics, *America Magazine*, 2 February 2004, 26-33.

9 Muhamed Husejn Hejkel, *Život Muhameda, a. s.*, El-Kalem, Sarajevo 2004. I have also used Rizwi Faizer, *Muhammad (570-632)*, in: *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, Editor in Chief Richard C. Martin, Macmillan Reference USA 2004, 478-485

pointed by the pagan belief and practice of his fellow citizens who worshipped idols. He did not find a solution in his encounters with Jews and Christians of his time and therefore he withdrew to the cave of Hira near Mecca where he experienced God's revelation through the angel Gabriel. The first person to trust him was his wife Khadija, who foresaw that Muhammad would become God's Messenger, to his own clan and to the Arab nation. Muslim theologians point out that the essence of this experience from July AD 610 is recorded in Surah 96:1-5:

In the name of Allah. Most Gracious, Most Merciful

1. Proclaim! (or Read!)
In the name
Of the Lord and Cherisher,
Who created –
2. Created man, out of
A (mere) leech-like clot
Of congealed blood:
3. Proclaim! And the Lord
Is Most Bountiful –
4. He who taught
(The use of) the Pen-
5. Taught man that
Which he knew not¹⁰.

Muhammad Asad in his commentary on the Qur'an, which has been translated into Bosnian¹¹, points out that the Prophet of Islam understood that "read" in this inspirational context "signifies a conscientious taking-in, with or without an audible utterance but with a view to understand them, of words and ideas received from an outside source: in this case the message of the Qur'an" (p. 963). "The pen" is a symbol for all knowledge recorded by means of writing. "Read" in verses 1 and 3 refer in human ability to transmitting written records from individual to individual, from generation to generation and from one cultural environment to another. God's teaching humans "signifies also the act of His revealing, through the prophets, spiritual truths and moral standards which cannot be unequivocally established

10 Quotation from Abdullah Yusuf Aly, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an. Eleventh Edition Qur'anic Text (Arabic), with Revised English Translation, Comment and Index*, Amanat Publications, Beltsville, Maryland, U. S. A. 2006. 1672-1673.

11 *The Message of the Qur'an. Translated and explained by Muhammad Asad*, Isaret Yayinlari Istanbul 2006 (first published in 1980 by Dar al-Andalus Gibraltar). Bosnian translation: Muhammed Asad, *Poruka Kur'ana. Prijevod i komentar*, El-Kalem, Sarajevo 2004.

through human experience and reasoning alone: and, thus, it circumscribes the phenomenon of divine revelation as such” (p. 964).

Muhammad was convinced that God was leading him toward a proper understanding and explanation of revelation. This is reflected in the following verses of Surah 17:

73. And their purpose was
To temper thee away
From that which We
Had revealed unto thee,
To substitute in Our name
Something quite different:
(In that case), behold!
They would certainly have
Made thee (their) friend.
74. And had We not
Given the strength
Thou wouldst nearly
Have inclined to them
A little.
75. In that case we should
Have made thee taste
An equal portion of (punishment)
In this life, and an equal portion
In death: and moreover
Thou wouldst have found
None to help thee against Us.

Surah 17 is entitled *Al-Isrā'*, the Night Journey. Commentators believe that it was revealed in the year preceding the *hijrah* and point out that it presents Muhammad's night journey to Jerusalem where previous revelation had taken place. In this surah are stressed the principles of faith, the oneness of Allah and the veracity of the Prophet Muhammad. Verse 73 “relates to an offer of ‘compromise’ made by the pagan Quraysh: they demanded of the Prophet that he give some sort of recognition to their tribal deities and attribute this recognition to God; in return, they promised to recognize him as a prophet and to make him their leader. Naturally, the Prophet rejected this offer. The implication is that the Prophet's deep faith made it *impossible* for him to consider anything of this kind... The purport of the above passage goes, however, beyond the historical event or events to which it relates: it

expresses the idea that any *conscious* offence against a fundamental truth is an unforgivable sin” (M. Asad, 430).

The historical idea of faith is linked to the Arabic expressions *iman* and *islam*. As one can see in Surah 8:2:

For Believers are those
Who, when Allah is mentioned,
Feel a tremor in their hearts,
And when they hear
His Signs rehearsed, find
Their faith strengthened,
And put (all) their trust
In their Lord.

Faith means recognition of God’s oneness and a corresponding submission to God. The noun *iman* is derived from the root *’mn* and means rendering certain and trustful submission to something or somebody. The believer, *mu’min* (in contrast to *kafir*, non-believer) is one who understands and accepts the content of God’s revelation entering in this way into a situation of certainty and of trusting God. In those who believe in this way “their hearts find their rest in the remembrance of God” (Q 13:28, Asad’s translation)¹². The Bosnian Muslim scholar Dr. Smail Balić (1920-2002) was active after World War Two in Austria. Writing in German, he presented Islam to Europeans as a peace-loving religion, and he felt enabled by his Muslim faith to contribute to a life of tolerance in a secular state. For *Lexikon religiöser Grundbegriffe. Judentum, Christentum, Islam* (second edition by Styria Verlag in Graz 1996), he contributed about 150 pages on basic concepts of Islam. He points out that the word *islam* means submission to God but also peace and salvation in God. He rejects the traditional names in German *Mohammedaner*, *Mohammedanismus* because Muslims do not pray to Muhammad but only to God. According to him, *iman* is only one part of Islam, although the most important. In its entirety, Islam consists of three parts a) confession of faith, b) performance of religious duties, c) keeping and fulfilling the Muslim ethical codex¹³. Confession of faith comprises six articles:

1. Belief in one God,
2. Belief in angels,
3. Belief in revelation or Sacred books,

12 See Jane J. Smith, Faith, *Encyclopedia of the Qur’an, Volume Two E-I*, Brill, Leiden 2002, 162-172.

13 Smail Balić, Vjera – islamski, *Leksikon temeljnih religijskih pojmova: Židovstvo, Kršćanstvo, Islam*, Zagreb 2005 (Croatian translation of German 1996 original), 515-516.

4. Belief in God's Messengers,
5. Belief in the Day of Judgment and the Afterlife ,
6. Belief in divine predestination.

The ethical codex is based on *iman* or faith and on *islam* or social implementation of the Islamic system of living. Abraham, an obedient receiver and performer of God's revelation is the first Muslim (Q 3:67-68). Faith is God's grace but it supposes free and rational acceptance by humans. Polytheists refuse to reject their idols (Q 14:11):

Their messengers said to them:

"True, we are human
Like yourselves, but Allah
Doth grant His grace
To such of His servants
As He pleases. It is not
For us to bring you
An authority except as Allah
Permits. And on Allah
Let all men of faith
Put their trust".

This verse is part of a passage that points out the basic similarity of the message transferred by all the messengers. All seekers after truth should turn to the substance of the divine message. "The Qur'an dwells in many places (e. g. 6:109-111 or 13:31) on the futility – moral as well as intellectual – of the demand that the divine origin of a prophetic message should be proved by tangible, extraneous means: for, a morally valid and intellectually justifiable conviction of the intrinsic truth of such a message can be gained only through 'conscious insight accessible to reason' (12:108)" (Asad, 373). It is evident here that *iman* is a rational appropriation of the divine message transferred to the Messenger Muhammad through the angel: "Faith is not so much believing in something or adhering to some kind of acceptance of the unseen or what is not immediately evident to the senses or reason, as it is active testimony to what one holds unquestionably to be true, God acts on behalf of humankind, and men and women respond in the act of faith. But what is the content of that faith? What is the mix of mental discernment, verbal confession and the performance of good deeds that is really at the heart of *iman*?... Islam is the only major religion whose very name suggests

a bi-dimensional focus of faith. On the vertical axis it refers to the individual and personal human response to God's oneness, often described as the 'faith' dimension, while on the horizontal axis it means the collectivity of all those persons who together acknowledge and respond to God to form a community of religious faith. Muslims agree that the religious response of all those persons throughout the ages who have affirmed the oneness of God in faith can rightly be understood as personal *islam*. It was only with the official beginning of the community at the time of the emigration to Medina, however, that there came to be a special recognition that Muslims together form a group, a unity, an *umma*"¹⁴.

According to a well known *hadith* of the Prophet, registered and transferred by Muslim (c. 817-873), *iman* is belief in Allah, in angels, in the Sacred Book, in God's messengers, in the Day of Judgment which includes the resurrection of the dead to life, while *islam* is not associating any human person to God in his divinity, performing ritual prayers, social assistance to the poor (*zekat*) and fasting in the month of Ramadan as the month when revelation was given¹⁵. Muhammad al-Tabari (839-923) in his commentary on the Qur'an (*Tafsir* IX, 518) points out that *islam* on one level signifies the verbal submission by which one enters the community of the *muslims*, and on the other it coordinates with *iman*, which involves the total surrender of the heart, mind and body¹⁶.

From this short survey, it is clear that Christianity and Islam are religions of revelation claiming the assent of heart and mind to God's revelation available through the prophets and that believers must present and defend their faith rationally.

IN A TIME OF DIALOGUE, WE STUDY SHARED VALUES AND RESPECT DIFFERENCES WITHOUT MOCKING

We should keep in mind that Muhammad in AD 630 wisely took control of Mecca and turned it into the future center of Islam as a world religion. After the death of the Prophet and Messenger of Islam, Abu Bakr was elected as the first caliph and political leader of Muslims who during two years of his

14 Jane J. Smith, Art. cit., 167.

15 See Bosnian translation of *Muslimova zbirka hadisa*, El-Kalem, Sarajevo 2008, 11-12.

16 See Jane J. Smith, Faith, 169.

rule affirmed and widened the Muslim state. On 30 June 534 Muslims defeated the Byzantine army at Ajnadayn in Syria and in ten years under Caliph Umar (634-644) the expansion of the Muslim state and religion continued in all directions¹⁷.

In 635 Muslims laid siege to Damascus, an important city of the Byzantine Empire. The prefect of the city was an influential member of the Mansur family, who did not like the Byzantine rulers and therefore he handed over the keys of the city gate to the Muslims. He was the grandfather of the Christian monk and theological writer John of Damascus (676-749). John's father, Sargun, despite being Christian, served as a kind of finance minister to Caliph Mu'awiya I (661-680). After the Muslims took control of Jerusalem in 638 they permitted the Christian monks of the Mar Saba monastery near Jerusalem to continue their activities. Sargun's son, Yahia, joined them after the year 700 taking as monk the name John. Since the Byzantine emperor persecuted theologians who favored liturgical veneration of icons, saints and prophets in Christian churches, John felt safe in his monastery on Muslim territory near Jerusalem. In his work *Concerning Heresy*, written in Greek, he described 103 Christian heresies and listed Islam among them in chapter 101 calling it *Heresy of the Ishmaelites*. It contained seven pages, was translated into Latin and turned into a widely used Christian refutation of Islam in the middle ages. He called Muhammad a false prophet and Antichrist. According to John, Islam was founded during the reign of Emperor Heraclius by Muhammad who had contacted an Arian heretical monk¹⁸. Islam would be a Christological heresy because it denies that Jesus died on the cross and it abhors Christian worship of the risen Christ considering him divine as a grievous sin against God's oneness. As an educated Christian, he mentions that Ishmaelites in the time of Muhammad's mission did worship idols, but he does not blame negligent Christian preachers for this. John of Damascus knew the titles of some Surahs of the Qur'an and used the text of Surah two, three, four and five, but in his polemics against Islam he used only popular superstitions as if they were official Muslim teaching. John's polemic against Islam was composed as a conversation between a Christian and a Muslim, but the author put in this Muslim's mouth only

17 I have taken basic data from Muhammad Quasim Zaman, Caliphate, *Encyclopedia of Islam and Muslim World*, 2004, 116-123. Ahmed Alibašić, Hronološki pregled historije islama i muslimanskih naroda, in: *Atlas islamskog svijeta*, Udruženje Ilmije IZ u BiH, Sarajevo 2004, 795-805.

18 The Greek text of John of Damascus on Islam has been published in *Patrologia graeca* 94, 763-778. A new scientific edition and translation into English by Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam. The Heresy of the Ishmaelites*, Brill, Leiden 1972.

what a Christian would like¹⁹. Despite this, the Rumanian Orthodox theologian C. Cauru believes that the text of John Damascene can inspire Christians and Muslims to dialogue even today²⁰.

Another medieval theologian who formed Christian students of philosophy and theology in polemical attitudes towards Islam was Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). In the preceding period the Christian theologian Petrus Venerabilis (1094-1156) organized a translation of the Qur'an into Latin as well as several works of Muslim authors. This enabled Christian researchers of Islam to get direct insight into Muslim texts. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa contra gentiles*, written between 1259 and 1265 brought out the philosophical foundations for Christian belief and regarding dogmatic truths based only on Scriptures he pointed out that they do not contradict human reason. In refuting Islam, he stated that Muhammad "did not present convincing signs of supernatural origin"²¹. In his *Tractatus de rationibus fidei contra Saracenos* Aquinas answered the question of a Christian cantor living among a Muslim majority in Antioch who wished to defend the Christian faith using rational arguments²². The name "Saracen" was used by Christians at that time for Muslims of Arab and other ethnic identity in countries of Muslim rule.

In the Forward to his translation Joseph Kenny supposes that the Cantor of Antioch must have been responsible for music in the cathedral and that the questions he asks "must have been the subject of lively discussions in a city where Latin Christians mixed with eastern Christians and Muslims". This small treatise by a mediaeval theologian (24 pages in Kenny's electronic text) is a presentation of the Bible to people who do not accept it, since Aquinas acknowledged that he knew little about Islam. Here are the titles of individual chapters:

1. Introduction;
2. How to argue with unbelievers;

19 See John Ernest Merrill, Of the Tractate of John of Damascus on Islam, *The Muslim World* 41, 2/1951, 88-93. I reached this article through Google on 31 May 2017.

20 See Cajus Cutaru, A Great Father of the Church in Dialog with Islam: Saint John of Damascus, *Teologia* 4/2014, 157-181. *Teologia* is periodical of the Orthodox Theological faculty at Aradu, Roumenia.

21 I have used the Croatian translation of the *Summa contra gentiles*, *Suma protiv pogana. Svezak prvi*, preveo Augustin Pavlović, Zagreb 1993, 1,6, p. 27-29.

22 For the Latin text and English translation, see, Thomas Aquinas, *De rationibus fidei contra Saracenos, Graecos et Armenos - On Reasons for Our Faith against Muslims, Greeks and Armenians*, New Bedford, Mass 2002. I have used here *Reasons for the Faith against Muslim Objections (and one objection of the Greeks and Armenians) for Cantor of Antioch by Saint Thomas Aquinas, O. P.* translated by Joseph Kenny O. P. (taken from Google on 15 May 2018).

3. How generation applies to God;
4. How the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son;
5. The reason for the incarnation of the Son of God;
6. The meaning of 'God became man';
7. The meaning of 'The Word of God suffered';
8. The meaning of 'The faithful receive the body of Christ';
9. How there is a special place where souls are purified before receiving beatitude;
10. That divine predestination does not impose necessity on human acts.

The Introduction contains Aquinas' summary of the Muslim attitude to Christianity as he was informed by his Antioch Christian correspondent: "The following are the things you say the Muslims attack and ridicule: They ridicule the fact that we say Christ is the Son of God, when God has no wife (Q 6:110: 72;3) and they think we are insane for professing three persons in God, even we do not mean by this three gods. They also ridicule our saying that Christ the Son of God was crucified for the salvation of the human race (Q 4:157-8) for the almighty God could save the human race without the Son's suffering, he could also make man so that he could not sin... Concerning merit, which depend on free will, you assert that the Muslims and other nations hold that God's fore-knowledge or decree impose necessity on human actions, thus they say that man cannot die or even sin unless God decrees this, and that every person has his destiny written in his forehead. On these questions you ask for moral and philosophical reasons which the Muslims can accept. For it would be useless to quote passages of Scripture against those who do not accept this authority". Aquinas calls Muslims unbelievers from his Christian point of view, but in chapter eight he points out that "Muslims admit the omnipotence of God".

Nevertheless, Aquinas does not ask the Christian partner to move out of Antioch, a majority Muslim city, but helps him to explain rationally his Christian faith in his encounters with Muslims. One can also notice Aquinas' awareness of religious pluralism: faith cannot be imposed forcibly nor proved mathematically, but it can be rationally accepted and justified after an adult person accepts the faith of his or her community to which he or she associated. To most other Christian theologians who wrote about Islam, apologetics were an instrument for mockery, and this remained the case until the middle of the last century.

Pioneers of a dialogical approach were the rare Christian scholars who lived for a time among Muslims, learning Arabic and exploring the culture. Among scholars writing in French, such promoters of dialogue were Louis Massignon (1883-1962), Jean-Mohammad Abd-el-Jalil (1904-1979), Louis Gardet (1905-1986), and George C. Anawatti (1906-1994)²³. The works of these and other scholars were included in the reflections of bishops and theologians at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). In their Declaration on Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis humanae*) they accepted the principle of the fundamental human dignity of followers of different religions, and the right to follow one's conscience, and in the Declaration on Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra aetate*) they opened the way to dialogue with Judaism, Islam and other religions²⁴.

In times of polemical apologetics, Muslim theologians criticized Christianity for its faith in the Trinity and the incarnation of Christ. It seems that historically the first of these was Zaydi al-Qasim b. Ibrahim (died 860) with his *Response to the Christians (al-Radd 'alā l-naṣārā)*. A shared conviction of Muslim theologians past and present is that Jesus did receive authentic revelation from God but that this was corrupted in the four canonical Christian gospels. Relying on the doctrine of the Qur'an that it was revealed to confirm earlier revelation (Q 3:3-4: 5:48: 6,92: 10,37: 46:12) Muslim polemicists believed that "the Qur'an was the source of the truth and that Islam was the authentic expression of this truth; they viewed other religions as either incomplete or incorrect forms of Islam. It followed that one main purpose of their arguments was to show where the inadequacies of the other faiths were to be found. Another was to establish the truth of Islam by demonstrating that other attempted versions of the truth did not have the inner consistency or comprehensiveness of their own"²⁵. The aforementioned al Qasim b. Ibrahim adduces long quotations from the Gospels to support his argument that Jesus was only hu-

23 See Maurice Borrmans, *Prophètes du dialogue islamo-chrétien : Louis Massignon, Jean-Mohammed Abd-el-Jalil, Louis Gardet, Georges Anawati*, Editions du Cerf, Paris 2009. M. Borrmans was a member of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious dialogue who wrote *Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims*, Paulist Press, New York 1990 (French original published in 1981 by Ed. du Cerf in Paris. This book has been translated into Croatian: *Smjernice za dijalog između kršćana i muslimana*, Glas Koncila, Zagreb 1984.) His book published in Italian *Islam e cristianesimo. Le vie del dialogo*, Edizioni paoline, Milano 1993 was also translated into Croatian *Islam i kršćanstvo*, Napredak, Sarajevo 2010.

24 For a brief survey of discussion on these two schemes and their message, see John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts 2008, 211-224.

25 David Thomas, Apologetics, in: *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an. Volume One*, Brill, Leiden 2001, 115-119.

man. Alī b. Rabdān al-Tabarī (d. ca. 864) in his *Book of religion and empire* (*Kitāb al-Dīn wa-l-dawla*) brings about 150 verses translated from the Bible to show the ways in which they foretell the coming of Muhammad and Islam. Smail Balić points out that Muhammad defended himself in front of Judaism and Christianity and therefore Muslim theology cannot give up apologetics after his death. He reminds his Christian audience that Sunni Muslims have created the concept of *ijtihad* which through anecdotes, stories and songs influenced even folk literature²⁶. According to Balić, keeping in mind the need to preserve Muslim identity in a changing world, Muslim apologetics primarily affirms fidelity to tradition. He would like modern Muslims, especially those living in Western democracies, to think their faith and organize their religious structures in the spirit of Western pluralism.

I found such a dialogical attitude in the translation and commentary of the Qur'an organized by the Iranian philosopher and theologian Seyyed Hossein Nasr in the USA. His collaborators were Muslim intellectuals living in America who are proud of their Muslim identity and ready to live in peace with fellow citizens of other identities²⁷. Such an aim is especially evident in fifteen essays intended for readers who wish to live Islam in Western democracies (pp. 1587-1855). The first topic "How to read the Quran" was written by Ingrid Mattson who was born into a Catholic family and educated in Catholic schools in Canada. While studying Islam in Paris she converted to Islam and gradually became a respected Muslim scholar active in promoting mutual understanding between Muslims and Christians. She would like any readers of the Qur'an to take into account the historical context in which it was revealed and written, and to avoid pointless assumptions and prejudices, to trust the historical certainty that the revelation given by the angel Gabriel to Muhammad was faithfully transferred, and to acknowledge the continuity of the revelation along the lines of the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Quran. In her conclusion she points out: "The hard division between 'Muslim' and 'non-Muslim' lands does not reflect the religious diversity found in most nation-states today (if it ever did), so this medieval legal option is now moot. Instead, Muslims usually collaborate with other peoples of faith to cultivate an ethic of mutual respect for religious symbols, artifacts

26 See Smail Balić, Apologetika – islamski, *Leksikon temeljnih religijskih pojmova*, 54. Muneer Goolam Fareed, Ijtihad, *Enciclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, 344-345 points out that "in general, *ijtihad* served to validate the reformist's efforts to subordinate the sacred texts to the exigence of modern context."

27 *The Study Quran. A New Translation and Commentary*. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Editor-in-Chief, Harper One, New York 2015, pp. LIX+1988 with 11 maps.

and sacred texts. Although some nations have laws restricting 'hate speech' toward religious communities or grant special protection to religious books and symbols, the need for robust laws protecting the freedom of speech in many countries, especially in the West, prevents such restrictions from being widely adopted especially as far as Islam is concerned, and in any case no law is effective without an underlying ethic that is broadly supported. Inculcating values of kindness, mutual respect and neighborliness in our diverse communities is the best way to prevent religious differences from being used to harm one another, and this begins and ends with respect for the sacred scriptures and religious beliefs and practices of others"²⁸.

In our days, tolerant Christians and Muslims point out that we believe in the same God who gave his revelation through prophets. This was emphatically asserted by Miroslav Volf, a Baptist theologian born in Osijek, Croatia, but performing his ministry in the USA, in his 2011 book *Allah: A Christian Response*. The editor of a Croatian translation of this book motivated Adnan Silajdžić, professor of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, to write a reflection on the book²⁹. Professor Sijadžić appreciates in Volf's research his personal contacts with Muslims and regrets the spread of Christian islamophobia since the terror attack of 11 September 2001 in New York. He evaluates as positive Volf's "interconfessional" reading of the New Testament and Qur'an, where in Islam are pointed out God's attributes of life, knowledge and power as an analogy to the Christian belief in Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He accepts Volf's thesis that belief in the same God enables Christians and Muslims to live peacefully in a pluralistic world. Belief in the same God motivates Christians and Muslims to contribute what they have been individually given by God and so become signs and instruments of God's activity. Such a faith can become a source of deepest values in believers and strengthen them to behave in harmony with their responsibility in front of God and before new generations.

28 Ingrid Mattson, *Art. cit.*, 1600. She is known for her book *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Daily Life*, 2nd edition 2013. In her public presentations she focuses on ethical living and interfaith relations. According to a passage about her in *Wikipedia*, soon after the 11 September 2001 terror attacks in New York she wrote an article, "American Muslims have a Special Obligation", stating: I, as an American Muslim leader, denounce not only suicide bombers and the Taliban, but those leaders of other Muslim states who thwart democracy, repress women, use the Qur'an to justify un-Islamic behavior and encourage violence". In a 2007 essay she condemned "exclusivist, triumphalist, communal identities (religious or political) that justify violent attacks on other groups".

29 See Adnan Silajdžić, "Pogovor: Nema istinskog kršćansko-muslimanskog dijaloga bez zrele i odgovorne vjere" (= There is no true dialogue of Christians and Muslims without a mature and responsible faith), in: Miroslav Volf, *Allah. Kršćanski odgovor*, Ex Libris, Rijeka 2015, 320-342.

In April 2017, the Bosnian Muslim journalist Mirnes Kovač, commissioned by the Interreligious Council in Sarajevo, prepared the publication of the book *One* in English with quotations from the Bible and the Qur'an on ten themes shared by modern Christians and Muslims³⁰. Collaborators in selecting the quotations were Muhamed Fazlović, doctoral candidate in Muslim Theology and Pavle Mijović, professor of philosophy at the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Sarajevo. In his Foreword, Mirnes Kovač points out: "In holy scriptures believers can find instructions and lessons that can directly influence their lives: Christians experience the presence of God through Jesus as a strength to demonstrate kindness, love and mercy, while Muslims find those ideals in the words of the Quran, that were accomplished through the life of Prophet Muhammad. The broad ideal of living is focused on reaching the unattainable by using what we have here and now in the world surrounding us. People find comfort in faith and it is something everyone needs in our fast-paced world burdened with conflicts. However, that primordial essential faith that ordinary people try to live by as much as they can, unfortunately has been frequently misused and often used as an instrument of hate, as a fuel for crime and the absurd killing of God's most wonderful creature – man. Precisely because of this, we have decided to make "The One" -messages from the Bible and the Quran more available for common people". Ten topics important for believers in a secular society are: One God, Peace, Justice, Love, Family and Neighbors, Sanctity of Life, Compassion, Forgiveness, Helping Others and Hope. Quotations from the Bible are taken from *The New American Bible* and from the Qur'an from M. Asad's *The Message of the Qur'an* in English. The reason is confusion with local languages in B&H: there is no local translation acceptable and recommendable by all faith leaders to their members. The presiders at weekly prayer services and teachers of confessional religion in public schools in our country can easily find in the translations they use the verses quoted for each of these topics.

FROM MUSLIMS IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE TO EUROPEAN ISLAM

The first Muslim settlers in present day Slovenia were Bosniaks in the Austro-Hungarian army in World War One. In 1918 Slovenia was included in

30 Mirnes Kovač, *One. Words of God from the Holy Books of both Islam and Christianity*, Međureligijsko vijeće za Bosnu i Hercegovinu, Sarajevo 2017.

the new state of the South Slavs, and from the 1950s the former Republic of Yugoslavia began moving Muslim workers from Bosnia, Kosovo and Sandžak. During Ottoman rule in these regions some local inhabitants accepted Islam and retained this faith after the Ottoman rulers were forced to leave in 1878³¹. The general political practice of the Turkish occupying authorities in Albania, Kosovo, Serbia and Bosnia was not forceful Islamicization but enabling former settlers to remain with certain protection rights (*millet*). Nevertheless, Christians had to pay a special per capita yearly tax called *jyziah* and were not admitted to high ranking state offices³². Due to more than 400 years of Ottoman occupation, this gradually influenced domestic inhabitants to accept Islam so that today Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina have majority Muslim populations. In contrast to Muslims in the United Kingdom, France, Germany and the Nordic countries, all of them are descendants of well-established Muslim communities, not recent immigrants. After the rule of the Ottoman Sultan was terminated, these Muslims had to decide with their leaders whether to migrate to Turkey or adjust to living in a secular state under Christian rulers. The vast majority remained, gradually affirming their ethnic and religious rights and now they have the option of being loyal citizens of their respective nations and cherishing their Muslim identity³³. Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina regard themselves as ethnic Bosniaks and point out that they are Europeans, aware that this does not make them less Muslim than Arabs, Pakistanis, Indonesians and others. They want freedom to practice Islam and look forward to BiH membership of the EU. Muslims of Slovenia are largely immigrants from Bosnia or their descendants. They are included in the pastoral care of the Bosniak diaspora in European countries, America and Australia. With other Muslims in these countries they would not like to be treated as a danger to the majority population in European countries³⁴.

31 See Christian Moe, Slovenia, in: *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe 2*, Editor-in-Chief Jurgen S. Nielsen, Boston 2010, 473-480.

32 See the chapter on Islamicization of Bosnia, in: Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia. A Short History*, Macmillan London 1994, 51-69. Marko Atila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia. From Middle Ages to the Present Day*, Saqi, London 2007, 38-100.

33 See Ina Merdjanova, *Rediscovering the Umma. Muslims in the Balkans between Nationalism and Transnationalism*, Oxford University Press, New York 2013.

34 See Enes Karić, *Essays (on Behalf) of Bosnia*, El-Kalem, Sarajevo 1999. E. Karić, *Čekajući Evropu. Eseji*, Sarajevo 2015 (Waiting for Europe. Essays). Adnan Silajdžić, *Islam u otkriću kršćana Europe. Povijest međureligijsog dijaloga* (Islam in Discovery of Christian Europe. History of interreligious dialogue), Fakultet islamskih nauka, Sarajevo 2003. Idem., *Muslims in Search of an Identity*, translated by Saba Risaluddin, El-Kalem, Sarajevo 2007. Fikret Karčić, *Muslimani Balkana. "Istočno pitanje" u XX. vijeku* (Muslims of the Balkans. "Eastern Question" in twentieth Century), CNS, Sarajevo 2014. Idem., *The Other European Muslims. A Bosnian Experience*, CNS, Sarajevo 2015. The book by Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, Oxford University Press, New York 2005 has been translated into Bosnian: *Euro-američki muslimani i budućnost islama*, Ilmija Islamske zajednice u BiH, Sarajevo 2007.

It is well known that pastoral care for Muslim immigrants in Western Europe has for decades been provided by imams and teachers of Islam from the countries where the immigrants originally came from, and that most Turkish imams in Austria and Germany do not speak German in the countries where they perform their ministry. The question of confessional religious instruction in public schools for children of Muslim parents is very sensitive, because different states have their own guidelines on curricula, including religion, acknowledging legitimate requests of parents who entrust public schools with educating their children. The civil authorities in France recently decided that imams coming from former French colonies should attend a special program about the country in which their believers live and work, in order to help them to adjust properly to the social environment while maintaining their Muslim identity. An increasing number of initiatives have arisen in the countries of Western Europe to organize the study of Islam for future imams in the countries where they will perform their ministry.

Well intended and properly informed Christian intellectuals present Islam and Muslims in a way that shows they are not a danger to Western democracies or the Christians that live in them³⁵. Christian religious leaders, acknowledging the human rights of Muslims in their countries strive to inform their own believers about Muslims and through their own humanitarian organizations to assist them with integration, which is not intended to result in assimilation. In this regard, the Catholic bishops of Germany published a working document in 2003, *Christians and Muslims in Germany*³⁶. In their Foreword the bishops recall that in 1983 they published a similar document, but thanks to living encounters with Muslims in the country there was subsequently a significant increase in the volume of academic literature about Islam and at the same time a growing need for rapprochement with Muslims as nextdoor neighbors. In the first part of the book, the bishops present the Muslim communities in their country (Sunni, Shia, Alevite, Sufi, Arab, Iranian, Turkish Muslims). In the second chapter, Islam is depicted as a faith and a way of life, and basic truths of

35 See John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, Oxford University Press, New York, 3rd edition 1999 (This edition has been translated into Bosnian, *Islamska prijetnja: mit ili stvarnost?*, Selsebil, Živinice 2001). As a Christian scholar, Esposito is aware of Muslim extremists in the modern world; see his *Islam and Politics*, Fourth edition, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, New York 1998.

36 Sekretariat der Deutschen Bishopskonferenz, *Christen und Muslime in Deutschland* (Arbeitshilfen 172), Bonn 2003, 277 pp. A list of most important books on Islam intended for general audience, p. 270-277.

Christianity and Islam are compared. In the third chapter, Islam is presented in German society, seeking a place in Christian understanding for the building of mosques and for teaching about Islam in Catholic religious instruction. The second part of the book presents responses to concrete questions on, for example, homes for the elderly, cemeteries and burial, marriage, the celebration of feasts, the practice of Muslim women wearing veils, and religious instruction for Muslim children in public schools.

In the town of Saint Etienne-du-Rouvray, Northern France, in the early morning hours of 26 July 2016 two violent extremists broke into a church, held the Catholics who were present at knife point and with ritual cruelty murdered Fr. Jacques Hamel, an 86-year old priest. A woman managed to go out of the church and informed the police, who arrived and killed the two attackers. Through a later public investigation it became evident that the killers belonged to an extremist Islamic organization which, among other things, has also killed innocent Muslims in order to punish officials who cannot be reached directly. President Hollande visited the church very soon after the terror attack. This tragic event provoked a new wave of suspicion that Muslims are incapable or unwilling to adjust to the secular way of life in Western democracies. On the same day, at 3.43 PM a priest wrote on his website: "Let us pray for victims and killers! Let us not succumb to revenge. Forgive them, they do not know what they do!" French bishops addressed their believers and society as a whole on 14 October in their Pastoral letter entitled: "In a world which is changing we should rediscover the meaning of the political"³⁷. The bishops begin with the social tension among French citizens and they express confidence that social networks can contribute to a public discussion about a society in which young and old of different origin and social position can find their place. Aware that absolute security cannot be guaranteed but that the foundations of liberty can be protected, the bishops acknowledge that living without a job is a great injustice and they point out that, to many contemporary French people, republican values of liberty, equality and fraternity are meaningless. They ask themselves why some young persons are not willing to integrate in French society but look for purpose in their lives by fighting in the wars in Syria and Iraq. They reproach politics for having lost its sense of purpose, for having been reduced to a set of management skills, thus diminishing the French national project. They

37 *Dans un monde qui change retrouver le sens du politique. Le Conseil permanent de la Conférence des évêques de France aux habitants de notre pays*, in : *La Croix*, 17 Octobre 2016, and as a separate booklet. It contains 16 pages and is available also through Google.

propose a new legitimacy of public speech, rethinking of laicism upon which the modern French state is founded, and making more room for religion in French society: “Laicism is a legal framework which should enable all, believers of all religions and those who do not believe to live together. It should not exceed its objective by transforming laicism into a social project with the aim of neutralizing religion in society, expelling religion from the public sphere into the purely private domain where religion would remain hidden. Such comprehension is harmful for society” (N. 9).

One of the Muslim organizations in France is the Muslim Theological Council, with has its headquarters in Paris. On 1 November 2016, it published an Open letter expressing gratitude to the French bishops for their Pastoral letter³⁸. In their introduction they write: “In the booklet you have recently published with the title *Dans un monde qui change retrouver le sens du politique* you propose the common life that we have missed in recent years. We thank you in the name of God, of his creatures, and believers and those who do not believe in France which is our common good. The solemn tone which you have used corresponds well to the gravity of the situation and the atmosphere of tension that prevails in the country and in the world”. The authors of the letter bitterly regret the rejection of those who are different, and the violent terror attacks that are recurring around the world. These attacks provoke mistrust and suspicion among neighbors. They continue: “France, five times a victim of terror assassinations, with unheard of cruelty, with more than 250 murdered in less than two years and hundreds injured, is no exception in this ocean of calamity”. They commend the measured reaction of the bishops to the assassination of Fr. Hamel, which sent a clear message to the world and to murderers: “The widespread participation of French Muslims in Masses that were organized everywhere in France to commemorate the death of this priest and martyr to cruel savagery and ruthless murder was a first step that must be supported and continued. Let us set out to remove the barriers that divide us! Our dogmas are indeed different, but we have numerous points that bind us, and we can apply some of them in fighting the antagonism that history has placed between us. This is why we must magnify mercy, peace, and fraternity by extolling these virtues and living them and constantly exhorting people to practice them”. They promise to cooperate as Muslims in confronting any ideology of hate and in accepting complex-

38 *Lettre du Conseil Théologique Musulman de France à la Conférence des évêques de France*, published in the periodical *Oumma* and in electronic media (insight on 25 May 2017).

ity in situations where some people would prefer to impose simplicity. The laicism of France means that no citizen is above the law of the Republic and that he or she should not be maltreated because of religious convictions. "You know well that laicism emerged to terminate the ocean of injustices and centuries of wars that created grievances and defiled our country and its history. Laicism was never meant to be an invitation to fight religion or to prescribe the way French citizens should dress."

On 6 June 2017, the Secretary-General of *Religions for Peace* in New York, William Vendley distributed the English text of the Message of Dr. Mustafa Cerić on the occasion of the terror assaults in Manchester of 27 May and in London of 3 June 2017. The Reis emeritus addresses the Muslims of Europe, acknowledging that he feels confused while trying to explain what is going on in his faith community and around it. He then continues: "I know there are those who will assert that I believe that the bloody attacks against innocent civilians in Manchester and London are more important than the attacks in Palestine, Kabul, Mosul, Sa'ana and Mistrata. It is not more important, but it is certainly more dangerous for Muslims in Europe, a majority of whom had fled from Muslim majority countries to seek peace and security for their children in Europe. Now this peace and security that they have experienced so far is greatly threatened. After the attacks in Manchester and London, and before that in Paris, Berlin and Zurich, a great cloud of uncertainty hovers over Muslims in Europe. European Muslims must be aware of this. Therefore, the European Muslims must be loud and clear not only to condemn the violence 'in the name of Allah' but they must also take concrete steps against the abuse of Islam in any way."³⁹

Such terrorist attacks by Muslim extremists have caused an increase of Islamophobia among Christians in the Western democracies and contributed to hostile attitudes towards Muslims, who are perceived as a danger. Reliable research results on this topic have been published also in Bosnia and Herzegovina⁴⁰.

In this regard, Ayhan Kaya, a university professor in Constantinople who publishes his essays in German and English, synthesizes Islamophobic attitudes in the following statements:

39 E-mail letter of *Religions for Peace*, 8 June 2017.

40 Ahmet Alibašić-Muhamed Jusić (ed), *Islamofobija. Pojam, Pojava, Odgovor*, CNS Sarajevo 2014. The book consists of recent essays translated from English: the concept of islamophobia is presented in 10 of the essays, the actual phenomenon in 15, and the response in 13. See my review of the book in *Vrhbosnensia* 1/2015, 256-261.

1. Islam is seen as a monolithic block, static and unresponsive to change;
2. Islam is seen as 'other': it does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them and does not influence them;
3. Islam is seen as inferior to the West; it is seen as barbaric, irrational, primitive and sexist;
4. Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, and supportive of terrorism, and engaged in a 'clash of civilizations';
5. Islam is seen as a political ideology and is used for political or military advantage;
6. Criticisms made of the West by Islam are rejected out of hand;
7. Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society;
8. Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural or normal⁴¹.

In his conclusion, he reminds readers that in the 1960s and 70s Muslim immigrants were viewed as respected and welcome workers. Discontent and discrimination began with socio-economic and political changes in these countries and with the radicalization of some descendants of these immigrants after terror attacks by Al-Qaida. This produced stricter immigration processes. This scholar concludes: "Unemployment, poverty, exclusion, institutional discrimination and Islamophobia have become the main reasons for the Muslim-origin immigrants and their descendants to question the political and legal structure of their countries of settlement in a way that has made them hesitate to integrate into these countries. Instead they have tended to find refuge in the comfort of certain communities of sentiments, such as religious, ethnic, cultural, and fellowship communities. Such communities of sentiment provide immigrants and their children with a safe haven that protects them against uncertainty, insecurity, ambiguity, poverty, unemployment, and exclusion. In this sense, religiosity becomes one of the most resourceful tactics for migrants to come to terms with the existing structural problems."⁴²

41 Ayhan Kaya, Islamophobia, in: Jocelyn Cesari (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of European Islam*, Oxford University Press 2015, 739-769. At p. 752, Table 17.2 contains a list of insulting statements about Muslims in some European countries, p. 765-769 selected bibliography.

42 Ayhan Kaya, Islamophobia, 765.

Among essays and books on Islamophobia in English, Professor Kayan also lists *Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims. Addressing Islamophobia through Education*. This was prepared in 2011 by UNESCO, and the OSCE recommends it for use by teachers in education institutions in European countries. This 72-page document contains the following chapters: 1. Introduction, 2. Manifestations of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, 3. Methodological principles and approaches, 4. Strategies in schools, 5. Potential challenges, 6. Resources and information tools. In addition to 22 education experts, four government and nine nongovernmental organizations also worked on the document, which identifies six of the most common stereotypes of Muslims that might be manifested in schools (p. 26-27):

- They are all the same – regardless of their nationality, social or political outlook or whether they observe their beliefs and practice;
- *They are all motivated by religion* – in all circumstances religion decides their conduct, if they engage in violence it is because their religion advocates violence;
- *Totally “other”* - seen as having few if any interests, needs or values in common with persons without Muslim background;
- *Culturally and morally inferior* – and therefore prone to be irrational, violent, intolerant, maltreating women, contemptuous toward other worldviews, hostile to “the West”;
- *A threat* – engaged in a ‘clash of civilizations’ and therefore in countries where they are in the minority an ‘enemy within’, sympathizers of international terrorism;
- *Cooperation is impossible* – there is no possibility of active partnership between Muslims and ‘others’ working as equals on tasks that require dialogue and patient negotiation.

One Muslim intellectual living in a country with a majority Christian population is Tariq Ramadan. He supports a prudent adjustment to European secular structures and culture with the preservation of Muslim identity, but sees the need for space in which to practice Islam freely in such countries⁴³. Catho-

43 See Tariq Ramadan; Chapter “Social Commitment and Political Participation” in his book *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, Oxford University Press 2004, 144-173. His book *What I Believe*, Oxford University Press, 2009, has been translated into Bosnian: *Moje uvjerenje*, CNS Sarajevo 2011.

lic bishops and theologians in European countries are making efforts to remove from the minds and hearts of their own congregations an artificial fear of Muslims as fellow citizens in their own countries. From my personal contacts with Muslim theologians in Sarajevo and from reading their texts in Bosnian and in foreign languages I know that they encourage their fellow believers to persevere in moderate Sunni Islam and expect Christians in European countries to support their integration in the plural societies of Europe⁴⁴. Mainstream Christian leaders and theologians are helping their own flocks to do away with fear of Muslims living in their countries. The Dutch protestant theologian Bert de Ruiter gives a course on Islam to Christian students in which he proposes a *shared life* without mutual suspicion⁴⁵.

Since the Republic of Slovenia is a European Union member state, Muslims of Slovenia are European Muslims. But to practice their religious identity freely, they need the understanding and support of the civil and religious majority. Those of us who have experience of belonging to an ethnic or religious minority know that we are all prone to be arrogant where we are the majority while as a minority we feel safe only when the majority of our fellow citizens recognize our needs through their mentality and conduct.

CONCLUSION

Based on my experience of living in Sarajevo as a city with an absolute Muslim majority while striving to implement the guidelines of Vatican II on dialogue with present-day Muslims in my country and elsewhere in the world, my response to the question in the title of this presentation is positive. Yes, it is possible to defend rationally Christianity and Islam after we as adult believers accept our membership in a faith community, read our sacred books and receive sufficient instruction from imams, priests and religious teachers in our own faith. This requires that we cherish shared values as citizens in secular and plural societies and respect mutual differ-

44 In my preceding text I mentioned professors Adnan Silajdžić, Fikret Karčić and Enes Karić. Here I add Rešid Hafizović with his two works: *Muslimani u dijalogu s drugima i sa sobom*, El-Kalem, Sarajevo 2002 (Muslims in Dialogue with Others and themselves) and *Islam u kulturnom identitetu Europe*, Ibn Sina, Sarajevo 2018 (Islam in Cultural Identity of Europe).

45 See Bert De Ruiter, *Sharing Lives. Overcoming Our Fear of Islam*, OM Books, Linz, Austria 2010.

ences. This also supposes that we do study our own faith and are open to being informed about the faith of others. We should allow each other to present ourselves as we see ourselves. In the Catholic theology of interreligious dialogue the accent has been moved from religious truth *per se* to human persons maintaining their human dignity and fundamental rights even if they remain different in faith, culture and political conviction.

NEW IMPULSE TO MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN COOPERATION IN THE OPEN LETTER OF 138 MUSLIM LEADERS¹

When I was asked in early December to give a guest conference to students of this Faculty I proposed this theme because the *Open Letter* of 138 Muslim leaders of October 13, 2007 to Christian leaders did not draw sufficient attention in religious and secular media of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The copyright holder of this Letter is The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Amman, Jordan and it is available at www.acommonword.com. The Letter was occasioned by collective reflection of Muslim leaders and scholars regarding the quotation of Pope Benedict XVI in his speech at Regensburg on September 12, 2006 on enforced conversions to Islam.

THE POPE'S DISPUTED QUOTATION AND CREATIVE REACTION OF MUSLIM LEADERS

During his second visit to Germany, on September 12, 2006 Pope Benedict gave his public lecture at the University of Regensburg, where he was professor of dogmatic theology during his academic career. He entitled his speech: "Faith, Reason and the University – Memoirs and Reflections". Illustrating his thought on the need for mutual openness of human reason and faith he quoted 1391 statement of the Byzantine emperor and author Manuel II Paleologus that Muhammad had commanded "to spread by sward the faith

1 A Lecture at the International University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, December 29, 2008.

he preached” and “not acting reasonably would be contrary to God’s nature”². In his later explanation the Pope insisted that this was only a quotation from the fourteenth century author, not his personal opinion. Electronic and written media soon spread the news without depicting the theme and the context of Pope’s speech. This act evoked vehement reactions of Muslims all over the world. Here in Sarajevo, rector dr. Mustafa Cerić and dean of the Faculty for Muslim sciences dr. Enes Karić, made prudent comments pointing out that Bosnian Muslims have deliberately accepted Islam, suffered for their faith under communist regime and they reject such an insinuation about Muhammad. But it would not be prudent to organize violent protests in BH because of this incident.

On September 25, 2006 Pope Benedict invited ambassadors of Muslim countries in Rome and representatives of Muslim communities in Italy wishing to strengthen the bonds of friendship and solidarity between the Holy See and Muslim communities throughout the world. In his address he expressed his respect for Muslims in the words of the Second Vatican Council stating that Muslims “worship the one God, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to humanity and to whose decrees, even the hidden ones, they seek to submit themselves wholeheartedly”. He went on pointing out that humanity is in great need of an authentic dialogue between religions and cultures, in a spirit of faithful cooperation, to overcome all the tensions together: “Faithful to the teachings of their own religious traditions, Christians and Muslims must learn to work together, as indeed they already do in many undertakings, in order to guard against all forms of intolerance and to oppose all manifestations of violence; as for us, religious authorities and political leaders we must guide them in this direction... The lessons of the past must therefore help us to seek paths of reconciliation, in order to live with respect for the identity and freedom of each individual, with a view to fruitful cooperation in the service of all humanity”³. Dialogue is not endless conversation for the sake of enjoying each other’s company. It must gradually and realistically turn into concrete actions of cooperation for the common good.

After the negative reactions to Pope’s speech in Regensburg gradually calmed down, 38 Muslim leaders wrote in October 2006 their Open Letter to Pope Benedict politely drawing his attention to the points in his speech

2 Pope Benedict spoke in German, his native language. I quote here the official Vatican translation into English which is available at the Vatican web site.

3 He spoke in English; the speech available on the Vatican web site.

they considered wrong but also humbly accepting some weaknesses which took place in long history of the countries with majority Muslim population⁴. They rejected Pope's explanation of historic background for the Qur'an's saying: "There is no compulsion in religion" (2,256). They also questioned the quotation from Ibn Hazm (died in 1069) who was only a marginal figure in the Islamic theological tradition. They are critical of the expression "holy war" which does not exist in the Qur'an and they bring out Islamic rules of a just war. They firmly state: "The command *There is no compulsion in religion* means now what it meant then. The mere fact of a person being non-Muslim has never been a legitimate *casus belli* in Islamic law or belief. As with the rules of war, history shows that some Muslims have violated Islamic tenets concerning forced conversions and the treatment of other religious communities, but history also shows that these are by far the exception that proves the rule. We emphatically agree that forcing others to believe – if such a thing be truly possible at all – is not pleasing to God and that God is not pleased by blood" (p. 3). In my experience of inter-religious encounters and writings, we all tend to minimize the past failures of our fellow believers and compare our ideal prescriptions with concrete abuses of others.

These 38 Muslim scholars welcomed Pope's clarifications of his statements in Regensburg reminding that Christians and Muslims make up 55% of the world's population and therefore they should contribute to a meaningful peace around the world: "We share your desire for frank and sincere dialogue, and recognize its importance in an increasingly interconnected world. Upon this sincere and frank dialogue we hope to continue to build peaceful and friendly relationships based upon mutual respect, justice and what is common in essence in our shared Abrahamic tradition, particularly the two greatest commandments in Mark 12:29-31" (p. 4). They meant the love of God and the love of neighbor, two commandments declared by Jesus as most important and appreciated by followers of Judaism and Islam. Among the signatories of this document are Dr. Mustafa Cerić as grand mufti and Head of Ulema of BH, Dr. Nedžad Grabus as grand mufti of Slovenia, Mag. Ševko Omerbašić as grand mufti of Croatia and Muamar Zukorlić as mufti of Sandžak. Other signatories come from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Yemen, USA, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Russia, Pakistan, United Kingdom etc.

4 I got the English text of it through the kind service of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious dialogue on December 17, 2008. The document comprises four pages of the text and two more pages with names and functions of the signatories.

During his visit to Turkey, on November 28, 2006 Pope Benedict received the diplomatic corps at the Apostolic Nunciature in Ankara. He encouraged the diplomats to become architects of understanding among peoples, of international security and of peace among nations. He called Turkey “a crossroads of cultures and religions” and expressed his conviction that active presence of religions is a source of progress and enrichment for all: “Recognition of the positive role of religions within the fabric of society can and must impel us to explore more deeply their knowledge of man and to respect his dignity, by placing him at the center of political, economic, cultural and social activity. Our world must come to realize that all peoples are linked by profound solidarity with one another, and they must be encouraged to assert their historical and cultural differences not for the sake of confrontation, but in order to foster mutual respect”⁵. He concluded that the Catholic Church seeks to cooperate with believers and leaders of all nations, and especially with Muslims so that we might together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values.

“OUR COMMON FUTURE IS AT STAKE”

Their open letter of October 13, 2008, 138 Muslim leaders and theologians have entitled *A Common Word between Us and You*. This is a quotation from Qur’an 3:64: “Say: O People of Scripture! Come to a common word between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner to Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him)”. People of Scripture are Jews and Christians as followers of earlier revelation. Regardless of polemics against Christians who attribute divinity to Jesus contained in this verse⁶, the signatories of the Open Letter and other Muslim theologians see in it the foundation for shared values in three monotheistic religions. In their introductory summary the signatories explain the expression “we shall ascribe no partner unto Him” as shared belief into God’s unity and “worship non but God” as

5 Pope Benedict spoke in French. I quote the official Vatican translation into English available at the Vatican web site.

6 Cf. *The Message of the Qur’an* translated and explained by Muhammad Asad, Gibraltar 1984, 76-77.

total submission to God. They also see here the source of the love of God as greatest commandment and of the love of neighbor as next to it “because justice and freedom of religion are a crucial part of the love of neighbor”. In its electronic form, the document comprises twenty six-pages: fourteen pages of main text, four pages of explanatory notes and eight pages of names and functions of the signatories. It is divided into three sections:

- (I) Love of God in Islam and in the Bible as understood by Muslim readers;
- (II) Love of the neighbor in Islam and in the Bible;
- (III) Come to a Common Word between Us and You (where Muslims and Christians are encouraged to cooperate in building a just peace, because “our common future is at stake”).

Leaving to experts on both sides a comprehensive theological exploration of this document, I would like to draw attention of a general public to some attractive sections and aspects of it. First of all, in the introductory formula of their document the signatories say: “In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. On the Occasion of the *Eid al-Fitr al/Mubarak* 1428 A.H./ October 13 2007 C. E., and one year anniversary of the Open Letter of 38 Muslim Scholars to H. H. Pope Benedict XVI”. By dating it in this way, the signatories want Pope Benedict and other 27 Christian leaders listed by name and function in their respective Churches to connect this document with the 2006 Open letter signed by 38 Muslim scholars. Therefore, this is a continuation of creative thinking and acting after the speech of Pope Benedict in Regensburg.

First section of the document is preceded by the Qur’an quotation which we participants of inter-religious conferences often hear: “Call unto the way of the Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and contend with them in the fairest way. Lo! Thy Lord is Best Aware⁷ of those who go aright” (16:125). Similarly, Qur’an in 29:46 requests Muslims not to argue “with followers of other revelation otherwise than in the most kindly manner”. In Muslim view, this is consequent application of the categorical injunction, “There shall be no coercion in matters of faith” (2:256).

Beside on numerous verses in the Qur’an, in Muslim belief the commandment to love God is based on the hadith or saying of the Prophet Muhammad: “There is no god but God, He Alone, He hath no associate, His is the sovereignty and His is the praise and He hath power over all things”.

7 I use the orthography of the signatories. M. Asad: *Op. cit*, 416 has slightly different translation and orthography here.

Love of God is personal acceptance of God's supreme authority, gratefulness of creatures to their Creator for his bounties, and humble trust in Him. The signatories explain that *Fatihah*, which Muslims recite 17 times daily in their canonical prayers, reminds them "of the praise and gratitude due to God for his Attributes of Infinite Goodness and All-Mercifulness, not merely for His Goodness and Mercy to us in this life but ultimately, on the Day of Judgment when it matters the most and when we hope to be forgiven for our sins" (p. 5). Therefore, love of God is healthy, religious fear of God as just and supreme Judge. Here the signatories quote Qur'an 2:194-5; 2,196; 9:3; 38-39 and 64:16. In their note No. 9, they quote the Prophet's hadith about proper fear of God as the beginning of believer's wisdom and point to nearly same saying in Jewish-Christian Bible (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10). The signatories quote 3:31: "Say (O Muhammad to mankind): If ye love God, follow me; God will love you and forgive your sin, God is Forgiving, Merciful". They conclude that "love of God in Islam is thus part of complete and total devotion to God; it is not mere fleeting, partial emotion. The call to be totally devoted and attached to God heart and soul, far from being a call for a mere emotion or for a mood, is in fact and injunction requiring all-embracing, constant and active love of God" (p. 6-7).

In showing that they know Biblical roots of love commandment, the authors quote Historical Creed of Jews from the Book of Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (*Shema Israel*⁸). Since the Lord is God alone, believers must love him "with all their heart, all their soul and all their strength". This is not only affirmation of monotheism but of exclusive devotion to God. Gradually, the *Shema Israel* became principal Jewish confession of faith. As in Old Testament vassal treaties, the verb *ʾahab* –love carries the political connotation of covenant fidelity and so involves the obligation to keep all God's commandments⁹. In the time of Jesus' ministry, a common topic on the greatest of 613 precepts of the Old Testament law distinguished Jewish theologians. When asked what would be the greatest commandment in his view, Jesus quoted two Old Testament versions of the commandments on love of God and of neighbor (Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18) and equalized the love of neighbor with the love of God. The signatories quote Matthew's and Mark's version of Jesus' answer (Mt 22:34-40; Mk 12:28-31). Then they rightly conclude: "What all these versions have thus

8 The signatories quote only *Shema*, probably purposely avoiding *Israel* because of political tensions between Palestinians and the State of Israel.

9 Cf. *Jeruzalemska Biblija*, KS, Zagreb 1994, 192. J. Blenkinsopp: "Deuteronomy", *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Geoffrey Chapman, London 1992, 99.

in common – despite the language differences between the Hebrew Old Testament, the original words of Jesus Christ in Aramaic, and the actual Greek of the New Testament - is the command to love God fully with one's heart and soul and to be fully devoted to Him. This is First and greatest Commandment for human beings" (p. 9).

In opening their second part, the signatories quote the hadith of the Prophet: "None of you has faith until you love for your neighbor what you love for yourself". This is ethical golden rule which exists in Hebrew Bible, Christian New Testament, in the works of ancient Greek and Roman writers and in most of great religions¹⁰. The signatories explain: "Love of the neighbor is an essential and integral part of faith in God and love of God because in Islam without love of the neighbor there is no true faith in God and no righteousness" (p. 9). Empathy and sympathy for the neighbor must be accompanied by generosity and self-sacrifice. Here they also quote Qur'an 2:177 where it is pointed out that "truly pious is he who believes in God... and spends his ... substance upon his near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy and the wayfarer and beggars"¹¹. Then they quote 3:92 where "the Qur'an reminds the believers that their faith in God cannot be considered complete unless it makes them conscious of the material needs of their fellow-beings"¹².

In dealing with Jesus' teaching that on the love of God and love of neighbor "hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Mt 22:38-44) the signatories rightly notice that Jesus quotes Old Testament book of Leviticus (19:17-18) and explain: "Thus the Second Commandment, like the First Commandment, demands generosity and self-sacrifice" (p. 10).

I find most attractive third section of the Open Letter, entitled "Come to a common Word between Us and You" (p. 11-14). Here the signatories are convinced that "the Unity of God, love of Him, and love of neighbor form a common ground upon which Islam and Christianity (and Judaism) are founded" (p. 11). This fundamental teaching of Moses and Jesus was confirmed by the Prophet Muhammad who felt obliged to transfer what was revealed to him. He was "a plain warner" (Q 41:43; 46:9). Here the signatories quote again Q 3:64 explaining that "worshipping none but God" means total devotion to God as first and greatest commandment. In

10 Cf. M. Zovkić: "Zlatno pravilo u kanonskim evanđeljima (Mt 7,12; Lk 6,31)", M. Vugdelića (prirednik), *Govor na gori (Mt 5-7)*, Služba Božja, Split 2004, 291-318.

11 Translation of M. Asad, *Op. cit.*, 36. He explains that "wayfarer" (lit. "son of the road") in broader sense is "a person who, for any reason whatsoever, is unable to return home either temporarily or permanently, for instance, a political exile or refugee".

12 M. Asad: *Op. cit.*, 81.

the prohibition of compulsion in religion (Q 2:256) they see the commandment to love the neighbor “of which justice and freedom of religion are a crucial part” (p. 12). They also quote here Mark’s version of Jesus’ answer the question which is the first of all commandments: “The Lord our God is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mk 12:29-31). In his response Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4-5 which was the first of the three texts recited twice daily by pious Jews (other two: Deut 11:13/21; Num 15:37-41). In this text, and in Mark’s quotation, the command to love God flows from His oneness and uniqueness. The four nouns (heart, soul, mind, strength) are a way of stressing that the whole person should love God with all available resources. Although he was only asked for one commandment, Jesus added a second which was a quotation from Lev 19:18. In Mark’s version there is no attempt at equation of the two commandments or joining them (as in Mt 22:34-40 and Lk 10:25-28). The two commandments are connected by the word ‘love’ and their juxtaposition by Jesus was an original move¹³. Muslim partners like Mark’s version of the Great Commandment because it insists on God’s unity and draws the obligation of moral conduct from one’s faith in God.

In the spirit of mutual trust and cooperation the signatories point out: “As Muslims, we say to Christians that we are not against them and that Islam is not against them - so long as they do not wage war against Muslims on account of their religion, oppress them and drive them out of their homes” (p. 12, in accordance with Q 60:8 and 3:113-115). Quoting the saying of Jesus “He who is not against us is on our side” (Mk 9:40; Lk 9:50)¹⁴ they say: “We therefore invite Christians to consider Muslims not against them and thus with them, in accordance with Jesus Christ’s words here. Finally, as Muslims, and in obedience to the Holy Qur’an, we ask Christians to come together with us on the common essentials of our two

13 D. J. Harrington: “The Gospel according to Mark”, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 622.

14 They also quote the non-ecumenical saying of Mt 12:30 “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters abroad” which contrasts with the lenient view of Mark and Luke. They quote the commentary of the Blessed Theophylact (1055-1108), Orthodox Archbishop of Ohrid and Bulgaria (1090-1108), who explained this hard saying as referring to demons. There are other explanations: “The accusation of scattering does fit the situation. Jesus is the shepherd of God’s people (2:6), his mission is to lost sheep of Israel (15:24); the Pharisees, who oppose him, are guilty of scattering the sheep” - *The Catholic Study Bible - The New American Bible*, Donald Senior and John Collins editors, Oxford University Press, New York 2006, 1273.

religions... Let this common ground be the basis of all future interfaith dialogue between us, for our common ground is that on which hangs all the Law and the Prophets” (p. 13).

The reason for new era of dialogue is because Muslims and Christians together make up more than 55% of world’s population, “making the relationship between these two religious communities the most important factor in contributing to meaningful peace around the world. If Muslims and Christians are not at peace, the world cannot be at peace. With the terrible weaponry of the modern world; with Muslims and Christians intertwined everywhere as never before, no side can unilaterally win a conflict between more than half of the world’s inhabitants. Thus our common future is at stake. The very survival of the world itself is perhaps at stake”. This formulation reflects the conviction of believing monotheistic individuals and groups in the modern world that we can and should *together* contribute toward building a just and stable peace. We depend on each other and none of us can enjoy his or her peace and prosperity without being influenced by scarcity or injustice suffered by the neighbor.

In concluding passage, the signatories reject violence as instrument for building a just peace. They quote Q 16:90 where God enjoins justice, good deeds and generosity towards fellow humans¹⁵ and Mt 5:9 where Jesus proclaims God’s adoptive sons and daughters all nonviolent peacemakers¹⁶.

CATHOLIC-MUSLIM FORUM AS POSITIVE RESPONSE OF CATHOLIC CHURCH

Pope Benedict entrusted his Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone and his collaborators in the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious dialogue to look for positive response to open letters of 38 and 138 Muslim leaders.

15 Actually, the Qur’an text uses the expression “giving to kinsfolk”; M. Asad, *Op. cit.*, 409 translates this verse: “Behold, God enjoins justice, and the doing of good, and generosity towards [one’s] fellow-men” and explains: “Lit., the giving to [one’s] kinsfolk (*dhu l-qurbā*). The latter term usually denotes ‘relatives’, either by blood or by marriage; but since it occurs here in the context of a comprehensive ethical exhortation, it obviously alludes to man’s “kinsfolk” in the widest sense of the term, namely to his ‘fellow-men’”.

16 The signatories quote only first part of Jesus saying: “Blessed are the peacemakers” omitting “because they will be called children of God”, probably because of sharpest prohibition to associate anyone with God. In very quoting the first part they are aware that this saying can be rightly explained and used in Muslim-Christian dialogue.

They had their rich experience of ten seminars with World Muslim Call Society, centered in Tripoli, Libya¹⁷. After careful and numerous contacts, 29 experts from each side attended the First Seminar of Catholic-Muslim Forum in Rome, November 4 to November 6, 2008. The theme of the seminar was: "Love of God, Love of Neighbor: The Dignity of the Human Person and Mutual Respect". In their concluding Declaration they defined the respective concepts in Christianity and in Islam and they committed themselves:

- to work in preservation of human life as most precious gift of God;
- to support civil legislation that assures equal rights and full citizenship; to jointly ensure that human dignity and respect are extended on an equal basis to both men and women;
- to educate their congregations in respecting full practice of religious freedom of minorities;
- to bear witness to the transcendental dimension of life, through a spirituality nourished by prayer, in a world which is becoming more and more secularized and materialistic;
- to enable each religion to make its indispensable contribution to the good of society, especially in service of the most needy;
- to recognize that plurality of cultures, civilizations, languages and peoples is a source of richness and should never become a cause of tension and conflict;
- to provide a sound education in human, civic, religious and moral values for their respective congregations;
- Catholics and Muslims are called to renounce any oppression, aggressive violence and terrorism and uphold the principle of justice for all;
- Religious believers of all denominations should cooperate with other people of good will to alleviate the suffering of the hungry, and to eliminate the causes of poverty;
- Young people should be well formed in their own religious traditions and informed about other cultures and religions, that they might take active part in multicultural and multi-religious societies.

17 The first seminar was organized in Tripoli, February 1-6, 1976 and dr. Ahmed Smajlović leader of Muslims in BH, Croatia and Slovenia, was among the invited delegates of Muslims in Yugoslavia. The eleventh seminar took place in Rome, December 15-17, 2008 and the theme was *Responsibilities of Religious Leaders, especially in Times of Crisis*. Each delegation had twelve members. Cf. my short presentation "Katoličko-muslimanski susret o odgovornosti vjerskih poglavara u vremenu krize", *Katolički Tjednik* 2008, No. 52-53 (December 28, 2008), p. 33.

They decided to establish a permanent Catholic-Muslim Committee which would coordinate responses to conflicts and other emergency situations. Their next meeting will take place in two years time in a country with Muslim majority population. During the audience with Pope Benedict on November 6, professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr of Islamic Studies at the George Washington University in USA pointed out in his speech: "We cannot claim that violence is the monopoly of only one religion... We should join together in the battle against the desacralizing and anti-religious forces of the modern world, and joining effort should bring us closer together. Secularism should certainly not be a source for the creation of further distance". Dr. Mustafa Cerić emphasized that human heart is capable of war and peace, of hate and love, of fear and hope and that "we children of Adam should repent for our sins like the father Adam in humility and submission to Almighty God for the sake of the birth of new seasons of human life... I have come here to join with you in prayer for truth, peace and justice and reconciliation of our common land of Europe. We will not forget your predecessor John Paul II when he repeatedly said: 'You are not alone. We are with you in our prayers!'"

Pope Benedict in his address directly mentioned the Open Letter of 138 Muslim leaders and told that he was well aware of differences between Islam and Christianity, but "we can and must be worshippers of the one God who created us and is concerned about each person in every corner of the world. Together we must show, by our mutual respect and solidarity, that we consider ourselves members of one family: the family that God has loved and gathered together from creation of the world to the end of human history". He quoted the "Golden Rule" in Muslim tradition which enables Christians and Muslims to promote genuine respect of human person and fundamental human rights, although our respective theologies justify this in different ways. He concluded: "Let us resolve to overcome past prejudices and to correct often distorted images of the other which even today can create difficulties in our relations; let us work with one another to educate all people, especially the young, to build a common future"¹⁸.

In conclusion, I see in the Open Letters of 38 and 138 Muslim leaders to Pope Benedict and other Christian leaders a new impulse to Muslim-Christian dialogue which should go further and deeper from friendly

18 Pope Benedict's Address of November 6, 2008 is available at the web site of the Vatican. The Final Declaration of the Seminar and two other speeches here quoted at the web site www.acommonword.com

encounters. This is a program for cooperation of believing citizens of our pluralistic world in view of our common future and for the sake of our common good. Since the leader of Muslims in BH is active signatory of these letters, this can and should bring more good will and mutual trust in cooperation of Muslims and Christians for the common good of our country and of our pluralistic society. One of effects of this initiative was the Conference of 45 Muslims and Christians as an event within the European Year of intercultural Dialogue and the 60th anniversary of UN Declaration on Human Rights, from October 20th to October 23rd, 2008, in Mechelen, Belgium. In their Final Statement they called for more common actions: "Dialogue should be among ourselves as Muslims and Christians and also with other major faiths and humanist and life stance traditions. Where dialogue leads to action this may also include NGOs, Councils of Faiths, and other community organizations. We learn to heal the wounds of division from the past conflicts, in order to become truly ambassadors of reconciliation. To do this we should know each other"¹⁹. This is what we need in this country.

19 I quote the Statement in English which its original version and it is available at the web sites of CEC, CCEE and of interfaith organizations.

ACTIVE SUPPORT OF POPE FRANCIS FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION¹

Jorge Mario Bergoglio was born in 1936 into a Catholic family of Italian immigrants in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he grew up. In March 1958 he joined the Society of Jesus, a religious congregation in the Catholic Church. He was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1969 and was assigned to a teaching ministry in schools run by the Argentinian Jesuits. In 1973 he was named provincial superior of the Argentina Jesuit province; after a period in office he turned again to the teaching ministry. In June 1992 he was named auxiliary bishop in Buenos Aires and in February 1998 he became Archbishop of Buenos Aires. In February 2001 Pope John Paul II elevated him to the College of Cardinals, the body that elects the new pope. From 2005 to 2011 he served as President of the Bishops' Conference of Argentina. After Pope John Paul II's death, in April 2005, Cardinal Bergoglio reportedly received the second-highest number of votes in the 2005 papal election, when Cardinal Ratzinger was elected, taking the name of Pope Benedict XVI.

After Benedict XVI resigned for health reasons on 28 February 2013, in the papal election of 13 March 2013 Cardinal Bergoglio was elected and took the name Pope Francis, after St. Francis of Assisi, the thirteenth-century founder of the Franciscan order, known for his simplicity, his love of the poor and his advocacy of Church reform.

1 Presentation at a Symposium organized by the Iranian Cultural Center, Sarajevo, June 10-11, 2014.

FOLLOWING THE PATH OF VATICAN II AND HIS IMMEDIATE PREDECESSORS

Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*, published in August 1964 between the second and third sessions of Vatican II, inaugurated the era and the agenda of dialogue: the Church should follow the path of dialogue with herself, with the modern world and with other faith communities. From this pontifical document the concept of dialogue entered the documents of Vatican II, especially where the Catholic magisterium sought to address issues of religious liberty in democratic and pluralist societies. Before Vatican II, the Catholic magisterium and Catholic theologians approached this question from the point of religious truth and error: truth had to be pursued and protected by the civil authorities, while error had to be tolerated in order to avoid greater evils. In the Council, discussions switched from truth and error to human persons and their fundamental rights. All human beings have a human right to choose their religious affiliation in accordance with their conscience, because remaining in their respective faith community is an integral part of their human rights (cf. J. W. O'Malley, 199-246). This attitude has been reflected in the Declaration on Religious Liberty (DH), in the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (NAE) and in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern world (GS). "The Council declares that the right to religious freedom is based on the very dignity of the human person as known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom must be given such recognition in the constitutional order of society as will make it a civil right... The freedom or immunity from coercion in religious matters which is the right of individuals must also be accorded to men when they act in community. Religious communities are a requirement of the nature of man and of religion itself." (DH 2.4)

Based on a new understanding of Christian revelation and on an acceptance of the standards of the UN and of international law, the Council opened a new era of relations with Muslims: "Muslims highly esteem an upright life and worship God, especially by the way of prayer, alms-deeds and fasting. Over centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values." (NAE 3) This new

Catholic doctrine opened the way to dialogue and cooperation which is still going on, depending on the goodwill of concrete partners.

In 1964 Pope Paul VI instituted a special department of the Roman Curia for relations with people of other religions, named the "Secretariat for Non-Christians". In 1988 Pope John Paul II changed its name to the "Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue" (PCID) and broadened its mission. Its current president is the French Cardinal, Jean Louis Tauran. Its responsibilities are:

- To promote mutual understanding, respect and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of other religious traditions;
- to encourage the study of religions;
- to promote the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue.

The PCID has prepared and published a number of documents designed to help Catholics to promote interreligious respect and cooperation, and it organizes seminars and symposia with scholars of other faith affiliations on selected themes. I would remind you briefly of the initiative of Muslim leaders and scholars in their open letter of 2007 *A Common Word between Us and You*, addressed to Pope Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders and scholars. In it they proposed dialogue based on shared love of God and of fellow human beings as a common instrument for building peace and justice in our world. "Christianity and Islam are the largest and second largest religions in the world and in history. Christians and Muslims reportedly make up over a third and over a fifth of humanity respectively. Together they make up more than 55% of the world's population, making the relationship between these two religious communities the most important factor in contributing to meaningful peace around the world. If Muslims and Christians are not at peace, the world cannot be at peace... Thus our common future is at stake" (*A Common Word*, 2009, 34-35). Pope Benedict XVI entrusted the PCID with the important task of responding to this initiative and as part of this response the First Seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum was organized in Rome on 4-6 November 2008, in which the Grand Mufti of Bosnia, Dr. Mustafa Cerić, took an active part. The participants adopted a Declaration in which they committed themselves to work on respect for human dignity and called upon the privileged of the world to consider the plight of those afflicted most severely by the current crisis in food production and distribution, and asked all religious believers to work together to alleviate the suffering of the hungry, and to eliminate its causes (No. 15 of the Declaration; full text in *A Common Word*, 247-252).

On 19 May 2014 Pope Francis sent a public letter to Cardinal Jean Louis Tauran as President of the PCID. In this document the Pope expresses his support for the activities of this Pontifical Council on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary and recalls that “the Catholic Church is conscious of the importance of promoting friendship and respect between men and women of different religious traditions. Like Christ on the way to Emmaus, the Church wishes to be close and to accompany every man and woman. Such a readiness to walk together is much more necessary in this day and age, marked by profound and never-before-known interactions between diverse people and cultures. In this context, the Church will be ever more committed to travel along the path of dialogue and intensify the already fruitful cooperation with all those who, belonging to different religious traditions, share her intention to build relations of friendship and share in the many initiatives to do with dialogue.” In this letter Pope Francis reconfirmed his decisive resolution to walk in the way of dialogue, the path of Vatican II and of his immediate predecessors.

DIALOGUE WITH MUSLIMS IN THE POPE’S EXHORTATION EVANGELII GAUDIUM

On 23 November 2013 Pope Francis published his programmatic document, the Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium – The Joy of the Gospel*. In it the Pope presents his view of the mission of the Catholic Church to fellow bishops, priests, deacons, men and women of consecrated life and to lay faithful in the modern world. Besides the introduction (numbers 1-18), the document contains five chapters:

- I. The Church’s missionary transformation;
- II. Amid the crisis of communal commitment;
- III. The proclamation of the Gospel;
- IV. The social dimension of evangelization;
- V. Spirit-filled evangelizers.

In the fourth chapter, having in mind the public space of Christian pastoral activity, the Pope binds the confession of the faith and commitment to society, especially to the poor throughout the world. In this chapter he treats four fields of the Church’s activity:

- Communal and societal repercussions of the kerygma (numbers 177-185);
- The inclusion of the poor in society (186-216);
- The common good and peace in society (217-237);
- Social dialogue and contribution to peace (238-258).

Pope Francis depicts his vision of Christian mission in a pluralistic world on the basis of his theological education and pastoral experience in South America. This is why the original of the document is in Spanish, his native language. Apart from Spanish, official translations into Croatian, Dutch, French, English, German, Italian, Latin, Polish and Portuguese are available at the Vatican website. The German Jesuit priest Felix Körner is a Christian expert on religions, especially Islam, and he teaches religions at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. In his presentation of this document he sees as its key concepts “Verständins – understanding” and “Offenheit – openness”. He points out that the section on interreligious dialogue, including Islam, should be viewed in the context of the whole section on social dialogue and contribution to peace. Here is the section on interreligious dialogue:

250. An attitude of openness in truth and in love must characterize the dialogue with the followers of non-Christian religions, in spite of various obstacles and difficulties, especially forms of fundamentalism on both sides. Interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world, and so it is a duty for Christians as well as other religious communities. This dialogue is in the first place a conversation about human existence or simply, as the bishops of India have put it, a matter of “being open to them, sharing their joys and sorrows”. In this way we learn to accept others and their different ways of living, thinking and speaking. We can then join one another in taking up the duty of serving justice and peace, which should become a basic principle of all our exchanges. A dialogue which seeks social peace and justice is in itself, beyond all merely practical considerations, an ethical commitment which brings about a new social situation. Efforts made in dealing with a specific theme can become a process in which, by mutual listening, both parts can be purified and enriched. These efforts, therefore, can also express love for truth.

251. In this dialogue, ever friendly and sincere, attention must always be paid to the essential bond between dialogue and proclamation, which leads the Church to maintain and intensify her relationship

with non-Christians. A facile syncretism would ultimately be a totalitarian gesture on the part of those who would ignore greater values of which they are not the masters. True openness involves remaining steadfast in one's deepest convictions, clear and joyful in one's own identity, while at the same time being "open to understanding those of the other party" and "knowing that dialogue can enrich each side". What is not helpful is a diplomatic openness which says "yes" to everything in order to avoid problems, for this would be a way of deceiving others and denying them the good which we have been given to share generously with others. Evangelization and interreligious dialogue, far from being opposed, mutually support and nourish one another.

252. Our relationship with the followers of Islam has taken on great importance, since they are now significantly present in many traditionally Christian countries, where they can freely worship and become fully a part of society. We must never forget that they "profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, who will judge humanity on the last day". The sacred writings of Islam have retained some Christian teachings; Jesus and Mary receive profound veneration and it is admirable to see how Muslims both young and old, men and women, make time for daily prayer and faithfully take part in religious services. Many of them also have a deep conviction that their life, in its entirety, is from God and for God. They also acknowledge the need to respond to God with an ethical commitment and with mercy towards those most in need.

253. In order to sustain dialogue with Islam, suitable training is essential for all involved, not only so that they can be solidly and joyfully grounded in their own identity, but so that they can also acknowledge the values of others, appreciate the concerns underlying their demands and shed light on shared beliefs. We Christians should embrace with affection and respect Muslim immigrants to our countries in the same way that we hope and ask to be received and respected in countries of Islamic tradition. I ask and I humbly entreat those countries to grant Christians freedom to worship and to practice their faith, in light of the freedom which followers of Islam enjoy in Western countries! Faced with disconcerting episodes of violent fundamentalism, our respect for true followers of Islam should lead us to avoid hateful generalisations, for authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence.

254. Non-Christians, by God's gracious initiative, when they are faithful to their own consciences, can live "justified by the grace of God", and thus be "associated to the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ". But due to the sacramental dimension of sanctifying grace, God's working in them tends to produce signs and rites, sacred expressions which in turn bring others to a communitarian experience of journeying towards God. While these lack the meaning and efficacy of the sacraments instituted by Christ, they can be channels which the Holy Spirit raises up in order to liberate non-Christians from atheistic immanence or from purely individual religious experiences. The same Spirit everywhere brings forth various forms of practical wisdom which help people to bear suffering and to live in greater peace and harmony. As Christians, we can also benefit from these treasures built up over many centuries, which can help us better to live our own beliefs.

In footnotes 194 to 201 of the official edition, Pope Francis cites the documents of Vatican II and of his predecessors, pointing out that he is developing already promulgated and accepted Catholic conviction on the need for interreligious dialogue. In numbers 252 and 253 he gives a fresh impulse to dialogue with Muslims. He expresses his admiration for Muslim believers who are deeply convinced that their life is from God and for God and who feel the need to respond to God with an ethical commitment towards the poor and the needy. In his support for dialogue and cooperation he stresses that the partners should be fully grounded in their own identity and should therefore have special training on both sides. He urges Christians as majority inhabitants of western countries to respect and assist immigrant Muslims in their countries "in the same way we expect and we hope and ask (for Christians) to be received and respected in countries of Islamic traditions". This is the principle of *positive reciprocity* which was introduced by Pope John Paul II. Bosnian Muslim theologian Enes Karić in his April 2014 interview in *Diwan*, a religious magazine for Bosnian Muslims in the Diaspora, acknowledged that Muslim minorities in European countries enjoy greater religious freedom and civil protection than Christian minorities in Muslim countries. Pope Francis is convinced that the majority of Muslims are tolerant and this "should lead us to avoid generalisations, for authentic Islam and a proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence."

ENCOUNTERS WITH MUSLIM LEADERS DURING THE VISIT TO JORDAN AND PALESTINE IN MAY 2014

Pope Francis, together with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, wanted to commemorate in the Holy Land the fiftieth anniversary of the encounter of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras. This is why he made his pilgrimage to Jordan, Israel and Palestine, from May 24 to May 26 this year. I participated in organizing the visit of Pope John Paul II to Sarajevo in April 1997 and I know that such papal journeys must be carefully planned because those whom the Pope would like to meet are entitled to be asked to grant their formal consent.

At Amman Airport on May 24, the Pope was welcomed by Prince Ghazi bin Muhammed on behalf of King Abdullah II of Jordan. In his address to the Jordanian authorities in the Royal Palace the Pope said:

“I thank God for granting me this opportunity to visit the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the footsteps of my predecessors Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. I am grateful to His Majesty King Abdullah II for his warm words of welcome, as I recall with pleasure our recent meeting in the Vatican...

I take this opportunity to reiterate my profound esteem for the Muslim community and appreciation for the leadership of His Majesty the King in promoting better understanding of the virtues taught by Islam and a climate of serene coexistence between the faithful of the different religions. I am grateful that Jordan has supported a number of important initiatives aimed at advancing interreligious dialogue and understanding between Jews, Christians and Muslims. I think in particular of the Amman Message and the support given within the United Nations Organization to the annual celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week.

I would also like to offer an affectionate greeting to the Christian communities present in this country since apostolic times, contributing to the common good of the society of which they are fully a part. Although Christians today are numerically a minority, theirs is a significant and valued presence in the fields of education and health care, thanks to their schools and hospitals. They are able to profess their faith peacefully, in a climate of respect for religious freedom. Religious freedom is in fact a fundamental human right and I cannot fail to express my hope that it will be upheld throughout the Middle East and the entire world.”

The Amman Message mentioned by the Pope is the open letter to Christian leaders from Muslim leaders and scholars in 2007. Jordan is also known for its protection of Christians as a religious minority in the country. Jordanian Prince El Hassan bin Talal, in his book on Christians in the Arab countries and in his interreligious presentations, has expressed regret over the fact that Christians are moving out or are being expelled from Muslim countries in the Middle East.

On May 25, Pope Francis was taken by helicopter to Palestine where he was received by President Mahmoud Abbas and met Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah at Ramallah. Meeting with the Palestinian authorities on May 25, Pope Francis deplored the conflict between Arabs and Israelis in the Holy Land and expressed the need to intensify efforts and initiatives for a just and stable peace.

“The time has come for everyone to find the courage to be generous and creative in the service of the common good, the courage to forge a peace and security within internationally recognized borders.”

He concluded:

“Mr. President, dear brothers gathered here in Bethlehem: may Almighty God bless you, protect you and grant you the wisdom and strength needed to continue courageously along the path to peace, so that swords will be turned to ploughshares and this land will once more flourish in prosperity and concord. Salaam!”

On 26 May Pope Francis met with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Muhammad Hussein. After expressing his joy at this meeting in the Holy City of Jews, Christians and Muslims and recalling the visit of Pope Paul VI fifty years ago he alluded to Abraham as a pilgrim and a father in faith, venerated by Muslims, Christians and Jews, albeit in different ways. He went on to develop the concept of life as a pilgrimage on earth with those who are different:

"In our earthly pilgrimage we are not alone. We cross paths with other faithful; at times we share with them a stretch of the road and at other times we experience with them a moment of rest which refreshes us. Such is our meeting today, for which I am particularly grateful. It is a welcome and shared moment of rest, made possible by your hospitality, on the pilgrimage of our life and that of our communities. We are experiencing a fraternal dialogue and exchange which are able to restore us and offer us new strength to confront the common challenges before us.

Nor can we forget that the pilgrimage of Abraham was also a summons to righteousness: God wanted him to witness his way of acting and to imitate him. We too wish to witness to God's working in the world, and so, precisely in this meeting, we hear deep within us his summons to work for peace and justice, to implore these gifts in prayer and to learn from on high mercy, magnanimity and compassion."

Pope Francis invited the presidents of Israel Shimon Peres and of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas to come to Rome and pray for peace. They have both accepted this invitation and agreed to participate on June 8.

In conclusion, we can see that Pope Francis is bringing to his active support for dialogue and cooperation with Muslims his experience of growing up and taking part in pastoral care for the poor in Argentina. There he learned to see the need for justice, mercy and peace. There he was accustomed to meeting people of different religious and cultural affiliations and respecting them for what they are. This is the new aspect of the Catholic approach to interreligious dialogue and cooperation.

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THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN CHRISIANITY AND ISLAM IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: A MISSIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE¹

Being a Catholic theologian in Sarajevo, personally involved in motivating Christians and Muslims to support shared values in our multi-religious country, I rely on my experience of living among Bosnian Muslims and on recent guidelines of the Catholic magisterium regarding mission and dialogue. About three years ago I had a meeting with a Muslim theologian who teaches at the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo and he had provided the book *Islam: Introduction and Approach. An Independent Study Textbook* by Sobhi Malek², translated into Croatian. In this book, the author presents his experience of evangelization among Muslims in Africa and sets out to introduce Islam to evangelical Christians. In his lessons he quotes letters from converts and asks Christian preachers not to treat Muslims as enemies who should be defeated but to offer their own personal experience of Jesus as the light of life. However, the Sarajevo professor characterized the Croatian translation of this book as a tool for proselytizing, which could divert Muslims from their religious and ethnic identity in our region.

1 Published in *Mission in Central and Eastern Europe: Realities, Perspectives, Trends*, Edited by Corneliu Constantineanu, Marcel V. Măcelaru, Anne-Marie Kool and Mihai Himcinschi, Oxford 2016, 252-269.

2 Sobhi Malek, *Uvod u islam*, Publisher Nakladni zavod Evanđeoske Crkve Osijek 2002, 334 pp. American edition and Copyright 1992 by International Correspondence Institute, Irving, Texas, USA.

MUSLIMS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AS A RELATIVE MAJORITY POPULATION IN THIS SLAV AND EUROPEAN COUNTRY

From AD 1463 to 1878 Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) was ruled by Ottoman invaders and during that period a large part of the Slav population accepted Islam as their faith affiliation. After the Berlin Congress in 1878, where Austria-Hungary was entrusted by the European powers with administration of this territory, Muslims were enabled to choose their religious leaders, run schools for the education of imams and sharia judges and ensure confessional religious instruction of their school aged students in public schools. From 1918 to 1991 BiH was part of Yugoslavia and its Muslim population was treated in the same way as other religiously affiliated groups and individuals – which meant they faced discrimination and were treated as second class citizens in a state that was officially atheist, though they were not formally persecuted. After the disintegration of Yugoslavia in late 1991, the democratically elected government of BiH organized a referendum on 1st March 1992. Citizens were asked if they wanted to stay within a truncated Yugoslavia or form a new independent country. Muslims as an ethnic and religious group, together with Croats-Catholics, opted for independence. Only 63.04% of our citizens were allowed and willing to take part in the referendum and 62.53% of those who participated voted for their country's sovereignty³. That political decision prompted Serbs-Orthodox in the country to wage a war for ethnic territory, assisted by the Yugoslav army. In December 1995 the Dayton accords stopped the war and required the three ethnic communities – Bosniaks/Muslims, Serbs/Orthodox and Croats/Catholics – to live in one country, which is barely viable because of the conflicting ethnic interests of a population in which ethnic and religious identity coincides⁴. Muslim citizens constitute a relative majority of the population. They belong to the Turkish sunni tradition, moderate in practicing their faith and ready to live in a secular state which is about to join the EU in the near or distant future. According to the April 1991 census, BiH, one of six Republics of Yugoslavia, had 4,377.033 inhabitants. Of these, 1,630.033 or 43.5% were Muslims. According to the October 2013 census, the coun-

3 See *Religion and the War in Bosnia*, edited by Paul Mojzes, Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia 1998.

4 See Mato Zovkić, "Faith and National Identity of Catholics in Bosnia and Herzegovina", M. Ipgrave (ed): *Building a Better Bridge. Muslims, Christians and the Common Good. A Record of the fourth Building Bridges Seminar held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, May 15-18, 2005*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC 2008, 35-39.

try's population was 3,791,622, of whom 48.5% were Bosniaks/Muslims.

The war for ethnic territory from 1991 to 1995 was not an armed conflict of religions, but it had religious connotations due to an overlap of ethnicity and religious affiliation among the conflicting parties⁵. Now, the first mission task of Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christians regarding Muslims in this country is to address distant and recent past experience, to contribute to shared moral values and common needs and to respect each other's religious, ethnic and cultural identities. I am writing this essay in the aftermath of 11th July 2015, the twentieth anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre or genocide, an occasion that rekindled sharp debate between Bosniaks and Serbs. Bosniaks insist that this was a genocide: Serbs acknowledge that what happened was a terrible massacre of innocent Muslim adult men and boys, but they contend that it was not a genocide, because that would mean that Serbs are a genocidal people. On the other hand, Bosniaks are fond of alluding to the Ottoman period of this country's history as an ideal era of tolerance due to the Millet system regarding Jews and Christians in the empire and due to the 1463 Ahdnama, a document granting safe passage and relative religious freedom to the Bosnian Franciscans by Mehmet II the Conqueror. This was consistent with the Millet system allowing Jews and Christians to live within the empire if they paid taxes and obeyed the Sultan and his regional representatives⁶. "Bosfor", a Bosnian-Turkish friendship NGO has provided Bosnian and English translations of the Ahdnama, characterizing this document as "the oldest human rights declaration in history, written in 1463, promulgated 326 years before the 1789 French Revolution, and 485 years before the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights"⁷. Serious Bosniak scholars do know that in 1465 five Bosnian Franciscans were killed in Visoko and that many Christian churches were destroyed by Turks because implementation of the Sultan's orders depended on the goodwill of his

5 See Mitja Velikonja, *Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Texas A & M University Press 2003. Gorana Ognjenović & Jasna Jozelić (ed), *Politicization of Religion, the Power of Symbolism. The Case Study of Former Yugoslavia and its Successor States*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2014.

6 See Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia. A Short History*, Pan Macmillan, London 2002, 43-50. Marko Attila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia. From Middle Ages to Present Day*, Saqi, London 2007, 55-56. The book *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society* edited by Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York 1982) has been translated into Bosnian and published in Sarajevo 2007 by the Centre for Advanced Studies under leadership of Professor Ahmet Alibasic of the Faculty for Islamic Studies in Sarajevo.

7 www.ottomansouvenir.com/General/the_ahdname_of_sultan_Mehmet (15 June 2015).

local military representatives and judges in Bosnia.⁸ Muslims who mythologize the Ottoman period of Bosnian history may play into the hands of Christian extremists who claim that Muslims should not be trusted.

In my experience, most Muslim religious and political leaders in BiH are proud of their ethnic and religious identity, but they are European Muslims with more than 130 years of experience of living under non-Muslim rule, ready to practice their faith in the pluralistic society of this and other European countries. I would simply cite the published texts and personal attitudes of professors Ahmet Alibašić, Fikret Karčić, Enes Karić, Adnan Silajdžić, Dzevad Hodžić, Tarik Haverić and others⁹. As in other Balkan countries, they eagerly strive to reconcile their faith affiliation and their nationhood as an integral part of their social and political activities in a pluralistic society¹⁰.

MISSION AND DIALOGUE IN BOSNIAN CONTEXT

Individual conversions or “defections” do take place in BiH mostly because of mixed marriages. After the fall of the communist regime hundreds of lapsed Christians and Muslims began joining their practicing fellow believers at Sunday or Friday worship and several hundred adults in Sarajevo gave their consent for prescribed baptismal instruction before they were baptized and joined other Catholics in urban parishes. In assisting such individual choices, Christian and Muslim faith ministers respect the human right of such individuals to choose their faith affiliation, but the era of mass conversions is over. None of our faith communities has a program for mass conversion of “the others”, because we feel primarily bound to offer pastoral care to our own flock and to educate them to respect those who have been born

8 Andrija Zirdum, „Osmanlije su, osvojivši Bosnu, porušili 464 katoličke crkve i 48 franjevačkih samostana“, *Katolički tjednik* no. 21, 26 May 2013, p. 8-9, 33.

9 See Hansjörg Schmid, *Islam im europäischen Haus. Wege zu einer interreligiösen Sozialethik*, Herder, Freiburg 2012. In his bibliography this author enlisted 25 titles by Fikret Karčić and 3 by Enes Karić. See also. Armina Omerika (Hrsg.), *Muslimische Stimmen aus Bosnien und Herzegowina: Die Entwicklung einer modernen islamischen Denktradition*, Herder, Freiburg 2013.

10 See Ina Merdjanova, *Rediscovering the Umma. Muslims in the Balkans between Nationalism and Transnationalism*, Oxford University Press, New York 2013. Mato Zokvic, “Muslime in Bosnien-Herzegowina zwischen inneren Dialog und Beziehungen zu Andersgläubenden”, in: *Religionen unterwegs* (Vienna), 21. Jg. Nr. 2 Juni 2015, 4-9.

and raised in families of a different faith or ethnic affiliation. This depends mostly on religious leaders and teachers of religion who have a unique opportunity to influence their respective flocks at weekly prayer services and in confessional religious instruction in public schools, which was reintroduced in 1993. Believing Christians and Muslims do cooperate at the local level and through their institutions.

A modest but stable instrument of mutual encounter and cooperation is the Interreligious Council (IRC), established in June 1997 by four religious leaders who have their seats in Sarajevo: Reis Dr. Mustafa Ceric, Orthodox Metropolitan Nikolaj Mrdja, Catholic Archbishop Vinko Puljic, and President of the Jewish community in BiH Jacob Finci. Dr. Cerić signed an Open letter from 38 Muslim leaders to Pope Benedict XVI dated 13 October 2006 in response to the Pope's lecture in Regensburg. The Grand Mufti of BiH was also one of 138 original signatories to the Appeal "A Common word between you and us" addressed to Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders on 13 October 2007, which was an invitation from Muslim scholars to dialogue based on love of God and love of neighbor, as enjoined by the New Testament and the Qur'an. This letter, and enclosed documents of implementation, was translated into Bosnian and published in book form by El-Kalem, a Muslim publishing house in Sarajevo¹¹. The general purpose of the IRC is to foster a faith-motivated strengthening of tolerant civil society. In view of this, the IRC implements projects acceptable to the four partners and these projects are directed by four employees nominated by the respective religious leaders. One of these projects is a short history that presents the activities of the two churches and the two religious communities that are members of the IRC. Baptist Pastor Tomislav Dobutovic has represented reformed Christian churches in BiH¹².

Teachers of religion in public schools are being trained and nominated by their religious superiors. School textbooks for confessional religious instruction are being prepared by education experts from the respective religions, and authors and teachers who use these textbooks strive to

11 English original: *A Common Word Between You and Us*, The Royal Ahl Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Jordan 2009. Bosnian translation: *Zajednička riječ za nas i vas*, El-Kalem and CNS, Sarajevo 2010, 205 pp.

12 Ifet Mustafic (ed), *Religije u Bosni i Hercegovini. Monografija vjerskih zajednica i crkava - Religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Profile of Religious Communities and Churches*, IRC, Sarajevo 2012, 269 pp. Bosnian and English text of T. Dobutovic, entitled "Reformation Heritage Churches", p. 220-227. Christians of reformed orientation moved to BiH around 1860 and there are today 12 registered Churches which comprise about 2.500 members. The reason why they were not invited to join IRC is centuries long presence of Islam, Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Judaism in BiH with inherited values and problems.

present the faith of “others” in a way that the “others” would recognize, without polemic or caricature. On one occasion a Muslim theologian analyzed the image of Muslims in the textbooks for Orthodox and Catholic students and criticized the harsh presentation of local Ottoman rulers in BiH, which could inspire contemporary Christian students to hate or discriminate against their Muslim peer group¹³. With the support of the IRC, the Catechetical offices of Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics have organized since 2013 an annual seminar for teachers of religion where they exchange their professional experience, discussing shared values and problems.

Vatican II opened a period of dialogue with followers of non-Christian religions with its Declaration on the relations of the Church with non-Christian religions, of 28 October 1965 (*Nostra aetate*), and with the Declaration on religious liberty, of 7 December 1965 (*Dignitatis humanae*). Through the ecumenical council and through the documents adopted by vote by the participating bishops a time of inter-religious dialogue was inaugurated and this has required a new approach to Christian evangelization in a pluralistic world¹⁴. I would briefly recall that the focus has shifted from religious truth *per se* to human persons who have the right to preserve their religious identity even if, from a Christian point of view, their religion might be perceived as wrong. A new attitude toward non-Christians emerged from the efforts of Cardinal Augustin Bea to reach an acceptable reformulation of the attitude toward the Jewish people. He informed the fathers that Pope John had specifically instructed the Secretariat to address the church’s relationship with the Jewish people, because of the vicious outburst of anti-Semitism in the modern world that culminated with National Socialism in Germany. “It was a German who spoke. At the end the cardinal underscored that this was not a religious text and did not touch on the difficult questions of the relationship of Arab nations to the state of Israel or to Zionism”¹⁵. American theologian John C. Murray built into the *Schema* on Religious Liberty the experience of the Church in the US of being neither privileged nor persecuted. Cardinal Richard Cushing, Archbishop of Boston and a personal friend of the Kennedy family, defended the proposed text in the name of the US bishops: “The declara-

13 See Mato Zovkić, “Govor o islamu u školskom vjeronauku”, *Katehza* 31 (2009), 2 101-111.

14 See Michael L. Fitzgerald-John Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue: A Catholic View*, Orbis Books Maryknoll, New York 2006. David L. Coppola (ed), *What do we want others to teach about us?* Sacred Heart University Press, Fairfield, Connecticut 2006.

15 John W. O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, The Belknap Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2008,195-196.

tion, while needing further work, was on the right track and was vitally important for the church in today's world. One aspect in particular was of highest importance: through this declaration the Catholic Church would show itself to the world as protagonist for human and civil liberty in religious matters"¹⁶.

The recent Catholic magisterium constantly reiterates that dialogue does not exclude mission. Indeed, it is a new form of mission. Christians are encouraged to evangelize by witnessing to the manner in which their faith in Jesus the universal Savior makes them human and humane. Pope John Paul II in his 1990 Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (RM), chapter V, entitled "Paths of mission" (RM 41-60) points out that the first form of evangelization is the witness of the missionary, of the Christian family and of the ecclesial community.

"The evangelical witness which the world finds most appealing is that of concern for people, and of charity toward the poor, the weak and those who suffer. The complete generosity underlying this attitude and these actions stands in marked contrast to human selfishness. It raises precise questions which lead to God and to the Gospel. A commitment to peace, justice, human rights and human promotion is also a witness to the Gospel when it is a sign of concern for persons and is directed toward integral human development. Christians and Christian communities are very much a part of the life of their respective nations and can be a sign of the Gospel in their fidelity to their native land, people and national culture, while always preserving the freedom brought by Christ. Christianity is open to universal brotherhood, for all men and women are sons and daughters of the same Father and brothers and sisters in Christ" (RM 42,3-43,1)¹⁷.

In this chapter, followers of other religions are called our brothers and sisters and the Pope stresses that proclaiming Christ to non-baptized persons should not be confused with interreligious dialogue. Dialogue should be conducted and implemented with Christian conviction that the Church is the ordinary means of salvation while other religions stimulate the Church "to examine more deeply her own identity and to bear witness to the fullness of revelation which she received for the good of all" (RM 56,1).

"This gives rise to the spirit which must enliven dialogue in the context

16 John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 217.

17 Quotations from English translation of *Redemptoris Missio* taken from the Vatican electronic address, 18 July 2015.

of mission. Those engaged in this dialogue must be consistent with their own religious traditions and convictions, and be open to understanding those of the other party without pretense or close-mindedness, but with truth, humility and frankness, knowing that dialogue can enrich each side. There must be no abandonment of principles nor false irenicism, but instead a witness given and received for mutual advancement on the road of religious inquiry and experience, and at the same time for the elimination of prejudice, intolerance and misunderstandings. Dialogue leads to inner purification and conversion which, if pursued with docility to the Holy Spirit, will be spiritually fruitful. A vast field lies open to dialogue, which can assume many forms and expressions: from exchanges between experts in religious traditions or official representatives of those traditions to cooperation for integral development and the safeguarding of religious values; and from a sharing of their respective spiritual experiences to the so-called “dialogue of life,” through which believers of different religions bear witness before each other in daily life to their own human and spiritual values, and help each other to live according to those values in order to build a more just and fraternal society” (RM 56,2-57,1).

On 19 May 1991 the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for Evangelization of Peoples published the joint document *Dialogue and proclamation. Reflection and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*¹⁸. After the Introduction (no 1-13), these two Dicasteries of the Roman Curia in charge of moderating Catholic efforts for dialogue and mission deal in the first part with interreligious dialogue (no 14-54) and in the second with proclaiming Jesus Christ to human beings in a pluralistic world (no 55-85)¹⁹. The document depicts four possible forms of dialogue:

- The dialogue of life, where believers of different faith affiliation strive to live in an open and neighborly spirit;
- The dialogue of action, where Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people;
- The dialogue of theological exchange, where specialists seek to

18 English translation available at the Vatican electronic address and in the book by Francesco Gioia (ed), *Interreligious Dialogue. The Official teaching of the Catholic Church from the Second Vatican Council to John Paul II*, Pauline Books and Media, Boston 2006, 1156-1189.

19 For a critical evaluation of these two documents by Catholic and Protestant scholars, see William R. Burrows (ed), *Redemption and Dialogue. Reading 'Redemptoris Missio' and 'Dialogue and Proclamation'*, Orbis Books, New York 1993, 244 pp. The book has been digitalized in 2009.

deepen their understanding of each other's religious heritage and spiritual values; and

- The dialogue of religious experience, where persons of different faith affiliation share their spiritual riches (no 42).

The document puts forward the characteristics of dialogue and proclamation, and then studies their mutual relationship. It points out that proclamation should be confident in the power of the Holy Spirit, faithful in transmitting the teaching received from Christ and preserved in the Church, humble, respectful, dialogical and enculturated (no 70). Among external difficulties for evangelization may be a different conception of human rights or the identification of a particular religion with the national culture (no 74). Here is the way this document binds interreligious dialogue and proclamation in the mission of the Church:

“Interreligious dialogue and proclamation, though not on the same level, are both authentic elements of the Church's evangelization mission. Both are legitimate and necessary. They are internally related, but not interchangeable: true interreligious dialogue on the part of the Christian supposes the desire to make Jesus Christ better known, recognized and loved; proclaiming Jesus Christ is to be carried out in the Gospel spirit of dialogue. The two activities remain distinct but, as experience shows, one and the same local Church, one and the same person, can be diversely engaged in both. – In actual fact, the way of fulfilling the Church's mission depends upon the particular circumstances of each local Church, and of each Christian. It always implies a certain sensitivity to the social, cultural, religious and political aspects of the situation, as also attentiveness to the ‘signs of times’ through which the spirit of God is speaking, teaching and guiding. Sensitivity and attentiveness are developed through a spirituality of dialogue. This requires a prayerful discernment and theological reflection on the significance in God's plan of the different religious traditions and the experience of those who find in them their spiritual nourishment” (no 77-78).

The Catholic Church encourages and fosters interreligious dialogue between herself and other religious traditions but also among religious traditions themselves. This is the way to become ever more active as a sign and instrument of communion with God and unity among all people. In motivating religious institutions to collaborate, the Church promotes justice, love and

peace for all (no 80). In its conclusion the documents suggest: "It is also important that the specific studies on the relationship between dialogue and proclamation be undertaken, taking into account each religion within its geographical area and its sociocultural context" (no 88). Mons. Michael L. Fitzgerald, in his capacity as secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue has creatively contributed to the outcome of this document. In his analysis of the document from the point of view of how Christians should treat Muslims, published in 2003, he concludes that Jesus, respected by Christians and Muslims, inspires us to dialogue although our beliefs about him remain significantly different²⁰.

On 23 November 2013 Pope Francis published his programmatic document, the Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium – The Joy of the Gospel*. In it the Pope presents his view of the mission of the Catholic Church to fellow bishops, priests, deacons, men and women of consecrated life and to the lay faithful in the modern world. Besides the introduction (1-18), the document contains five chapters:

- I. The Church's missionary transformation;
- II. Amid the crisis of communal commitment;
- III. The proclamation of the Gospel;
- IV. The social dimension of evangelization;
- V. Spirit-filled evangelizers.

In the fourth chapter, having in mind the public space of Christian pastoral activity, the Pope binds the confession of the faith and commitment to society, especially to the poor throughout the world. In this chapter he treats four fields of the Church's activity:

- Communal and societal repercussions of the kerygma (no 177-185);
- The inclusion of the poor in society (186-216);
- The common good and peace in society (217-237); and
- Social dialogue and contribution to peace (238-258).

Pope Francis depicts his vision of Christian mission in a pluralistic world on the basis of his theological education and pastoral experience in South

20 Michael L. Fitzgerald, "Dialogue and Proclamation' A. Reading in the Perspective of Christian-Muslim Relations", *In Many and Diverse Ways. In Honor of Jacques Dupuis*, Daniel Kendall and Gerard O'Collins, Editors, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 2003, 181-193. Cardinal Avery Dulles in his essay "World Religions and the New Millennium", same book, 3-13 concludes that in the time of intensive globalization interreligious dialogue is not luxury but necessity in view of preventing disastrous conflicts among embittered groups.

America. This is why the original of the document is in Spanish, his native language. As well as Spanish, official translations into Croatian, Dutch, French, English, German, Italian, Latin, Polish and Portuguese are available at the Vatican website. The German Jesuit priest Felix Körner is a Christian expert on religions, especially Islam, and lectures on religions at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. In his presentation of this document he sees as its key concepts “Verständnis – understanding” and “Offenheit – openness”. He points out that the section on interreligious dialogue, including Islam, should be viewed in the context of the whole section on social dialogue and contribution to peace.

In paragraphs 252 and 253 Pope Francis gives a fresh impulse to dialogue with Muslims. He expresses his admiration for Muslim believers who are deeply convinced that their life is from God and for God and who feel the need to respond to God with an ethical commitment toward the poor and the needy. In his support for dialogue and cooperation he stresses that the partners should be fully grounded in their own identity and should therefore have special training on both sides. He urges Christians as majority inhabitants of western countries to respect and assist immigrant Muslims in their countries “in the same way we expect and we hope and ask (for Christians) to be received and respected in countries of Islamic traditions”. This is the principle of *positive reciprocity* which was introduced by Pope John Paul II. Bosnian Muslim theologian Enes Karić in his April 2014 interview in *Diwan*, a religious magazine for Bosnian Muslims in the Diaspora, acknowledged that Muslim minorities in European countries enjoy greater religious freedom and civil protection than Christian minorities in Muslim countries. Pope Francis is convinced that the majority of Muslims are tolerant and this “should lead us to avoid generalizations, for authentic Islam and a proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence”²¹.

FROM DISTORTING EACH OTHER’S FAITH AND HISTORY TO MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE PRESENTATIONS

Muslims of BiH are not a danger to other citizens or Europeans. They are fellow travelers who expect full freedom to practice their faith in a secular

21 Enes Karić, “Der christliche Osten und der islamische Westen”, *Diwan*- April 2014, 18-20.

state and to contribute to the common good of pluralistic civil society. Full freedom of religion involves not only the right to stick to one's faith affiliation and preach it. What about religious polemic? Can we attack each other's religion, striving to strengthen our own flock in their faith? In my introduction I mentioned a Muslim professor of theology in Sarajevo who complained that the 2002 Croatian translation of the book on Islam by Sobhi Malek was an intellectual attack on today's Muslims. Before we go deeper into this question I would like to mention a historical phenomenon in the Ottoman empire which some Muslims still defend and Christians bitterly criticize. During the 16th and 17th centuries there existed the institution of boys' tribute or *Devşirme*, which enabled state officials to abduct boys from Christian families, take them to central state institutions, convert them to Islam and educate them as future employees, mostly military personnel. According to Noel Malcolm "at least 200,000 children from the Balkans had passed through the system in its two centuries of operation"²². While some critical Muslim scholars point out that this procedure was against Muslim law, others still defend it as a unique chance for boys to be educated and to make military or political careers.

Let us now turn to polemical texts of Muslims on Christianity and vice versa. Relying on Qur'an 4:155-157 Muslims believe that Jesus did not die on the cross; he was Allah's Prophet and obedient servant without claiming any transcendental identity but evangelists and other early Christians have distorted his deeds and words.

Maurice Bucaille (1920-1998) was a French medical doctor, brought up as a Christian; in 1973 he became family physician to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and probably around that time accepted Islam; in 1976 he published his book *La Bible, le Coran et la science*. In 1978 the book was published in English, gradually translated into the languages of large Muslim populations and sold millions of copies. This book was translated and published by El-Kalem in Sarajevo, twice – in 1978 and in 2001. The book is viewed by numerous Bosnian Muslim intellectuals as scientific evidence that the Qur'an is right and the New Testament wrong concerning the teaching and life of Jesus the son of Mary. Bucaille is appreciated by Muslims in Europe as a Western intellectual who has significantly contributed to Islamic thought in the West²³. Ahmed Hussein Deedat (1918-2005) was

22 Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia. A Short History*, 45-46.

23 See Salah Salem Abdel Radaq, *Neo-Muslim Intellectuals in the West and their contributions to Islamic thought and the formation of Western Islam. An Explanatory Investigation of the religious and literary activities of Western neo-muslim intellectuals*, Peeters, Leuven 2008, 138-141; 473-483.

a Muslim scholar, public speaker and missionary of Indian-South African descent. His sharp discussions with Baptist preachers before a South-African audience may have sounded attractive and not insulting, but the effect in Bosnia and elsewhere was different. Two of his books were translated and published by private publishers in Bosnia in 2009: *Qur'an or the Bible? Which is God's Word?* and *The Choice – Islam and Christianity*. Private translators and publishers of pamphlets and books against Christianity contribute toward a hostile mentality and side with extremist movements.

Some Muslim intellectuals would like their leaders to pay more attention to extremist movements in protecting their own believers from such influence²⁴.

As a Catholic New Testament exegete, I strive to draw the attention of my students and readers to diversities about Jesus in the Qur'an and the New Testament as a matter of faith, not of ideology or politics. In explaining to their audience how the gospel of Jesus was watered down in the four canonical gospels of early Christianity, Muslim authors in Bosnia are reluctant to read and accept Christian authors who insist on three stages of gospel material: 1. Jesus preached the word of God and enacted God's mercy toward humans, 2. The Apostles and their collaborators left behind their preached material about the words and deeds of Jesus, 3. Evangelists chose from this material as real authors in shaping their gospels which the early Church accepted in its canon as inspired and therefore containing God's revelation. For us Christians, diversities in the canonical gospels are not distortions of Jesus' words and deeds but progress in understanding and interpreting them in a changed social and religious environment outside Palestine. As we would like "the others" to speak about "us" so that we might recognize ourselves in our Christian identity, we should treat them in the same way.

Despite the general objection that in the canonical Christian gospels the words and deeds of historical Jesus have been distorted, the saying of Jesus on the Advocate (*Parakletos*) whom he will send and who will testify (John 15:26) Muslim interpreters of the Qur'an since the 13th century have applied to Muhammed as the seal of God's prophets (Q 33:40). "Seal"

24 In my presentation at the Tagung organized by Akademie der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart from 22 to 22 November 2009 I examined ten books or pamphlets against Christianity recently published by private Muslim publishers in Bosnia. See, Mato Zovkic, "Dialogische und polemische Wahrnehmungen des Christentums durch Muslime in Bosnien-Herzegowina", *Vrhbosnensia* (Periodical of Catholic Faculty of Theology in Sarajevo) 1/2010, 159-171.

means the last and therefore most important. The Quran points out that Muhammed's coming has been announced by the Gospel (7:157) and by Jesus himself (61:6). Muslim authors explain that the Greek word *parákletos* has been changed from the Aramaic *periklytos*: "This prediction is supported by several references in the Gospel of John to the *Paráklētos* (usually rendered as 'Comforter') who was to come after Jesus. This designation is almost certainly a corruption of *Períklytos* ('the Much-Praised'), an exact Greek translation of the Aramaic term or name *Mawhamana*. (It should be borne in mind that Aramaic was the language used in Palestine in the time of, and for some centuries after, Jesus, and was thus undoubtedly the language in which the original – now lost – texts of the Gospels were composed.) In view of the phonetic closeness of *Períklytos* and *Paráklētos* it is easy to understand how the translator – or, more probably, a later scribe – confused these two expressions. It is significant that both the Aramaic *Mawhamana* and the Greek *Períklytos* have the same meaning in the two names of the Last Prophet, *Muhammad* and *Ahmad*, both of which are derived from the verb *hamida* ('he praised') and the noun *hamd* ('praise')"²⁵. Among others, such explanation of the saying on the Paraclete from John's Gospel is transferred by Dzermaludin Latic, a professor of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, in his textbook on world religions for Muslim students in public high schools in BiH. Muslim interpreters here enforce an allegorical meaning of a New Testament saying without any discussion of the hermeneutical approach to Christian writings written about five hundred years before the Qur'an.

Muslims are the relative majority population in BiH. After the fall of the one-party Marxist regime in 1991, religions were admitted to the public space in our society and we should demonstrate that our respective faith makes us able to live in peace and to contribute toward building up a just civil society. In other European countries, some other denominations may be the faith of the majority but we theologians should teach and research having in mind the multi-religious and plural situation in our multicultural societies. In the decades after Vatican II we Catholics spoke a lot

25 *The Message of the Qur-an*. Translated and explained by Muhammad Assad, Işaret Yayinlari, Istanbul 2006, 861. This book, published first time in 1980 in Gibraltar, has been translated into Bosnian as *Poruka Kur'ana*. El-Kalem, Sarajevo 2004. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, Aman Publications, Beltsville, Maryland 2006, 1461, in explaining Q 61:6 mentions John 14:16, 15:26 and 16:7 where *Parakletos* is mentioned by Jesus and points out: "Our doctors contend that Paracletos is a corrupt reading for Periclytos, and that in the original saying of Jesus there was a prophecy of our Prophet *Ahmad* by name. Even if we read Paraclete it would apply to the Prophet, who is "a mercy for all creatures" (21:107) and "most kind and merciful to the Believers" (9:128).

about enculturation but now some theologians prefer so called “enreligionization”²⁶. For us Christians of all denominations the mystery of Christ remains the enduring criterion for the nearness or distance of a certain religion²⁷.

Is apologetics acceptable in times of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue? Apologetics was and still is based on 1 Pt 3:15, where the writer asks that believers be able to give a reason (*apología*) for the faith that is in them. This is exemplified by Luke in Acts as he brings out the very first preaching of the Apostles and their collaborators. If we analyze the discourses and procedures of Peter, Paul, Stephen, Jacob and others in the Acts we see that they used Old Testament quotations apologetically. Thus an apologetic concern is deeply involved in the intention, the structure and the content of the New Testament. The word “apologetic” in the theological context comes from the adjective *apologēticos* used substantially and from the verbal root *apologeisthai* meaning to answer, to account for, to defend, to justify. The American Jesuit Avery Dulles (1918-2008), well known for his 1974 book *Models of the Church*, published three editions of his book *A History of Apologetics* (1971, 1999 and 2005). In the final edition he points out that apologetics is “consciously involved in dialogue, prevents faith from turning in upon itself, as though it were of concern to believers only. Beside dealing polemically with objections against Christianity from outside, it seeks to show the believers themselves why their faith is reasonable and responsible”²⁸. He considered Vatican II to be “irenic” and open to contemporary pluralism that makes it difficult to identify the adversary with whom the apologist should be in conversation. “For some years apologetics fell into a general disrepute from which it has not entirely recovered, at least in Europe. Serious scholars in European universities, wary of apologetics, diverted their energy to the newly develop-

26 “Risulta chiaro che è sempre l'altro colui che dovrà comprendere, giudicare e a sua volta accettare ciò che gli si offre. La ‘inculturazione’ indica che ciò non può avvenire negando la propria *cultura*, ma in essa e a partire da essa. Orbene, con la *religione* accade qualcosa di rigorosamente analogo: chi ascolta è una persona religiosa che, dall'ottica della propria religione, accoglie e discrimina (o rifiuta) ciò che le viene annunciato. È ciò a cui vuole alludere la ‘interreligionazione’, parola probabilmente brutta, ma di anima generosa e fraterna. Chiarisce e sviluppa un autentico atteggiamento fatto sia di accoglienza che di offerta” - Andres Torres Queiruga, “Ripensare il pluralismo: dall'inculturazione all' inreligionazione” *Concilium* 1/2007, 129-140, cit. 137.

27 See, Ugo Sartorio, “Rendere ragione della fede cristiana oggi”, *Crescere oggi* XVI (1996), 4 (94), 5-26. Horst Bürkle, “Introduzione. Religione e religioni”, G. Tanzella Niti e G. Maspero, *La verità della religione. La specificità cristiana in contesto*, Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Roma 2007, 13-34.

28 Cardinal Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2005, 328.

ing discipline of fundamental theology, practiced primarily for the guild of professors and graduate students. Going somewhere beyond merely academic audiences, major theologians such as Rahner and Balthasar conducted apologetics of a sort in their efforts to describe the process by which people can come responsibly to Christian faith. A few Catholic authors as Hans Küng and Luigi Giussani wrote major popular works for nonbelievers and marginal Christians²⁹. He believes that adherence to the gospel must have an ecclesiastical dimension and in this way apologetics seek to show why it is reasonable, with the help of grace, to accept God's word as it comes to us through Scripture and the Church. "The Catholic Church has taught, and continues to teach, that there are sufficient signs to make the assent of faith objectively justifiable...

Apologetics justifies itself, time and time again, as a distinct discipline and as a normal ingredient in authentic evangelization, catechesis, theology, ecumenism, and interreligious dialogue³⁰. He advocates an apologetics of religious testimony which can capitalize on personalist categories of Christian philosophers. As guidelines he proposes convergence, firmness, novelty, transformation and illuminative power³¹.

Analyzing strengths and weaknesses of some American textbooks, Richard Gaillardetz, professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo in Ohio, pinpoints five recommendable qualities of the new apologetics: 1. *passionate and positive*; 2. *dialogical*, 3. *ecumenical*; 4. *historically responsible*; 5. *culturally engaged*. He sees the need for more theologians who are informed by the best insights in contemporary theology and can present those insights with passion and enthusiasm in ways that affirm and enrich ordinary believers. "As long as theologians are content to lecture only in university classrooms and limit their publications to scholarly pieces in academic journals, the theological community will continue to cede the stage to those who offer a narrower and more rigid appropriation of Catholic tradition but are willing to bring the Catholic theological heritage to the people and provide with the substantive 'meat' for which they yearn"³².

Heinrich Fries blames traditional apologetics for overemphasizing Catholic matters at the expense of other matters in the realm of belief and

29 Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 365.

30 Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 367.

31 See, Avery Dulles, "The Rebirth of Apologetics", in his book *Church and Society*, Fordham University Press, New York 2008, 430-442.

32 Richard R. Gaillardetz, "Do we need a new (er) Apologetics?", *America Magazine*, 2 February 2004, 26-33.

the Church³³. In his view, Fundamental Theology should reach students and other people in their pluralistic context. All disciplines of theology should avoid distance from the world and a ghetto mentality. Theology cannot produce the faith and, therefore, theologians suppose that they are addressing a believing audience or readers who are already engaged. They can contribute toward the unity of ecclesiastical faith and preserve an open approach in their research and their lectures³⁴.

In Catholic tradition theology is *scientia fidei*, *scientia revelationis*; it assists the believer's search for an understanding of the faith, and it is indispensable for the Church. Theologians research and explain the faith of the Church from within, as intellectual servants of a believing community. In its 1990 *Instruction Donum Veritatis on the ecclesial vocation of the theologian* the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith first deals with religious and moral truth as God's gift to his people than outlines the ecclesiastical vocation of the theologian and the relationship of the theologian to the teaching authority within the Church. Theology results from the need of God's people to understand their faith and give an account of it to persons of goodwill: "In order to exercise the prophetic function in the World, the People of God must continually reawaken or 'rekindle' its own life of faith (cf. 2 Tim 2:6). It does this particularly by contemplating ever more deeply, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the contents of the faith and by dutifully presenting the reasonableness of the faith to those who ask for an account of it (cf. 1 Pet 3:15). For the sake of this mission, the Spirit of truth distributes among the faithful of every rank special graces 'for the common good' (1 Cor 12:7-11" (DV, 5). Theological science helps the People of God fulfill the Apostle's command to give an account of their hope to those who ask. Theology "offers its contribution so that the faith might be communicated. Appealing to the understanding of those who do not yet know Christ, it helps them to seek and find the faith. Obedient to the impulse of truth which seeks to be communicated, theology also arises from love and love's dynamism. In the act of faith, man knows

33 "Apologetik verstand sich als Verteidigung des Eigenen und als Abwehr des Anderen". Therefore, he proposed the new name of fundamental theology for this theological discipline: "Apologetik versteht sich heute als Fundamentaltheologie. Sie markiert ihre Geschichte als Weg von der Verteidigung zur Grundlegung. Sie ist überzeugt, dass erst von diesem positiv zu verstehenden Umfassenden und Grundlegenden aus eine Antwort gegeben werden kann. Erst innerhalb dieses Ganzen und Grundlegenden kann und muss auch die legitime Funktion der Verteidigung und der Auseinandersetzung gesehen und geführt werden" – Heinrich Fries, "Von der Apologetik zur Fundamentaltheologie", *Concilium* 6 (1969) 6/7 1969, 442-447, cit. 442-443.

34 See, Heinrich Fries, *Fundamentaltheologie*, Verlag Styria, Graz 1985, 149-150.

God's goodness and begins to love him. Love, however, is ever desirous for a better knowledge of the beloved. From this double origin of theology, inscribed upon the interior life of the People of God and its missionary activity, derives the method with which it ought to be pursued in order to satisfy the requirements of its nature" (DV 7).

Theologians research the content of the revealed truth and help the Christian community to witness it in the various life and cultural situation of their fellow humans. Theologians of different disciplines are enabled and bound to participate "in the building up of Christ's Body in unity and truth. Their contribution is needed more than ever, for evangelization on a world scale requires the efforts of the whole People of God" (DV 41). Theologians can essentially contribute toward formulating the faith of the Church in different cultures and historical periods. In performing their task, theologians must take into consideration the double aspect of their ministry: ecclesiological and scientific. Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* regrets that in certain currents of modern thought freedom is "exalted to such an extent that it becomes an absolute, which would then be the source of values". This crisis of truth obscures "the idea of universal truth about the good, knowable by human reason". Such an outlook "is quite congenial with an individualistic ethic, wherein each individual is faced with his own truth, different from the truth of others. Taken to its extreme consequences, this individualism leads to a denial of the very idea of human nature" (VS 32). Echoing the doctrine of Vatican II, he says: "Although each individual has a right to be respected in his own journey in search of the truth, there exists a prior moral obligation, and a grave one at that, to seek the truth and to adhere to it once it is known" (VS 34). Followers of monotheistic religions believe that human freedom finds its authentic and complete fulfillment in accepting God's sovereignty and obeying his commandments. This is why Christian theologians as intellectual servants of the ecclesiastical community assist their students in finding the religious and moral truth and accepting it.

In his encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, relying on Paul's discourse at Athens (Acts 17:26-27) John Paul II develops the traditional Christian conviction that "in the far reaches of the human heart there is a seed of desire and nostalgia for God... It is essential, therefore, that the values chosen and pursued in one's life be true, only true values can lead people to realize themselves fully, allowing them to be true in their nature. The truth of these values is to be found not only by turning in on oneself but by open-

ing oneself to apprehend that truth even at levels which transcend the person. This is an essential condition for us to become ourselves and to grow as mature, adult persons” (FR 24-25). Since the truth conferred by Revelation is a truth to be understood in the light of reason, Christian philosophers and theologians have a magnificent ministry and mission: “Fundamental theology should demonstrate the profound compatibility that exists between faith and its need to find expression by way of human reason fully free to give its assent. Faith will thus be able to show fully the path to reason in a sincere search for the truth. Although faith, a gift of God, is not based on reason, it can certainly not dispense with it. At the same time, it becomes apparent that reason needs to be reinforced by faith, in order to discover horizons it cannot reach on its own” (FR, 67). Here we can see the right and duty of theologians not only to explore the faith of the Church but also to defend it. They have been set apart by their respective dioceses and religious orders to study the shared faith of the Church and they should give back by continuous studying, explaining and defending that faith.

Among the current tasks of theology John Paul II lists “to mediate the content of faith to different cultures in a coherent and conceptually clear way” by renewing its specific methods and continuous enquiry of God’s plan of salvation revealed in Jesus Christ (FR 92). Theologians of all branches contribute toward understanding of Revelation and the content of faith, and the gist of it is God’s *kenosis* in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

To conclude this section, Christian preachers and theologians should neither ignore polemical articles and books in which the faith of the Church is being ridiculed nor waste too much time on them. In the multi-cultural and multi-religious context of BiH, the first duty of Christian shepherds and theologians is pastoral care of their own fellow Christians within their respective Churches and parish communities. In doing this, they should not distort the faith and history of Muslims but look for mutually acceptable representations of each other. As intellectual servants of the Church they should keep in mind such writings and educate their congregations and students of theology so that they may face religious criticism and persevere in their Christian identity. Theologians are entrusted and charged with explaining and defending the faith of the Church but in a dialogical way. The social and religious context of BiH requires fair presentation of Islam to Christians and of Christianity to Muslims. I know of

some pamphlets and books of this kind prepared for a mixed audience in Italian, English and German but not in the languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The initiatives for such texts should come from religious leaders and texts should be prepared by experts, who should write in simple and plain language.

CONCLUSION

At this point I would like to tell the story of a Sarajevo Muslim theologian who was invited to give a presentation in Zagreb at a Conference on Christian-Muslim dialogue organized by the Mufti of Croatia, by the Jesuit Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb and by an Iranian institute. This professor told me that his Iranian colleague confided his intention to invite publicly the majority Christian audience in the conference room to convert to Islam because he felt this was his duty. The Sarajevo Muslim beseeched his Iranian partner not to do this because it would damage the good relations between Christians and Muslims in the region. The Iranian gave up and so saved the audience from insult and provocation. Muslims and Christians feel bound to *preach their faith in the public space* but they should keep in mind people's legitimate faith and cultural affiliation. We, believing citizens of former socialist countries, now have an opportunity to offer moral values to our societies and perform our mission activity within that framework. We must learn how to behave in the public space³⁵.

Applied to the perspective of Christian mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this means that Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Christian ministers, theologians and teachers of religion in public schools should not look at Muslims in this country and in other European countries as a danger. Faced with polemics against Christianity in Muslim theology books or school textbooks for religious instruction they should deal with these problems in order to enable their faithful to remain practicing Christians and become instructed in their own faith tradition. Christian faith ministers and missionaries should look for authentic information about Islam

35 See Vernon Ruland, *Conscience Across Borders. An Ethics of Global Rights and Religious Pluralism*, University of San Francisco 2002. David Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith. Politics, Human Rights, and Christian Ethics*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, D. C. 2003. Miroslav Wolf, *A Public Faith. How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good*, Brazos Press, Grand Rapids 2011.

as the faith tradition of their fellow citizens and help their flock to acquire sufficient basic knowledge about Muslims, because an unknown neighbor can easily be transformed into an enemy. We would expect a similar approach on the Muslim side regarding Christians.

There is no need, I think, to emphasize that Christian witnesses and preachers must be open to, and even look for, God seekers who may be unsatisfied with their former religious tradition and may need personal assistance to resolve their spiritual dilemmas. We all believe that God wants us to be happy and to respect people's personal search for happiness. This is their religious and human right.

EFFORTS OF FAITH COMMUNITIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN EDUCATING THEIR CONGREGATIONS FOR PEACE¹

In his book on the role of religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) during the 1991-1995 war to establish ethnic territories after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Slovenian sociologist Mitja Velikonja accurately says that this was not a war of religions, but that the religious factor was influential. Somewhat inaccurately he points out “the relatively fictional secularization” that took place during socialist regime, and regrets that Catholic Croats were “the least secularized of all nations in the former Yugoslavia”. He sympathizes with Bosnian Muslims whose tragedy in the last war “lies in the fact that they were too Muslim for the West and not Muslim enough for the Islamic world”. He further identifies Catholicism, Islam and Orthodoxy as “the three main religions were voluntarily involved in the war, but in different ways and to different degrees”. While citing different meetings of religious leaders from all three religious communities before, during, and after the war, he nevertheless blames them for not educating their subordinates for reconciliation. He concludes that “national and religious pluralism remains a necessity, not merely an opportunity” and that “the solution will not be found ... in ignoring or overstating the significance of the religious factor”². Leaders and ministers of faith communities in BH reject criticism of left-minded politicians and sociologists who claim that they have sided

1 A presentation at 9th Nuremberg Forum, Sept. 26 to 29, 2006. Published in: J. Lähnemann (Hrsg.): *Visionen wahr machen. Interreligiöse Bildung auf dem Prüfstand. Referate und Ergebnisse des Nürnberger Forums 2006*, EV Verlag, Hamburg 2007, 332-345.

2 M. Velikonja: *Religious separation and political intolerance in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 189, 253, 262, 269, 285, 294.

with ethnic interests and needs of their respective communities in the recent war and in the post-war restoration process. At the same time, they are aware that the November 1995 Dayton Accords have produced only a cease-fire, not a stable and just peace. Religious leaders believe that they can and should contribute towards peace education and building up a pluralistic civil society.

As a Catholic theologian and believing citizen of multi-ethnic and multi-religious BH, I would like to depict how faith communities in my country are taking small steps in simple ways towards educating their congregations for peace. I might remind my audience that BH is a small country where Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Islam and Judaism have been meeting for centuries. According to 1991 census, BH had 4,377,077 inhabitants. About 44% declared themselves as Bošnjaks-Muslims, 31% as Serbs-Orthodox and about 17% as Croats-Catholics. Muslims in our country are not Turkish or Arab immigrants, but descendants of Slavs who accepted Islam during the Ottoman rule (1463-1878), and are now proud of their religious identity that emphasizes with equal importance being both Muslim and European.

SOME INSTITUTIONAL TASKS AND POSSIBILITIES

1. *Confessional religious instruction in public schools* – In 1991, immediately after the first democratic elections in BH and before the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic religious leaders asked the Presidency of BH to mediate with education authorities and school directors to inaugurate confessional religious instruction in public schools. The permission now has been granted, and in most schools where there is sufficient numbers of students, Muslim teachers of religion teach Muslim children their faith, Orthodox teachers teach their students and Catholic teachers teach Catholic students. There are about one thousand Jews in BH, but they do not have trained teachers of their faith, and their children are dependent exclusively on the example and knowledge of their parents.

Catholic teachers of religion follow the plan, program and manuals of the Croatian Bishops Conference, because 98% of Catholics in BH are ethnic Croats. Orthodox teachers of religion use the program and manuals prepared by Serbian Orthodox theologians. In accordance with the guide-

lines of their religious leaders, Muslim experts in religious pedagogy, have written new manuals for their students taking eight years of elementary school. In the manuals published during the war there were some illustrations and texts distorting the history, the culture and identity of ethno-religious "others". An integral part of post-war renewal is the effort to eliminate hate speech from media and textbooks. Along this line, religious educators agreed to revise each others' manuals so that the presentation of the faith of "others" might be fairly and accurately portrayed. I have seen the first edition of the manual for Muslim children of the first grade in which they were instructed to greet all fellow students and adults with "Peace be upon you!" (*Es-selam alejkum*). In later editions they are asked to greet only their fellow Muslims so, while others should be greeted with "Good day" (*Dobar dan*).

Religious education manuals for higher grades of elementary school or the first two grades of secondary school contain not only basic information about the faith and the feasts of the four traditional religions in BH (Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, Orthodoxy) but also about other great world religions. Our religious leaders and believing parents are convinced that as taxpayers they have the right to educate their children in their faith through public school curricula. Minority religious leaders and agnostic parents are not happy about this because their children, who are offered a class in Ethics or similar subjects, feel unfairly treated by majority classmates. This is a sharply disputed question. Left-minded politicians and teachers contend that faith education should be restricted to families, churches and mosques, and are convinced that ethnic and religious differences in the curricula should be reduced to a minimum.

2. *The Inter-religious Council of BH* - In July 1996, Dr. William Vendley, the (then) secretary general of the *World Conference of religions for peace* (WCRP) centered in New York, visited religious leaders of BH and announced his intention to open in Sarajevo an office which would assist religious leaders and ministers with reconciliation and peace building initiatives. He opened the WCRP office in October of that year nominating a foreign person as director and employed four persons that were recommended by the four religion leaders with seats in Sarajevo. On June 9, 1997 the four leaders signed their Statement of Shared Moral Values and committed themselves to collaborate in peace education. This was the official beginning of the Inter-religious Council (IRC) of BH. The working team of the IRC produced a *Glossary of basic religious concepts* of Islam,

Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Judaism. They also drafted the new Law on freedom of religion and the legal status of faith communities in BH, which in 2004 the parliament officially adopted and then promulgated. For about two years following the promulgation, a team of civil law experts and theologians offered a series of round table discussions in different towns of our country, explaining the rights and duties of civil authorities and believing citizens contained in the new law. In the meantime, and thanks to personal contacts of the Jewish religious leader, the municipality of Stari grad Sarajevo gave a suitable office to be shared by the WCRP and the IRC in the central area of the city. Before that very needed and most welcome donation, the leaders and their collaborators used to rotate the meeting place to the premises of the presiding leader. But now a permanent secretariat could be established and maintained. It comprises a manager accepted by the leaders and four employees, one from each of traditional faith communities. In April 2005, WCRP made it possible for IRC personnel to take over the office, and in December of that year WCRP closed down its office in Sarajevo. As the delegate of the Catholic archbishop to the IRC from its inception, I regret to say that the same donors, who through their financial support from 1996 to 2005 generously enabled the WCRP and IRC to function in BH, are now reluctant to continue their help. We are especially disappointed with State, Federation and Republika Srpska authorities of BH who, when we ask for financial support, look at IRC as just one of 5000 registered NGOs in our country.

3. *The Muslim official View of peace building and dialogue in BH* – Besides the *Faculty of Islamic studies* (Fakultet islamskih nauka), which was inaugurated in 1977 in Sarajevo and now has about 400 students, Grand Mufti Dr. Mustafa Cerić has opened Muslim teachers' training colleges in Zenica and Bihać to educate teachers of Islam. As I mentioned, religious education manuals have been gradually prepared and approved by religious authorities to be used in public schools.

Judging by the significant number of new theological and popular books, one would say that Bosnian Muslims are interested in their faith. A 26 volume Commentary of the Qur'an has been translated from Arabic into Bosnian and published. The Muslim religious leadership approved Besim Korkut's translation of the Qur'an into Serbo-Croatian, first published in 1977. During 1991-1995 war for ethnic territories it was reprinted in a pocket size edition and distributed to thousands of Muslim refugees. Its latest and seventh edition was published in 2005. Besides

Korkut's translation, which is a kind of *textus receptus* among Bosnian Muslims, four new translations have been published in last ten years. Mustafa Mlivo published his translation into Bosnian in 1994 (with notes below the text and short topic items; fourth edition in Bugojno 2004). In 1995 Professor Enes Karić, who is now dean of the Islamic Faculty in Sarajevo, published his translation with a parallel Arabic text and exegetical notes. In 2006 his translation was published in a pocket-sized edition, but without the Arabic text or exegetical notes, and it is on its way to becoming the new *textus receptus* among Bosnian Muslims. In 2001 Ramo Atajić published his ten-volume translation with commentary intended for Bosnian Muslims living in European- and international-diaspora (printed by Bavaria Verlag, München). Bošnjak poet Enes Duraković published his translation in 2004 imitating the rhythmic cadence of the original. A single-volume Qur'an Commentary by Muhammed El-Gazali was translated from Arabic and published in 2003. Also, a single-volume Qur'an commentary by Muhammed Asad (alias Leopold Weiss, a Westerner who converted to Islam) was translated from English and published in 2004.

In his *Declaration of European Muslims*, published in 2005, the Grand Mufti of BH, Dr. Mustafa Cerić regrets the massacres of innocent civilian populations on September 11, 2001 in New York, on March 11, 2005 in Madrid and on July 7, 2005 in London. In the same document he invites the Muslims of Europe to build Europe as the House of peace and security, and asks West Europeans to grant their Muslim fellow citizens equal rights and equal opportunities.

In the section of the Declaration addressed to the Muslims who live in Europe he summons his fellow believers thus:

Muslims who live in Europe should present Islam to the western audience as a universal *Weltanschauung*, and not as a tribal, ethnic, or national culture. The Muslims cannot expect from the Europeans to appreciate the universal message of Islam if they are constantly faced with an ethnic or national color of Islam. It is not only that the European Muslims can impress the European public by a universalism of Islam, but it also is a good place for the Muslims themselves to discover the power and beauty of the universality of Islam³.

As the religious head of Bosnian Muslims, he is aware of several gigantic mosques and Muslim Centers built in recent years by Saudi Arabia. Bosnian

3 M. Cerić: *A Declaration of European Muslims* II, 6. (English of M. Cerić).

religious authorities have nominated imams for these mosques, but humanitarian and cultural activities are funded and directed by Saudi Arabians. Some of these *Wahabi* newcomers are striving to convert Bosnian Sunni Muslims to their type of Islam, which includes intolerance towards “infidels”. Bosnian Muslim official leaders believe that young *Wahabis* cannot influence their congregations at a large scale and in the long run, but we Christians are afraid of their presence among us. Some of these are former fighters who have been welcomed by their Muslim brothers in their fight for survival, but later on they married Bosnian women, received Bosnian citizenship and are now legally residing with us. We simple citizens who have no access to the data of secret services cannot know their precise number.

At the request of their religious authorities, three professors of the Islamic Faculty in Sarajevo have prepared a draft text of *The Platform of Islamic Community in BH for Dialogue*. The first section contains basic principles. The second section deals with inter-ethnic and international relations, human rights and violence, and the third section highlights the Bosnian Muslim perspective of the 1991-1995 war in BH, and the post-war restoration of our pluralistic society. The view of the leadership of the Islamic Community is that each faith community or church should condemn and sanction its own individuals and groups who spread religious hatred, hate speech or reprehensible depictions of other people’s beliefs. Common prayers with members of different religious affiliation are unacceptable due to doctrinal and ritual discrepancies. The programs on traditional faith communities in BH should be included in the curricula of theological faculties, and carefully selected professors should be entitled to teach theology students of other faiths about the doctrine and ethics of their own faith community. The Islamic Community supports tolerance and mutual respect of BH citizens who belong to different faith communities, with a view towards drawing nearer to those countries with high levels of security, stability and respect in a pluralistic society. The Islamic Community of BH condemns any use of violence on behalf of religion, especially on behalf of Islam:

These individuals and groups neither represent Islam nor Muslims of the world, and with their acts, besides violence on the victims, they commit violent acts against Muslims and Islam. Causes of terrorism of this kind should be identified and dealt with in the fight against terrorism. But this fight should be conducted with legal instruments⁴.

4 *Platforma Islamske zajednice u BiH za dijalog*, II.

Muslim leaders of BH are convinced that their fellow nationals and fellow believers have suffered the greatest losses and violent acts in the recent war. Therefore, equating the guilt of each of the nations would mean an insult to thousands of innocent Muslim victims, and would reward the perpetrators of these crimes. It is their faith that gave Muslims of BH the strength to behave in a more humane way than others. In the war 832 mosques were destroyed and 13% of the imams killed.

In summoning their fellow believers to a constructive conduct towards followers of other religions, *The Platform* reminds them of the Qur'an, citing:

“Allah does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of your religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allah loves the doers of justice” (60:8).

A precondition for social restoration is prosecution of war criminals and the return of exiles to their places of origin:

Only a just punishment of criminals can interrupt the vicious cycle of evil that returns with a rhythm of several decades. For the sake of the future, crimes perpetrated in the past must be punished. Prayers and verbal excuses are no replacement for justice⁵.

Reconciliation and forgiveness should not exclude the right to remember. Therefore, Muslims of BH reject “the shameful request to erase from religious education manuals pictures of the destroyed Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka and Aladža mosque in Foča”.

There is no alternative to reconciliation and forgiveness in multicultural Bosnia, and the role of faith communities in this regard is enormous. Dialogue and coexistence are not our tactics or intellectual enjoyment, but our strategic option because we see in them the only way for our survival. Courage is necessary for reconciliation, and its first sign is refusing to deny the crimes. We regret that the genocide of Srebrenica has been denied except that the Office of High Representative has enforced a confession that it transpired. Upon the Report of the Commission for Srebrenica, an action of judicial and other organisms and institutions of the Republika Srpska and of BH should follow⁶.

5 *Platforma Islamske zajednice u BiH za dijalog*, IIIc.

6 *Ibidem*.

In its concluding section The Platform regrets “aggressive secularistic statements” of some politicians and public media against the presence of faith communities in the public life of BH society, and shares the commitment of other religious leaders to moral and spiritual values in society. This document is offered to Muslims and other well-intended citizens for debate before its official promulgation, but it contains standard teachings of Muslim religious leaders and thinkers in BH.

4. *The Serbian Orthodox Church* in BH is organized in five eparchies: Trebinje, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Banjaluka and Bihać. Their Faculty of Theology, opened by Metropolitan Nikolaj of the Dabar-Bosnia Eparchy (whose seat is in Sarajevo) at Foča in 1994, is now part of the State University of Eastern Sarajevo. It educates candidates to the priesthood and lay theologians who would like to be teachers of the Orthodox faith in public schools. The territory of Trebinje, Sarajevo and Bihać eparchies partly extend into the Federation where Muslims or Catholics are now the majority populations, after the ethnic cleansing that took place during the war. The eparchies of Tuzla and Banjaluka are completely on the territory of Republika Srpska from which Catholics and Muslims were driven out, and their return so far has taken place only in symbolic numbers. I have noticed that Orthodox bishops and priests of the Trebinje, Sarajevo and Bihać eparchies are more open for inter-religious and ecumenical meetings, aware that they need peace and tolerance while performing their ministry, but also ready to educate their fellow believers for peace and tolerance.

Orthodox bishops met seven times with their Catholic colleagues after the war, but meetings of Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim religious leaders together at one place, have not yet taken place. Although nothing has been said publicly, I surmise that the main problem is the absence of any (self-) critical evaluation of the recent war or humble admission that one’s fellow believers have committed crimes. Muslims and Catholics believe the conflict to be a war of aggression, but Orthodox clergy and most of their believers state that Serbs could not be aggressors in their own country, and that “others” have committed cruel crimes on their innocent civilians. Recalling the Srebrenica massacre, Muslims especially expect Orthodox clergy to confess and repent of crimes perpetrated by their fellow Serbs and Orthodox. We also disagree about what kind of state we should have in order to feel safe in our ethnic and religious identities, taking care of common needs and respecting our diversities. As the majority population, Muslims would like a state with a strong central government, while

Orthodox and Catholics insist on protecting and cherishing their ethnic and religious identities in such a state.

5. *The Catholic Church in BH* is organized in four dioceses: Trebinje, Mostar, Sarajevo and Banjaluka. Since December 1995 its bishops form the National Conference of Bishops. Two Theological Seminaries operate in Sarajevo, one inter-diocesan, the other Franciscan. Candidates to priesthood and lay-persons alike undertake studies in these seminaries. Besides offering education to their students, each of these seminaries organizes conferences on historical, cultural, ethical, and inter-religious questions.

Catholic bishops of BH in their Pastoral letter of December 5, 1995 expressed their bitter disappointment with the Dayton peace accords because it legalized the fruits of the aggression in the territory of the Republika Srpska⁷. This did not prevent them from summoning their fellow believers in their Letter of January 25, 1996 to be peace makers by fostering forgiveness and reconciliation, envisioning a common future with fellow citizens of other religious affiliations⁸. Within the Bishops Conference of BH there is The Council for relations with other religions, culture and ecumenical contacts. Bishop Sudar who moderates the Council, is also a moderator of Catholic schools in the Sarajevo Archdiocese with more than 4,500 students.

6. *According to Jewish sources in Sarajevo* there are about 1000 ethnic and religious Jews in BH who live in small communities in Mostar, Sarajevo, Doboј and Banjaluka. Their community is so small in number that they cannot afford to employ a rabbi who would permanently stay with them and educate them in their own faith. We Christian theologians along with our Muslim colleagues miss a Jewish representative who would share with us our social environment and reflect with us from his faith background. As a tiny minority that cannot “endanger” the “big brothers”, Jews of BH are trusted by Muslims and Christians when they speak of our country as a state where we all need peace, justice and stability. In contrast to Bošnjaks, Croats and Serbs who insist on language differences, Jews of BH have no problems with the language, which foreign representatives simply call “local”, bearing in mind our sensitivity to the issue.

7 English translation, entitled “The Peace Accords contain some odd contradictions and fatal insecurities”, in *Pastoral Letters, Statements and Appeals of the Catholic Bishops of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1990-1997*, 78-87.

8 English translation, entitled “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God”, *Pastoral Letters...*, 88-105.

7. *Weekly worship services* in the pre-war, war and immediate post-war periods were often misused to distort the image of “others” as a possible danger to “ours”. Without prophetic courage, which enables us to point at “ours” who have committed concrete crimes on innocent civilians, some religious ministers used hate language and constructed a caricature of other people’s faith. I know dozens of pamphlets and books translated mostly from Arabic in the period 1994-2001 in which Islam is praised as perfect, last, and therefore the best of great world religions, while Jesus of the New Testament or present-day Christians are ridiculed. Most of these books were not published by El-Kalem in Sarajevo, the official publishing house of the Muslim community in BH. But nevertheless, they did hurt and still hurt. The Catholic archbishop of Sarajevo, Cardinal Vinko Puljić, in his remarks about such publications, keeps saying that we believing individuals and communities of BH should not explain or defend our faith by attacking or deriding the faith of our neighbors.

I do not know of any scientific research on the sermons in mosques and churches after the fall of communism in our country, but I am firmly convinced that present day religious leaders in BH would not allow in the long term their imams and priests to preach hate language or distort the faith of others in their public proceedings. Weekly worship service is a unique event in our life where we come together as free and believing persons to deepen our friendship with God and with our respective fellow believers. At these liturgical gatherings we all pray, we listen to the Word of God, and we, priests and imams preach more or less regularly. This is the unique event and place where we educate our fellow believers in our inherited faith and help them to share our country, our common values and needs with citizens of other beliefs and convictions. What a chance, what a challenge, what an opportunity!

GOD’S COMMANDMENTS AS SHARED ETHICAL VALUES AND OBLIGATIONS

Great religions ordinarily extend beyond political borders and ethnic communities, but for centuries in BH ethnic and religious identities have coincided. This is what causes difficulties for leaders of faith communities who

are expected by their flock to primarily take care of needs and interests of their ethnic community while performing their ministry. In educating their congregations for peace, they sometimes need prophetic insight and courage to resist populism and pressure of daily politics.

Besides M. Velikonja and other left minded sociologists who point out that the religious factor in pluralistic societies should not be ignored, the number of politicians, social workers and scholars who welcome positive impact of spiritual and ethical values is increasing⁹. An American peace activist of reformed inspiration, David Steele, organized seminars of reconciliation in Croatia and BH in the mid-nineties looking for courageous individual believers who would cross ethnic and religious boundaries spreading mutual trust after the cruel conflict. He sharply rebukes Orthodox and Catholic bishops in our country for having sided during the war with ethnic interests of their fellow Serbs and fellow Croats. He did not try to collaborate with official leaders of faith communities, but worked with open-minded individual believers. Among Catholics in Bosnia he found Franciscans most open for Muslims and other fellow citizens. His seminar alumni have played the advocacy role, lobbying for refugee return, an end to corruption, and for development of an irrigation system, but the predominant role was peace education, helping to break down the stereotypes and working on cooperative projects. He concludes: "People of faith often bring a depth of hope and inspiration that can energize an otherwise stagnant process. When freed from the nationalistic bondage that is all too often perpetuated within their own institutions, they can inspire politicians and bureaucrats to think 'outside the box' in resolving intractable differences"¹⁰.

Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic and Jewish leaders in BH, most of the ministers and ordinary believers do accept European standards of free faith communities in a democratic state, embodied in the concept of the

9 I personally was enriched by some of these authors and books, like R. Barot (ed): *Religion and Ethnicity: Minorities and Social Change in the Metropolis* (1993); D. Johnston-C. Sampson (ed): *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (1994); Th. Tschuy: *Ethnic Conflict and Religion* (1997); L. S. Rounier (ed): *Religion, Politics, and Peace* (1999); A. Mackenzie: *Faith in Diplomacy* (2002); V. Ruland: *Conscience Across Borders* (2002); D. Hollenbach: *The Global Face of Public Faith* (2003); H. Lehmann (ed): *Multireligiosität im vereinigten Europa* (2003); H. Küng-D. Senghaas (ed): *Friedenspolitik* (2003), especially the contributions of H. Küng, p. 17-69, E.-O. Czempel, p. 122-144, and A. Hasenclever, p. 288-318; D. Johnston (ed): *Faith-Based Diplomacy* (2003).

10 David Steele: "Christianity in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. From Ethnic Captive to Reconciliation Agent", u D. Johnston (ed): *Faith-Based Diplomacy*, 124-177. Similarly, in his contribution: "Conflict Resolution among Religious People of Bosnia and Croatia", in Paul Mojzes (ed): *Religion and the War in Bosnia*, 246-253.

separation of religion and state. But they reject an aggressive secularism that would like to treat religion as a strictly private affair of individual citizens. This would be a new form of a communist concept of freedom of religions that actually meant only a freedom of a cult. We would like to be actively present in our pluralistic society, not to impose our beliefs. We are convinced that our loyalty to God enables us to remain open to our fellow humans. God's commandments are religious sanction of ethical values and obligations. Biblical scholars point out that the Decalogue is a document of covenant: God is Creator and Liberator who brought his people out of slavery in Egypt promising his merciful protection and requesting responsible conduct in one's family and society. The historical introduction to the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2, which states, "I the Lord, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt" is a kind of summary of all that will follow. Since he defeated their former lord and master, he and no other deity is their God. The commandments within the context of the Old Testament are the key demands of Israel's relationship with God and with one another. They are limited to ten for easy teaching to children, who can count them on their fingers. God of the Covenant asks believers and all human persons to support the values that make individual and common life humane. At the same time the Decalogue code of ethics is a product of experience and human wisdom, because we are all better off if we respect the transcendental value of the human person, if we take care of elderly parents and disabled members of our society, if do not take justice into our own hands by killing or hurting those who have hurt us, if we do not abuse our own sexuality and the sexuality of other persons, if we respect one another's property, if we do not give false testimony in the court, and if we do not covet the property of our neighbors¹¹. The Qur'an contains its own version of the Decalogue in 6,151-153 and 17,22-35. Beside proper relationship to God and to humans, the Qur'an expressly instructs Muslims to look for justice and for truth¹².

11 Cf. M. Zovkić: "The Ten Commandments: religious sanction of ethical values and obligations", in S. Schreiner (ed): *Visions of a Just society*, 35-39.

12 Cf. commentary of God's commandments in Qur'an by Muslim professor of theology in Sarajevo Dr. Enes Karić: "Deset zapovijedi u novijim komentarima Kur'ana" (= Ten Commandments in recent commentaries of the Qur'an), in his book *Kako tumačiti Kur'an* (= How to interpret the Qur'an), Tugra, Sarajevo 2005, 307-316. A. Khoury: *Der Koran Arabisch-Deutsch, Band 6*, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gütersloh 1995, 352-364. A. Khoury: *Der Koran Arabisch-Deutsch, Band 9*, Gütersloh 1998, 135-146. H. Küng: *Der Islam – Geschichte, Gegenwart, Zukunft*, Piper, München 2004, 129-130 (Der gemeinsame Grundethos der drei prophetischen Religionen).

A RECENT BOOK ON PEACE EFFORTS OF FAITH COMMUNITIES IN BH

The book by Stephen R. Goodwin on the role of faith sodalities in peace building in BH is a result of both studying scholarly texts and of field research. In his chapter on “The limitations of Western intervention towards peace and social restoration” he submits to critical evaluation the successes and failures of post-war initiatives by the international community to restore civil society in BH. He admits with Ralph Roloff that peace-making by diplomats is limited in its capacity for social restoration on the ground, that local actors must be included, and that Western analysts overlook faith communities in their capacity of contributing towards tolerance and understanding at the local level.

The international community acting as an external force has not resolved the conflicts in BH, and military success in ending the war did not translate into established peace... Although the international community recognizes the need for a value-based approach to address the human dimension, they concede this effort is beyond what an external body can provide... The realm of peace-building and restoration arguably lies beyond the secular institutions embodying a materialist worldview. The act of reconciliation is most naturally situated in the locus of the personal and relational, not the structural and institutional. Peace-building and restoration are pre-eminently human endeavors involving the moral and ethical will of individuals and communities alike. It is for this reason that religion – with all of its known difficulties in the Balkans - can play an integrally positive role¹³.

Having interviewed 28 persons in BH of Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic and Reformed affiliation who are inspired by their personal faith in reconciliation and peace activities, he finds that the capacity for peace building and social restoration in religious persons and religious faith sodalities is greater than in the institutions and official leadership of the religious communities. Some of the interviewees represent so called ‘civilian diplomacy’, wherein religious persons influence both high levels of society and the masses. Since such persons or religious leaders “have access to all levels of society through formal and informal mechanisms, they are key figures for substantial peace-building and social restoration”¹⁴.

13 S. R. Goodwin: *Fractured Land, Healing Nations*, 79-80.

14 S. R. Goodwin: *Op. cit.*, 141.

He concludes the chapter on views of religious students for peace-building and social restoration with this statement:

While there may be doctrinal or theological differences that are irreconcilable, their beliefs demonstrate a need for personal transformation that becomes the basis for new and peaceful encounter with others. In their expression of religious faith is found a dynamic that leads from fragmentation to wholeness in the person, in relationships and in newly formed communities. Their words and actions amply support the fundamental hypothesis that religion, expressed through personal faith, can be a source of mediation towards peace-building¹⁵.

The author laments that “on the whole, clerics in BH use the power of their position to advance nationalist causes, and ostracize those few clergy willing to reconcile with persons of other ethno-religious groups” (p. 205), but also points out that “unfettered by the constraint of preserving nationhood, individual clerics, women and young people are at liberty to contravene rigorous codes of conduct, and encounter each other in effective and meaningful ways. They are able to trespass the barriers of cultural and national identity because they consciously choose to respond less to the values and constructs of nationalists and more to what they perceive as the essential nature of humanity as created by a merciful and moral God” (p. 207). Such courageous individuals need faith sodalities, which “provide a sacred space for understanding and healing” (237).

In the conclusion to his book, Goodwin points out that efforts of the international community in BH have been based on two myths: The first is that liberal democratic values and methods of operating are shared by the local population. The second is that superior military power together with political and economic incentive would be sufficient to transform a divided society characterized by continuing fragmentation. Because these assumptions proved false and insufficient, religion in BH, therefore, can complement, not substitute, secular initiative. Religion in BH can have resources for peace building in the following ways:

- By clarifying issues of identity and values that are especially important factors in periods of social upheaval;
- By accessing the Bible and Qur’an, which describe and define the domain of peace beyond the cessation of war and move in direction of societal security and wholeness of being;

15 S. R. Goodwin: *Op. cit.*, 198.

- By recognizing that religions in BH are the basis for ethics and human rights, and that they can be a dynamic resource for social restoration;
- By acknowledging that religious actors can influence their communities in extending peace building to reconciliation and social restoration, because faith-inspired activity shifts the social situation from fragmentation and division towards wholeness and unity (264).

Goodwin concludes the book with this final assessment:

“Ultimately the success of the state rests in the hands and goodwill of its citizens. The religious faith sodalities have already demonstrated results of individual and communal movement from fragmentation towards wholeness, and continue to make significant contributions to sustainable peace and social restoration. Empowering them assists in the creation of a stable nation committed to the sacredness and dignity of all human life, and promotes much needed healing in this fractured land”¹⁶.

* * *

All citizens and ethno-religious communities of BH need material and spiritual support of a united Europe to live their shared values, to take care of their common needs and to respect their differences. Results of faith communities in educating their congregations for forgiveness and stable peace have been modest so far due to the wounds of recent war for ethnic territory after the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the coalescence of ethnic and religious identities. But we are aware that our faith enables us and motivates us to contribute as believing individuals and communities towards a pluralistic civil society with justice and freedom for all. May God help us in this noble endeavor!

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WAR WOUNDS IN CROATIAN CATHOLIC POPULATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA¹

My view of religion and ethnicity in my country is, indeed, influenced by my religious and ethnic identity: I am an ethnic Croat born in Bosnia, educated in Croatia and Italy, a Catholic priest of the Sarajevo archdiocese who has been assigned to priestly office in Sarajevo for the last 27 years, vicar general of Sarajevo Archdiocese since 1987, and professor in Sarajevo Theological Seminary since 1972. I was born in a Croatian Catholic village in Northern Bosnia, and since my grammar school I have experienced my country as a multiethnic and multireligious state because there were several Bosnian-Muslim boys in my grammar school, and because the houses of my maternal uncles were next to the first Serbian houses in the neighboring Serbian Orthodox village (that village was taken over by Serbian forces in August 1992, and according to the Dayton peace treaty included into the Republic of Bosnian Serbs). This essay is going to be more a personal witness than a cool, theological analysis of causes and consequences of the close links between ethnicity and religion in my country.

Bosnia is a small European country of only 51,564 sq. km. with 4,377,033 inhabitants, according to the census of April 1991. Ethnic self-identification at that census was the following: Bosnians-Muslims 1,630,033 (43.5%), Serbs 1,320,738 (31.2%), Croats 760,852 (17.4%), and Yugoslavs 242,683 (5.5%). During the census of 1981, 326,316 (7.9%) declared Yugoslavs. In November 1990, ethnic parties of Bosnians-Muslims (SDA), Serbs (SDS), and Croats (HDZ) won the first democratic elections. This happened primarily because of unsolved ethnic relations

1 Published in *Religion and the War in Bosnia*, Edited by Paul Mojzes, Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia 1998, 207-217.

during seventy-four years of Yugoslavia as one federal state of six national communities (Bosnians-Muslims, Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Serbs, Slovenians) and two large minorities (Hungarians and Albanians). Persons who declared themselves as ethnic Yugoslavs were mostly living in mixed marriages; they gave up their religious and ethnic differences for the sake of peace and harmony in their families. They also were praised by the pre-war royal regime and post-war communist party as ideal citizens, mostly predestined for better government jobs.

The new government of B&H took office in late December 1990. In mid- 1991, Slovenia and Croatia, by virtue of legally organized referenda, declared their independence from Belgrade, and they were soon attacked by the Yugoslav army.

DESTRUCTIONS, EXPULSIONS, AND "HUMANE RESETTLING"

In October 1991, Serbian local militia, substantially helped by the Yugoslav army, invaded Eastern Herzegovina and destroyed seven Catholic parishes. After several Croatian villages were burnt in Herzegovina, President Alija Izetbegović, probably wishing to avoid a possible army assault on the defenseless Muslim population, made a statement saying "This is not our war!" and expressed his conviction that the Yugoslav army would not attack its own people. His hesitant attitude produced major mistrust on the side of Croats in Herzegovina and Bosnia who started buying weapons and organizing their own armed units called HVO.

When Croatia and Slovenia were recognized by EC and other countries in January 1992, citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina were faced with the dilemma of remaining within a reduced Yugoslavia or looking for full sovereignty of their country. Serbian political and religious leaders in Bosnia expressed their concern by stating that Serbs would feel endangered outside of Yugoslavia as one country for all Serbs. Therefore, they forbade their fellow-ethnics, through their ethnic militia, to take part in the referendum on independence organized by the legally elected and functioning government on March 1st, 1992. On the eve of elections in November 1990, two Catholic bishops of B&H issued pastoral letters to be read in all Catholic parishes. In them, they encouraged their congregations to vote on election day and not to give their votes to members of parties which

practiced in the recent past religious or ethnic discrimination of citizens. They did not mention the names of respective parties, but it was obvious that Catholics should vote for HDZ, the only party which promised to protect ethnic and religious interests of Croats in B&H. When in April 1991 the new census was about to take place, Catholic bishops wrote a new letter to their believers, asking them to register as ethnic Croats and Roman Catholics confident that there would be no more civil discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or religious denomination. In February 1992, the bishops asked again their believers to vote for an independent B&H, having in mind the bad experience of the Croatian Catholic population in Yugoslavia which was dominated by Orthodox Serbs as the majority people. On March 1, 1992, only 63.04% of our citizens were able to take part in the referendum, and 62.63% of these gave their votes for their country's sovereignty.

In April 1992, the Serbs started an open war for their ethnically "clean" territory in B&H. In six months time, they took control of Eastern Herzegovina as well as of Eastern, Northern, and Western Bosnia. They expelled hundreds of thousands of Bosnians-Muslims and Croats from their homes, and they destroyed about 600 mosques and about 300 churches. Muslim civil and religious authorities estimate the number of their killed or missing civilians to about 200,000 and of their raped women to about 20,000.

The Muslim population driven out from Eastern and Western Bosnia moved in large extension into Central Bosnia where Croats and Muslims have been living in mixed or separate localities for centuries. In March 1993, armed conflicts broke out between Croats and Muslims in Mostar and in Central Bosnia. They finished only in March 1994, thanks to a federation agreement mediated by the US government. Before these conflicts, Croatian authorities in Mostar "cleansed" about 50,000 Muslims from Herzegovina, and during these conflicts, Muslim authorities "cleansed" about 100,000 Croats from Central Bosnia.² Archbishop Puljić made several pastoral visits, trying to trace and to calm down ethnic tensions before and during the confrontation period. In several localities, which were partially or predominantly inhabited by the Croats, he found confidential instructions of Croatian leaders to their fellow-ethnics to leave their settlements even before the arrival of the Muslim army. Probably those au-

2 Figures are approximate and vary from source to source. See, for example: Tomo Vukšić, *Mi i oni. Siguran identitet pretpostavka susretanja. Miscellanea de oecumenismo*, Sarajevo, 2000, p. 127.

thorities supposed at that stage of the war that Bosnia would be partitioned into three ethnic states, and, therefore, the Croats should move from ethnically mixed localities into safe Croatian zones.

As I now know, Croats have prepared and partially caused the armed conflicts with Muslims by “cleansing” Muslims from Stolac, Čapljina, Mostar, and other localities under Croatian control in Herzegovina. I was in Sarajevo in July 1993 when a Jewish leader of the humanitarian organization “Benevolencia” asked me to call via amateur radio operators (the phones of private citizens in Sarajevo were cut off in early April 1992) any high-ranking priest in Mostar who could mediate the freeing of a sick Muslim imprisoned by Croats in a concentration camp in Mostar with thousands of other Muslim men. Up to that day, I did not know that such camps existed in Herzegovina. Later on, some young priests, my former students, “explained” to me that bringing Muslim men between the ages of sixteen to sixty into concentration camps was necessary because Muslims were an “unreliable element” in Croatian places. I was not able to fulfill the request of radio amateurs on that day, but I sent my message through another channel.

In the first year of the war, Croats and Bosnian-Muslims used to criticize Serbs for having committed terrible atrocities on the civil population and sacral buildings. Ethnic media in Muslim-controlled Sarajevo unveiled only the crimes of Serbs and Croats and vice versa; Serbian and Croatian media at Pale and Mostar spoke only of criminal activities of Muslims. From personal reports of priests and lay people in the Mostar and Sarajevo diocese, I now know that my fellow-ethnics did commit criminal acts on innocent Muslim civilians and monuments. For a long time, the Muslims boasted that they were the most humane defenders of their settlements, but I know that their fighters have also killed some innocent civilians and two priests, destroyed three churches of my diocese, devastated a certain number of sacral buildings, and destroyed several villages. I saw on the exterior church wall in Travnik the Muslim creed written in Latin characters: *“Allahu ekber - Allah is great!”*

I do not distribute the guilt of war crimes equally to three ethnic communities nor do I look at any of our ethnic communities as “criminal people.” It is up to the impartial international tribunal to prosecute and to convict individuals from each ethnic community for their personal criminal actions during this war for the creation of ethnic territories. Despite the presence of some elements of religion, this war in Bosnia was not a

war of religions, but a war for ethnic territories within our multiethnic and multireligious country. I do hope that the present cease fire brought about by the Dayton agreement will grow into permanent peace. Serbian forces took about 70% of national territory in B&H in 1992. In October and November of 1995, the Bosnian army and Croatian forces took back about 20% of that territory from Serbian forces.

DISCORDANT EVALUATIONS OF WAR ACTIVITIES AND OF THE DAYTON PEACE TREATY

According to church statistics, the Catholic population in the four dioceses of B&H in 1991 was about 832,000, distributed as follows: the Trebinje-Mrkan diocese in Eastern Herzegovina about 16,000 in fifteen parishes, the diocese of Mostar-Duvno in Western Herzegovina about 178,000 in sixty-six parishes, the archdiocese of Vrhbosna-Sarajevo in Central and Northern Bosnia about 528,000 in 144 parishes, and the diocese of Banja Luka in Western Bosnia about 110,000 in forty-seven parishes. Eastern Herzegovina is inhabited by a predominantly Serbian-Orthodox population, Western Herzegovina by predominantly Croatian-Catholics while the territory of Sarajevo and Banja Luka dioceses has been populated for centuries by a mixed population of three respective ethnic and religious communities. During and because of the war, the Catholic population of B&H was reduced to about 400,000 as follows: the archdiocese of Sarajevo from 528,000 to about 200,000, the diocese of Banja Luka from 110,000 to about 5,000, in the Trebinje and Mostar diocese about 20,000 Catholics were displaced, but they were sheltered by Croatian civil authorities on the territory of Western Herzegovina.

Mons. Franjo Komarica, the Bishop of Banja Luka and Mons. Vinko Puljić, the Archbishop of Sarajevo, opened in Zagreb in the summer of 1992 an ecclesiastical vicariate for Catholic refugees from their dioceses. These vicariates had to take care of priests and their parishioners who were driven out by Bosnian Serbs or who left their homes before the arrival of Serbian forces. Most of them took refuge in Croatia with their relatives or were housed by the Croatian government in vacant hotels and refugee centers. Very soon Caritas directors of the Banja Luka and Sarajevo dioceses had to open their headquarters in Croatia in order to coordi-

nate more effectively the humanitarian aid coming into B&H or to refugee camps in Croatia. Since mail and telephone lines were cut off in April 1992, Caritas people had to bring in and out thousands of personal letters together with basic humanitarian goods.

Due to shortages of food, water, electricity, and fuel, ecclesiastical educational institutions in Bosnia had to be closed down in April 1992. It took ecclesiastical authorities about six months to reopen these centers outside of B&H: the Novitiate of Bosnian Franciscans in Italy, the Franciscan Theological Seminary in Samobor near Zagreb, the Sarajevo Metropolitan Theological Seminary in Bol on the island of Brač, near Split in Croatia.

Bishop Komarica of Banja Luka had to face Serbian rule in his diocesan territory. He asked his fellow Catholics not to take weapons because such action would only give an excuse to the Serbian militia and private armed groups for more violent discrimination against the non-Serbian population. He also asked them not to move out voluntarily because this would contribute towards ethnic self-cleansing. When two of his priests were killed and numerous Catholics were taken into custody by Serbian armed groups, or when Croatian men were brought by force to dig trenches on front lines, Bishop Komarica kept writing letters to Serbian civil and military authorities, asking for the protection of basic rights for non-Serbs in the Republika Srpska. In these letters, he was calling Radovan Karadžić "Mister President." I know some Catholics in other parts of Bosnia and in Croatia who consider Bishop Komarica indirectly responsible for the torture or even killing of some Croats, because he advised them not to leave their homes despite growing Serbian oppression of the non-Serbian population.

Privately, it was recommended to Archbishop Puljić of Sarajevo by some Croatian civil and military leaders in Bosnia to leave Sarajevo and to transfer his episcopal seat to a town with a majority of Croatian Catholics in Central Bosnia. The reason presumably was that Sarajevo had a Muslim majority which, therefore, cannot have any permanent meaning for ethnic Croat citizens of Bosnia. In his pastoral letters, homilies, and public statements, Archbishop Puljić repeated his conviction that Bosnia and Herzegovina should be the single state of all three ethnic communities with a high degree of provincial and local autonomy and with *really equal rights for all citizens and ethnic communities*. In his pleading for human, ethnic, and religious rights of all inhabitants of B&H, he shares his deep personal

views and the guidelines of the Holy See. His book, *Suffering with Hope: Appeals, Addresses, Interviews* is now available in English. It contains some of his speeches and documents published between August 18, 1991, and December 23, 1993. From them, the reader can get an insight into endeavors and reflections of a religious leader who shares the suffering of his own congregation and of his fellow-citizens in the besieged capital of B&H. This book also reflects the efforts of this Catholic prelate who drew the attention of the international political community and of the universal Church to the war atrocities and destruction in B&H. From his published and translated documents, foreign readers can discern the way in which Archbishop Puljić strongly supports B&H as a multiethnic and multireligious country.

During the armed conflicts between Croats and Muslims in Central Bosnia, the Muslim-controlled media in Sarajevo incited anti-Croatian feelings in their listeners and their readers in a city with only 30,000 of Croat Catholics out of 380,000 of the predominantly Muslim population. In such a situation, Archbishop Puljić wrote on June 4, 1993, a letter to the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in which he said:

We have already lived together and survived this siege of the city of Sarajevo for fourteen months. However, relations are becoming increasingly strained, chiefly under the influence of the media. For many people all of us Croats in the city have suddenly become *ustashas*. I therefore want to caution that responsibility can be only personal, never collective. Let us, citizens of Sarajevo who are all enduring this torment together, at least not poison our mutual good relations because they should be a model of common living for the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I would add that the world will see Muslims as a partner worthy of respect to the measure in which they manage to solve the question of Catholics and members of other religions in the area under their control.³

Mons. Ratko Perić, the Bishop of Mostar-Duvno who is also the apostolic administrator of the small diaspora diocese Trebinje-Mrkan, is the Catholic religious leader of Herzegovina which is predominantly inhabited by Croat Catholics. Most of the Croatian population in this area, Catholic priests included, hoped in 1992-1993 that B&H would somehow disintegrate and the Western Herzegovina would be included into the Republic of Croatia. This is why they aimed at creating a Croatian ethnic territory in B&H with Mo-

3 Vinko Puljić, *Suffering with Hope: Appeals, Addresses, Interviews*, p. 177.

star as its capital despite the fact that about 600,000 of the Croats of B&H who lived outside of this territory in Central, Northern, and Western Bosnia, mixed with Serbs and Bosnian-Muslims. The bishops of Sarajevo and Banja Luka together with the majority of their priests and lay persons asked Croatian political leaders in Zagreb and Mostar to create a political program for all B&H so that every family, regardless of its ethnic and religious identity, can safely live on its property. Most prominent political leaders in Croatia and Herzegovina ignored such suggestions in favor of a "safe" Croatian territory with a possible "humane relocation" of those Croats who now live outside of such an envisaged future, ethnic territory. I know of some local political and military leaders who tried to destroy the mutual trust of Muslims and Croats in some localities of Bosnia and sought to produce conflicts which would result in the relocation of the Croat population or the expulsion of the Muslim population. These same leaders maintained that Croats cannot have a safe future with Serbs or Muslims in B&H and, therefore, a fight for Croatian ethnic and political territory should be a primary "patriotic" duty of every good Croat.

Foreign media, after having discovered in 1993 concentration camps in Herzegovina arranged by Croats for Bosnian-Muslim men in the territory under their control, criticized sharply the Catholic bishops in B&H and Croatia for not condemning more explicitly violations of human rights in such camps. Muslim media in Sarajevo, and especially the present religious leader of Bosnian Muslims, Dr Mustafa Cerić, with his immediate collaborators, rebuked strongly the Catholic religious leaders for the crimes of HVO on the Muslim civil population in Herzegovina and Central Bosnia. I was personally present at such a conference in Sarajevo on October 3, 1993. Having in mind that Serbian- Orthodox bishops and Muslim religious leaders remained at a general level of condemning crimes without mentioning concrete violations of human rights by their own fellow-ethnics, Catholic bishops in B&H and in Croatia followed the same style of declarations and appeals. In their Declaration of November 29, 1993, the Catholic bishops of B&H said,

Innocent imprisoned civilians are still living in inhuman conditions in spite of daily talks and promises that they will be exchanged. We do not know whether local political authorities have enabled any refugee or displaced person to return home. Every day we follow with pain the increase of inhumanity that makes it impossible to transport greatly needed humanitarian aid to the civilian population. We repudiate all the unjust and

inhuman acts committed in this war, and in the name of God's law and human dignity we condemn every method and practice of depriving people and nations of their rights, persecuting the population, 'ethnic cleansing,' genocide and destruction of religious buildings—whatever group or ethnic political community are the perpetrators.

In late November 1993, a meeting of Catholic bishops of B&H with the civil authorities of Croats in B&H took place in Split. I know from personal information by some participants that the civil authorities took that occasion to reproach the bishops for insufficiently supporting the Croatian ethnic cause and for criticizing too much some criminal incidents of individual HVO soldiers or local civil leaders.

At an ecumenical conference in Pecs, Hungary, convened in December 1993 upon the invitation of Dr. John Taylor, a consultant of the Conference of European Churches for the countries of former Yugoslavia, we non-Serb participants from Bosnia and Croatia used the expression "Serbian aggression" until a present Serbian Orthodox bishop rebuked us for using such an impolite word at an ecumenical meeting. Serbs, he said, did not commit any aggression in Bosnia and Croatia; they only were defending their families and their property. He was serious, and he literally meant what he was saying. This incident helped me to realize how crucial it is for religious ministers and leaders to be prophetically critical of their own people in the countries and regions where ethnic and religious identities coincide.

Now that the Dayton peace treaty has been signed, it is welcomed by the Croatian population and religious leaders as a necessary means which stopped the bloodshed. At the same time, it is being looked upon as an unjust peace which has legitimized most of the results of Serbian aggression and which only formally guarantees a safe return of exiles and refugees to their former settlements. Large numbers of houses have been destroyed while those that are in relatively good shape are now settled by Serbian or Bosnian-Muslim families driven out from their residences. Those Croats who have experienced violence and injustice from Serbs or Bosnian-Muslims during this war in their own family and on their own property are disappointed by the Dayton peace agreement because B&H remains in some way one state, despite the high degree of autonomy in ethnic "entities." On the other hand, those who have been driven out from their places which are now controlled by Serbs or Muslims and would like to return one day ask themselves what kind of future can their children have in such places. I am

sure our Serb and Muslim fellow citizens who are in an identical position must have similar bitter feelings and dark expectations.

THE CHALLENGE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CIVIL TOLERANCE IN ONE STATE OF THREE ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Ethnogenesis of ethnic communities in B&H is a sharply disputed question in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia. In November 1995, I attended an inter-religious conference and prayer for peace at Florence, Italy. I was asked to take an active part in a round-table on religion and ethnicity, and I was expected to say something about my country and my identity. I told the audience that during my high school and theological studies in Croatia I was taught that the medieval kingdom of Bosnia was largely populated by Catholics, that the Bosnian civil leader was called “ban” like in middle age Croatia, and that, therefore, all inhabitants of Bosnia were in their past somehow Croats. When I was assigned to be a chaplain in Travnik in 1965,¹ I came in touch with local Muslim people. I discovered that they do not feel they are Croats or Serbs but a different ethnic community. I had to respect their sense of ethnic identity, and I still do so as an ethnic Croat citizen of Bosnia. At the same conference in Florence, a Serbian Orthodox bishop was present who told the audience that for Serbian historians all inhabitants of Bosnia in the Middle Ages were Serbs and that only during the Turkish rule in Bosnia (1463-1878) some converted to Islam and others to Catholicism, but they all have Serbian roots. During this war in Sarajevo, Zenica, and other towns controlled by Bosnian-Muslims, new text-books for history and literature were prepared and prescribed by the Ministry of Education. In these books, the official name of the language has been changed to “Bosnian” and all inhabitants of Medieval Bosnia are depicted as ethnic Bosnians, thus making the contemporary Muslims of B&H the most authentic Bosnians.

The Dayton peace treaty foresees the after-the-war reality consisting of two “entities” of B&H with a decentralized and autonomous educational program. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education and writers of text-books for all levels of education should find an essential consensus in important questions of history, language, literature, and other subjects of general significance. Educational programs and teaching staff can contribute towards digesting the bitter conflicts from the distant and near

past and work towards dismantling the revengeful feelings in the hearts of the young generation of Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats. The multiethnic and multireligious character of B&H has been heavily shaken by the war activities 1991-1995, but I firmly believe not destroyed forever.

I know some Croatian Catholic priests in B&H who were tortured in Serbian concentration camps or in Muslim house-prisons. They feel so embittered and disappointed that they would not accept—at least for the time being—any priestly office on the territory under Serbian or Muslim control. They even disagree with the rest of us who are ready to serve our fellow Catholics wherever they decide to settle down and who believe that a tolerant life in multiethnic and multireligious B&H is still possible. I am sure the bishops would not put any juridical pressure on such priests and send them to take care of parishes in the territory under Serbian or Muslim control. These servants of God's people need some time to heal in order to become again spiritual healers, not only of their own congregations, but also of other fellow citizens.

During the 1991-1995 war, religious leaders had to side with their respective ethnic communities because of unsolved ethnic and religious problems which accumulated during the existence of royal and communist Yugoslavia (1918-1991). Most of them wrote declarations, appeals, and protests on occasion of crimes committed by armed men of other ethnic identity upon members of their own communities. They may be blamed for lacking prophetic courage to stop or at least to denounce more explicitly concrete misdeeds of their fellow ethnics.

After this war, the material and spiritual renewal of religious ministers and leaders of B&H face the challenge of educating their own congregations for civil tolerance in their multiethnic and multireligious country. The time of selfjustification or of only blaming "others" should be over. Our mutual relations have been poisoned, and we who share our people's every day sorrows are more aware than our political representatives that the process of healing and reconciliation will be painful but possible with God's grace and the good will of involved people. We should comprehend that a new kind of Bosnia- Herzegovina is needed and possible after the disintegration of Yugoslavia and after the cruel atrocities which have taken place in this war which implanted in many hearts the fatal seeds of personal, family, and ethnic revenge. At least those of us who believe that such a Bosnia is possible should act accordingly- precisely as believing persons and as religious ministers.

Our homilies in liturgical celebrations and worship services as well as our religious instruction of school children are unique opportunities to help our adult believers and their adolescent youngsters to put into practice the moral values we proclaim and believe in. We should also take an active part in inter-religious, non-government peace movements. We can and we should encourage our believers to get involved in such movements. During this war, I had a chance to attend several conferences on regions in conflict organized by Moral Rearmament, an inter-religious peace movement founded by the American social worker, Frank Buchman (1878-1961), now centered at Caux in Switzerland. I also attended in 1993 the European Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) in Sweden and the 1994 World Assembly in Italy. At these meetings, I learned to speak “the secondary religious language” as Dr. William Vendley, general secretary of WCRP, proposed for us all to learn when we religious persons coming from different traditions try to make our world a better place to live.

The Croatian Catholic population of B&H is proportionately the greatest loser in this war. Because of the war, half of the Catholics have left or have been driven out from their parishes in Banja Luka, Sarajevo, and Trebinje dioceses. They found a temporary shelter in Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Germany, and other countries. Most of them will never return to the places of their birth. Those who have remained in their parishes or are about to return to their burned-out homes will become an absolute minority and even greater losers if their spiritual leaders do not help them to cherish their own ethnic and religious identity while respecting the identity of their Bosnian-Muslim and Serb-Orthodox fellow citizens. The future of the Catholic population in B&H will to a great extent also depend on the really humane and equal treatment of Croat Catholics in territories controlled by Serbs and by Bosnian-Muslims.

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A BOSNIAN CATHOLIC'S REVIEW OF A UK NOVEL ON THE SIEGE OF SARAJEVO¹

Kevin Sullivan was born in 1957 in Glasgow, Scotland. He harmonizes dynamically his Scottish ethnicity, U. K. citizenship and living in Sarajevo with his wife Marija and their daughter Katarina. He studied history and English at Glasgow University. He came first time to Bosnia in September 1991 on his way to Croatia where he intended to cover the fighting in Dubrovnik area and returned back in October 1992 as a correspondent for United Press International. At the beginning of 1993 he visited in an armored Land Rover Gornji Vakuf in Central Bosnia and drove over a land mine. He broke badly his left foot and right leg and was transferred to U. K. for medical treatment. For three years he lived with his family in Singapore and worked there, then in Spain. In 2001 he returned to Sarajevo where he worked for OHR until 2007. He continues living in Sarajevo with his family and, beside writing, works in the International Commission for Missing Persons.

On page 2 of this novel the readers are offered geographical map of war torn Sarajevo in 1992-1993 with Government controlled west section and "Rebel" controlled east side. In the map are clearly marked localities which are mentioned more times in the novel, from Chamber Theatre and Presidency on the north to the village of Otes in the south from which the young British volunteer doctor had to evacuate a heavily sick boy to London. In two pages of "Historical Note" the 1992-1996 war for ethnic territories in Bosnia and Herzegovina is depicted as tragic consequence of disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991. K. S. calls "Rebels" militia of ethnic Serbs who were assisted by Yugoslav Army professional officers in ethnic

1 Kevin Sullivan, *The Longest Winter*, Twenty7 Books, London 2016, 326 pp. This review was published in *Vrhbosnensia* 1/2017, 332-337.

cleansing of thousands of Bosniaks-Muslims and Croats from their centuries old native places. He points out: "This novel is set in Sarajevo during the first winter of the besiege and is based on true events".

In the plot of his novel K. S. presents masterfully the young British volunteer doctor, Terry Barnes, in her mission of evacuating the sick boy Miro Pejanović from suburban village of Otes to London for survival medical treatment. Due to besiege circumstances her pick up service did not come to Sarajevo airport, but American journalist Tim Brad, with his interpreter Anna took her to Holiday Inn in the center of the city and gave her first initiation into life dangers on the way. Once in the hotel, Terry meets arrogant journalist Michael Brading, but also Anna's friend Sanela who takes her to the hospital where she meets Dr Dario Jurić, coordinator of evacuation service. Next morning Sanela's boyfriend Zlatko takes Terry to Otes where fatal fights between Rebels and Government forces are taking place. In the PTT building where UN military headquarters was stationed they got the papers to enter the airport and board a plane with Miro and his mum. On the way to Otes "there were abandoned cars and trucks everywhere, some of them overturned, the factories fire-blackened and the walls with shell holes" (p. 95-96). On their way they heard bullets some of which were targeting their car. Thanks to Zlatko's extraordinary sense for orientation and courage they reached the building where Mrs. Edisa Pejanović and her son Miro were eagerly waiting for them, Terry examined Miro and promised to pick them up next morning.

On same evening Zlatko, Terry and Dr Jurić attend the children's singing contest which kept taking place in spite of war circumstances, as self-encouragement of performers and spectators. In that night Government military authorities decide to evacuate remaining 1500 civilians from Otes and abandon the settlement to Rebel forces who were armed with tanks.

That evening, during the party in honor of Terry, the building shook from explosion and Dr. Jurić ordered all guests to move to the hall of the building for safety. "They slept in the frail light of winter moon. Terry closed her eyes. Before she dozed she felt a curious peace, as safe as anyone could feel on such a night, sleeping with heroes" (p. 265). Next morning two soldiers, provided by military commander Alija, escorted Terry and Zlatko to take Miro and his mum. In a critical moment Terry asked Mrs. Pejanović to take Miro out of the cot. "Terry was that moment quite sure about what she must do. She hadn't come to this place to bring med-

icine. She hadn't come to ease Miro's entry into Britain. She had come to carry him across this street. His mother couldn't do it. She would have crawled through fire for him, but now Mrs Pejanović wasn't capable" (295). Although the French military control did recognize validity of their written permission to embark the UN Hercules military airplane, they requested additional written permission to enter the airport building. Only after threatening pressure of British flight officer and his escort three last minute Sarajevo passengers were enabled to embark.

Several other parallel stories are developed in the novel. First one concerns the assassination of Hakija Turajlić, deputy prime minister of BH, on 8 January 1993 who was in a French APC on his way from the airport where he had met a Turkish delegation. The author does not mention the name of murdered minister nor the date, but only his cruel death and unsuccessful attempt of two foreign journalists to find out who ordered the APC door to be opened so that a Rebel soldier could shoot the victim. These two journalists ask representatives of UN in west section of the city and Rebel spokespersons at Pale, the small town about 16 km north-east of Sarajevo, then temporary capital of rebelled Serbs. The impression the readers get is that UN officers cannot be criminally prosecuted in the country where they serve as peacekeepers and happen to perpetrate some criminal acts.

Another parallel story is tragic destiny of Milena Ristić from Foča, a town of Eastern Bosnia with majority Serbian population. Her father left the family before she was born and her mother had to run away for life when Milena was 12 years old because of family debt she was not able to pay back. Milena grew up with adoptive parents and married local boy Miroslav who succumbed in 1991 to his younger brother's plans for violent driving out non-Serbs from Foča. Milena moved to Muslim section of Sarajevo to work in a coffee bar and look for new friends. In the night when Terry slept in the hall of a building with other citizens of war torn Sarajevo for the sake of safety, Milena was hit on her way home from work. She dreamed of going to meet her father whom she never met alive. Her friends found her name on the list of picked up dead bodies in the hospital during the previous night.

Our author does not mention ethnic and religious identity of his heroines and heroes, probably to avoid confusing or boring his British readers. We readers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with other readers in neighboring countries issued from former Yugoslavia, recognize by names

their ethnic identity. In the novel, Dario Jurić is a Croat of Catholic descent, Little boy Miro Pejanović a Serb, but his mother Enisa a Muslim who gave birth to her son in a mixed marriage with a Serb, and accepted the husband's traditional right to give ethnic identity to the children in such marriage. Military commander in Otes Alija is a typical Muslim name, coinciding with Alija Izetbegović, first democratically elected president of BH after the silent imploding of communist regime. I conclude from this that Kevin Sullivan looks at suffering population of Sarajevo with their scarcities and calamities as human beings who share common needs, fears and joys. By making ethnic Serbs, Bosniaks-Muslims and Croats work, sing and fear together he would like to remind them and his British readers that more elements unite them than ethnic and religious peculiarities. I admit and appreciate this, although I helped shaping the Pastoral letter of Archbishop Vinko Puljić in February 1992 to be proclaimed to Catholic church goers on the eve of the independence referendum. Bishops of BH advised their fellow Catholics to take part in the referendum and to give their votes for independence of BH because we had bad experience with Yugoslavia from 1918 to 1992. We did not expect that the consequence of legally organized referendum would motivate our Serbian fellow citizens to violent expelling out of non-Serbs from their ethnic territory and keep Sarajvo for nearly four years in besiege.

On 23 January 2014 K. S. gave an interview to Emel Gušić Handžić on occasion of his novel *Out of the West* (November 2013) where the plot takes place in Greece during World War Two. In that interview he said: "Two of the principal Greek characters in *Out of the West* are reluctant members of the resistance; they didn't join it by choice, they had no option. Two of the other characters are a British officer who goes to Greece and a woman who works for the war office. The book tries to examine how the people in the U. K. and the people in Greece are both confronting moral issues. It tries to explore the fact that even if you're not in physical danger, in everyone's life people have to make moral decisions". This kind of approach makes his novel writing a kind of philosophical ethics in an entertaining way. He reflects and depicts his characters along the same line in *The Longest Winter* which makes worthy reading this novel.

I enjoyed the English of the author, with short sentences, vivacious dialogues and many times humorous metaphors. For example, Mrs Nurudinović, the Muslim neighbor of Milena in Sarajevo, knew that Milena "earned her living in a bar that was an unsavoury place. She spoke with

a country accent and kept in herself at the beginning" (122); another woman in the novel "had rouge on her cheeks to cover the paleness of winter and a poor diet, she had bags under her eyes and she wore too much mascara" (199); during the children singing contest Dr Jurić explains to Terry: "We have to do what we are accustomed to doing, and we are accustomed to holding our contest at this time of year. By being ordinary we resist! By singing we resist!" (222).

Kevin Sullivan is called by above mentioned Bosnian journalist "a Bosnian son-in-law" because he married a Bosnian girl and goes on staying and working with his family in Sarajevo. They like going for walks in and around Sarajevo. He is a member of Caledonian Society comprising the Scots who live in BH and who organize events from time to time. Among others, they celebrate the anniversary of Robert Burns (1759-1796), Scotland's national poet. To the question, how does he find living in Bosnia, he regrets that some positive things he had expected at the level of the whole country did not yet happen, but he does not give up his and our hope: "You can turn all the negatives into positives if you have the right approach and I don't think that's unrealistic. Bosnia and Herzegovina can be a success; it's like a football team that has lost a succession of games and it starts to think that it has to lose but I don't think that's the case". By living with us and doing what he does he helps us all to support each other and contribute to common good in our pluralistic society. This is why I believe that this novel should be read by his British audience and also translated into Bosnian to help us look for concrete ways of change for better.

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY OF THE QUR'AN BY MUSLIM SCHOLARS IN AMERICA¹

The Study Quran. A New Translation and Commentary, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Editor-in-Chief, Harper One, New York 2015, LIX+1988 pp with 11 maps.

I would like to thank Professor Enes Karić of the Faculty of Islamic Studies at Sarajevo University for lending me his copy of this book, which deserves the full attention of all those who support Christian-Muslim dialogue. Professor Karić, after his dissertation on the hermeneutics of the Quran, prepared and defended at Belgrade University², published in 1995 his own translation of the Quran into Bosnian accompanied by exegetical notes on individual verses³. When he learned that Professor Nasr was working with others on a new translation of the Quran, Professor Karić got in touch with him during a visit to the USA in April 2011 and obtained an interview with him on the subject of translating the Quran and providing a commentary in modern English. This interview appeared in *Preporod* (a Muslim magazine published in Sarajevo) on 15 May 2011⁴. In the interview, Professor Nasr notes that every new translation of the Quran into English contributes to making English also a Muslim language. In the General Introduction to this translation, dated April 2015, the editor-in-chief explains that the first initiative for the project came from HarperCollins publishing house in San

1 Published in Croatian in *Vrhbosnensia* 2/2016, 500-512.

2 Enes Karić, *Hermeneutika Kur'ana*, Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, Zagreb 1990.

3 *Kur'an* sa prijevodom na bosanski jezik. Preveo Enes Karić, Bosanska knjiga, Sarajevo 1995 with Arabic original and Bosnian translation. I have used the new edition, FF Bihać 2006. Besides this edition, which has parallel Arabic original and Bosnian texts, a pocket edition without Arabic text and exegetical notes was published the same year.

4 "Intervju Enesa Karića sa Seyyedom Hosseinom Nasrom, „Kur'an nam i danas govori što je govorio i prošlim pokoljenjima ljudi", *Preporod* 10/2011, 31-34.

Francisco (now Harper One, New York) which had had a positive experience in preparing and promoting a Christian study Bible⁵. Professor Nasr accepted this proposal on condition that he would draft the project and choose the collaborators. Their work took nine years.

A US SHI'A SCHOLAR EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND HIS COLLABORATORS

As can be seen in encyclopedia entries on Shi'a Muslims, this community began with followers of 'Ali, Muhammad's cousin and the husband of the Prophet's daughter Fatima. A number of groups have arisen over the course of Islamic history that are united by the belief that the leader (*caliph* or *imam*) of the Muslim community (*umma*) should be a member of the Prophet's family. Shi'a Muslims⁶ live mainly in Iran. Seyyed Hossein Nasr was born into a Shi'a family in Tehran in 1933, the son of a medical doctor and a university professor. At the age of 13 his father sent him to New York to stay with relatives and continue his education. He studied at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and received his MA from Harvard University in the field of geology and geophysics. In 1958 he finished his PhD dissertation *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (published in 1964). After his father died, his mother joined him with his younger brother in Boston in 1950. From 1958 to 1979 Nasr was a professor at Tehran University researching tradition and ancient wisdom. In the time of the Shi'a revolution in Iran he happened to be in London and did not return home but decided to move to the USA, where he has been a professor at George Washington University since 1984. He has written more than 50 books and 500 essays, predominantly in the field of Islamic philosophy. He was one of the Muslim scholars open to dialogue with Christians who signed the 13 October 2007 open letter *A Common Word between Us and You* as a response to Pope Benedict's 2006 speech in Regensburg. In that letter, Muslim leaders offer dialogue with Christians based on love of God and love of neighbor, as witnessed in the Quran and in the Bible. This letter and the responses of Christian

5 *HarperCollins Study Bible*, Paperback 2006, 2208. the English text of the Bible was taken from *Revised Standard Version*, commentary and essays written by Protestant and Catholic Bible scholars, professional sponsorship given by the Society of Biblical Literature.

6 See "Shi'a" in *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, Editor in Chief Richard C. Martin, Macmillan Reference USA 2004, 621-630.

leaders has been published in English⁷. Professor Ahmet Alibašić of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo has provided a translation and publication of this book into Bosnian with comprehensive documents⁸. Pope Benedict accepted this initiative for dialogue and entrusted the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue with further steps. The first seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum took place in Rome on 4-6 November 2008. Professor Nasr and the grand mufti of Bosnia, Dr. Mustafa Cerić, were members of the Islamic delegation. Their addresses in the presence of Pope Benedict have been included in this book in English (and Bosnian)⁹.

As assistant editors and members of the editorial board Professor Nasr chose established scholars from universities and research institutes mostly in the USA and Canada. He introduces himself and his collaborators at the beginning of this book (p. XI-XII) listing some of their published works. Caner K. Dagli is Professor of Islamic Studies at the College of the Holy Cross, a specialist in Sufism, Islamic philosophy, interfaith dialogue and Quranic studies. As well as the primary translation and commentary for surahs 2-3, 8-9, 21-28, he contributed an essay, "Conquest and Conversion, War and peace in the Quran" (p. 1805-1817). Maria Massi Dakake, a convert to Islam, is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at George Mason University, specializing in Shi'ism, Sufism, and Islamic philosophy and theology, the Quran, interfaith dialogue and issues related to women. As well as translating and commenting on surahs 4-7, 10-12, and 14-21, she wrote the essay: "Quranic Ethics, Human Rights and Society" (p. 1785-1804). Joseph E. B. Lumbard, also a convert to Islam, is Assistant Professor in the Department of Arabic and Translation Studies at the American University of Sharjah. He is a specialist in Quranic studies, Sufism, Islamic philosophy, comparative theology and Islamic eco-theology. He was primary translator and commentator for surahs 1, 13, 29-114 and wrote the essay: "The Quranic View of Sacred History and Other Religions" (p. 1765-1784). Mohammad Rustom is Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at Carleton University who specializes in Sufism, Islamic philosophy and theology and Quranic exegesis. He wrote the commentary for surahs 10-15 and 20 and edited other parts of the commentary and the translation.

7 *A Common Word between Us and You*, The Royal Aal Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, January 2009, Jordan, 280 pp.

8 *Zajednička riječ za nas i vas*, CNS Sarajevo 2010. Croatian translation of the document can be found in my book *Pozitivna recipročnost u međureligijskom dijalogu*, Napredak, Sarajevo 2015, 356-386.

9 See *A Common Word between Us and You*, 237-246.

In the General Introduction, Professor Nasr points out that the translators and contributors have not stopped at the historical, social and linguistic aspects of the Quran, neglecting the sacred character of the Quran for modern Muslims: "Inasmuch as the Quran is the central, sacred, revealed reality for Muslims, *The Study Quran* addresses it as such and does not limit to a work of merely historical, social and linguistic interest divorced from its sacred and revealed character. To this end, the focus of *The Study Quran* is on the Quran's reception and interpretation within the Muslim intellectual and spiritual tradition, although this does not mean that Muslims are the only intended audience, since the work is meant to be of use to various scholars, teachers, students, and general readers. It is with this *Book*, whose recitation brings Muslims from Sumatra to Senegal to tears, and not simply with a text important for the study of Semitic philology or the social conditions of first/seventh century Arabia, that this study deals" (p. XXIV). Continuing, he introduces the Quran as the book of Muslim faith, ethics, sacred history with eschatology and prayers. Aware that Muslim readers in Western countries meet Christians, Professor Nasr points out how important it is to recite parts of the Quran in Arabic: "The celebration of the Eucharist is valid according to traditional churches no matter which accepted liturgical language is used. But in Islam the daily prayers, the central rite that could be said to correspond to the celebration of the Eucharist in Christianity, are not valid if not performed in Arabic, whether the worshipper is Arab or non-Arab. One might say that, just as in the Eucharist worshippers become 'attached' to the Word, that is Christ, by eating the bread and drinking the wine, which are transformed through the rite into his flesh and blood, in Islamic rites worshippers 'devour' the Word of God through the enunciation of verses in Quranic Arabic. For Muslims Quranic Arabic is therefore, in the deeper sense, like bread and wine in the Eucharist or the body of Christ in the traditional Christianity. Both are embodiments of the Word of God and therefore sacred. For Christians or those from a Christian background who wish to understand the full religious and spiritual significance of Quranic Arabic, it is not enough to compare it to Aramaic, which was the language of Christ, or the Latin of the Vulgate. It must be compared to the role of the body of Christ in the Christian tradition" (p. XXX).

He prepares Muslim and non-Muslim readers for repetitions in 114 surahs of the Quran which open the door to other parts, reminding them that in the canonical text, surahs are not arranged chronologically, but

that the Prophet Muhammad made the order of surahs and verses. While Muslims recite five ritual or canonical prayers in Arabic, believers who are not Arabs read The Book of Revelation in their languages, among which Nasr also enumerates Bosnian: "In any case when speaking of the recitation and reading of the Quran, it is important to recall the vast number of languages in which it is read and studied, but also the fact that no translation can take the place of the Arabic Quran in the ritual and liturgical life of all Muslims, whatever their mother tongue might be" (XXV-XXVI). For Muslims, the Quran is the judge and friend, because it infuses their souls with the love of God and with the believer's fear of God and respect for Him. Among six existing translations into English consulted by these translators, he puts in first place the translation by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1872-1952)¹⁰. The translation and commentary by Muhammad Asad (1900-1992) is also mentioned¹¹. Professor Nasr informs readers that his translators have been able to remain faithful to a literal translation because they were enabled to explain single verses in their commentary: "Our commentary is meant to take readers beyond the literal meaning of the text when necessary, to clarify difficult passages, to reveal the inner meanings of verses when called for, and to provide a reasonable account of the diversity of views and interpretations in matters of law, theology, spirituality, and sacred history put forth by various traditional Islamic authorities... Our commentary, while based on the traditional commentaries, is not simply a collage of selections drawn from these books, but a new work. Our text has required making choices about both inclusion and exclusion of earlier texts in addition to providing in some places our own commentary, which is not found, at least in the same way, in earlier texts" (XLIII-XLIV). Professor Nasr has selected the themes of additional essays acknowledging that his criterion was to help modern Muslims finding responses to central questions they face today. He concludes his Introduction with a prayer of all the editors: "We pray that our efforts be acceptable in Thy sight and that this work becomes a guide for those who wish

10 Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Qur'an. New Edition with Revised Translation, Commentary and Newly Competed Comprehensive Index*, Eleventh Edition, Biltville, Maryland, USA 2006. Originally published under the title *The Holy Quran. Text, Translation and Commentary*. In this American edition, p. 1720, one can read the remark of the translator acknowledging that it was finished on 4 April 1937 in England.

11 Muhammad Asad was born and raised as Leopold Weiss, in a Jewish family in Austria. He converted to Islam and, among other writings, published *The Message of the Qur'an*, 1980. A pocket edition of this book was published in Istanbul in 2006. Bosnian Muslim theologians Enes Karić and Džamludin Latić have provided a translation of this book into Bosnian, Muhammad Asad, *Poruka Kur'ana. Prijevod i komentar*, El-Kalem, Sarajevo 2004.

to navigate upon the ocean of Thy Word, which, although in human language, opens inwardly unto the infinite expanses of Thy reality. Thou art the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward. Amen" (L).

SUMMARIES OF SURAHS, TEXT AND COMMENTARY VERSE BY VERSE

Researchers of the Muslim Book of Revelation divide surahs into those revealed in Mecca and those revealed in Medina. The Meccan surahs predominantly present God as one and unique with fundamental faith truths, while the Medina collection depicts right order in the faith community (*umma*). Collaborators on this commentary follow the established Muslim tradition in this point by indicating at the beginning of each surah to which group it belongs. As well as the title of each surah in English, they transcribe the Arabic titles, e.g. surah 4, "Women – *al-Nisā*" (p. 188-269). In the brief introduction, they divide this surah into a section on law about the position of women and relationships within the family (v. 1-36.127-130.176) and a section on the hypocritical Jews of Medina who turned against Muslims after the Muslims lost the Battle of Uhud in 625: "There are many verses in this surah dealing with those Jews who denied both Christianity and Islam and the Christians who divinized Jesus (vv. 44-55.153-173)". In dealing with relations between Christianity and Islam, the most sensitive verses are those regarding the end of Jesus' ministry and his crucifixion (vs 157-159). Yusuf 'Ali has divided this surah into eight large groups and summarized the last one, vs. 153-176, as "Where People of the Book went wrong, with honorable exceptions"¹². While 'Ali, Asad and the majority of other translators into English also bring out the Arabic text as parallel to English in each surah, Professor Nasr and his collaborators have abandoned this established translation tradition. They are aware that their readers live among Christians, who use biblical names inherited from the Hebrew background and Latin Vulgate adaptations. This is likely why they translate the Arabic word *Allah* as God. Introducing the exclamation of surahs: "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful!", they have left "Christianized" forms of biblical names that occur in the Quran: Adam, Moses, Joseph, David, John (the Baptist), Mary, Jesus. In the translation tradition of Bosnian Muslims, these

¹² Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, *The Message of the Holy Qur'ān*, 182.

names are taken over from Arabic and Turkish variants, but adjusted to the spirit of the Slav language, while some translators bring out at the end of their books a list of Biblical and Quranic forms of the same names as evidence that Judeo-Christian and Islamic revelations present basically the same receivers and conveyers of divine revelation¹³.

In commenting on individual chapters and verses, the authors quote classic commentators from the past. However, since Professor Nasr and several other collaborators are Shia Muslims they also use commentaries by Shia authors. A list of 41 commentators whose work has been used is given at the beginning (p. XLVII-XLIX), and at the end readers can see their biographies (p. 1919-1930). This offers useful context to Muslim and non-Muslim readers.

For the project's dialogue role, it is sufficient to look at the way the contributors have explained texts in light of present relations between Muslims and Christians. These commentators connect the text against Jews, accused of having "crucified the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of God" (4,157), with other sayings where Jews are criticized for not accepting Jesus as God's Prophet and Christians for their divinization of Jesus, which, in Muslim belief, is a sin against God's oneness (5;17.72.116; 9:31). These commentators connect criticism in the Quran of the divinization of Jesus with the belief among some Christians in Muhammad's time who acknowledged only the human nature of Christ (p. 261-264).

Surah 9 is called *al-Tewbeh* in Arabic, which is translated by Nasr's team as "repentance". All commentators point out that this is the only surah that does not begin with *bismala*, introducing the invocation of God's mercy. They differ in explaining the reason for this. Editors of this commentary see in 9:1-29 a passage about how and why the believers should fight the idolatrous Arabs and also certain groups among the People of the Book. This section is followed by a criticism of the corruption of religious leaders (vv. 29-32). A long passage describes trials and disagreements that took place within the community over setting out on a military campaign, and examines the dissension created by the hypocrites in Medina, who did not wish to join the Prophet in the battle (vv. 38-106, 117-127).

13 *Prevod i značenje Kur'ana*, preveo Besim Korkut, Sarajevo 1984, pp. 645-650 puts in three columns those names: in his translation form, in Original Arabic, in the Bible. This translation is recommended by Muslim religious leaders in Bosnia. In 2001 a pocket edition of it was published for Muslim refugees in Croatia and other countries. *The Qur'an*, Translated by M. H. Shakir, Published by Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., P. O. Box 731115, Elmhurst, New York 1999, brings the list of 41 names in Arabic form and "English Equivalents".

'Ali summarizes section 1-29 as "infidelity to be fought" against treacherous pagans because they have broken the treaty¹⁴. Verse 5 of this surah contains the text on killing the infidels:

Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wheresoever you find them, capture them, besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent, and perform the prayer and give the alms, then let them go in their way. Truly God is Forgiving, Merciful.

Nowadays, Muslim extremists kill Muslims and Christians reciting *Allahu ekber* (God is great) to punish the Muslims as collaborators of former or present colonizers and Christians as members or allies of colonizing nations. This is one of the Islamic texts cited as justifying *jihad* as violence against non-Muslims, but it is well known that *jihad* also has a non-violent meaning in Muslim spirituality¹⁵. Our commentators on this verse draw attention to the historical context where breaking the treaty concerned the idolaters of that time: "The Prophet was commanded to repudiate the treaties only with those idolaters who had broken it already and to maintain all others. Al-Tabari makes it clear that this passage could not possibly mean that after the lapse of the sacred months the believers were to kill any idolater; see the essay 'Conquest and Conversion, War and Peace in Quran'" (p. 506). They recall that v. 5 is an echo of the formation of the Islamic state in the Prophet's time and acknowledge a different understanding and explanation of this verse by Muslim scholars. Muhammad and his fellow believers could not leave idolaters in Arabia to menace the nascent Muslim state and the development of the Islamic community, which is clearly stated in v. 8 of this surah. "According to this understanding of the political context, the idolater's conversion (based on plain sense of v. 5) would be the only way for them to ensure their physical security; that is, they could avoid a state of war by renouncing idolatry and disavowing their previous actions and alliances, but being non-Muslim was not their original crime" (p. 507). In the view of our commentators, this surah was revealed after Muhammad took control of Mecca, which became the geographic and spiritual center of Islam.

14 Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 436. In a short bibliography, he lists recent works on *jihad* in English.

15 See Sobail H. Hahmi, Jihad, *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, 377-379.

THEOLOGICAL TOPICS AND CRITERIA FOR AUTHENTIC HADITHS

American Christians and Jews in the aforementioned *HarperCollins Study Bible*, in a similar Study Bible for Catholics¹⁶, and in *The Jewish Study Bible*¹⁷, bring out introductions to individual books of the Old and New Testament with commentary below the main text and also with general essays designed to help readers understand the theological background and message of sacred texts for today's Jews and Christians. These Christian and Jewish commentators in America may have inspired Professor Nasr and his team to put 15 essays in their commentary on the Quran that help readers to understand more deeply the message of the Muslim holy book:

- How to Read the Quran by Ingrid Mattson (p. 1587-16000);
- The Quran in Translation by Joseph Lumbard (1601-1606);
- The Islamic View of the Quran by Muhammad Mustafa al-Ayami (1607-1623);
- Quranic Arabic. Its Characteristics and Impact on Arabic Language and Literature and the Languages and Literatures of Other Muslim Peoples by Muhammad Abdel Haleem (1825-1643);
- Quranic Commentaries by Walid Saleh (1645-1858);
- Traditions of Esoteric and Sapiential Quranic Commentary by Toby Mazer (1659-1678);
- Scientific Commentary on the Quran by Muzaffar Iqbal (1679-1693);
- The Quran as Source of Islamic Law by Ahmad Muhammad al-Tayyib (1695-1718);
- The Quran and Schools of Islamic Theology and Philosophy by Mustafa Muhaqqiq Damad (1719-1735);
- The Quran and Sufism by William C. Chittick (1737-1749);
- The Quran and Islamic Art by Jean-Louis Michon (1751-1764);
- The Quran's View of Sacred History and Other Religions by Joseph Lumbard (1765-1804);
- Quranic Ethics, Human Rights and Society by Maria Massi Duke (1785-1784);

16 *The Catholic Study Bible, Second edition, New American Bible*, Donald Senior and John J. Collins editors, New York 2006, 1851 pp with 14 maps.

17 *The Jewish Study Bible*, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler editors, Michael Fishbone consulting editor, New York 2004, 2181 pp with 9 maps.

- Conquest and Conversion, War and Peace in the Quran by Caner K. Dagli (1805-1817);
- Death, Dying and Afterlife in the Quran by Hamza Yusuf (1819-1855).

In these 268 pages, the editor-in-chief has chosen themes that are attractive and important for Muslims living in non-Muslim countries. This reviewer believes that two additional topics would be enlightening, first on Islamic monotheism in the context of Muhammad's time, and second on the five pillars of Islam (1. Witnessing of one God whose eschatological Messenger is Muhammad, 2. Ritual prayer as duty of *communal worship of God*, 3. Alms tax, *zakat*, as participation in social solidarity, 4. Fasting in the month of Ramadan in which the revelation was given, 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca, *hajj*, once in a life by those whose means and physical health allow it). From the standpoint of dialogue, discussion of the role of Abraham as the first believer in Judaism, Christianity and Islam would contribute a great deal.

In the "Essay Author Biographies" (p. 1857-1859) Professor Nasr presents Ingrid Mattson, the London and Windsor Community Chair in Islamic Studies in Western Ontario. She is "an expert on Islamic Law, the Quran, inter-faith dialogue, and gender issues in contemporary Muslim communities, she is the author of *The Story of the Quran: Its History and Place in Muslim Daily Life* (2nd edition 2013)" (p. 1858). From elsewhere we know that she was born and raised in a Catholic family in Canada and studied at a convent high school. During her studies of Sufism in Paris in 1986, she met Muslims from Africa and converted to Islam. She has been entrusted here with contributing an essay on "How to read the Quran". Against the background of her Christian upbringing and contemporary cartoons in some Western countries against Muhammad and the Quran, in her first essay she brings out the following principles for a reading of the Quran that fulfils the role of dialogue:

- Context within which the Quran was revealed and transferred, together with the reader's personal background;
- Presuppositions and prejudices in relation to internal meaning of revealed terms;
- Quran as oral revelation and written text, document containing the words which Muhammad received from God through the angel Gabriel;
- Together with the Old Testament and the New Testament, it is one of the conveyors of revelation.

She concludes by inviting Christians and Muslims to show mutual respect: "Inculcating values of kindness, mutual respect and neighborliness in our diverse communities is the best way to prevent religious differences from being used to harm one another, and this begins and ends with respect for the sacred scriptures and religious beliefs and practices of others" (p. 1600).

Muhammad Azami comes from India but he did his doctoral studies in England and stayed on to carry out research in the UK. He is an expert on the text of the Quran¹⁸. In his essay here on the Islamic view of the Quran (p. 1607-1623) he points out that the Prophet did not decide when and where the revelation would be given to him. God took the lead and affirmed him in his mission, and Muhammad dictated the received text at different times to different scribes, 65 in total; simultaneously, other followers of the Prophet learned individual surahs by heart and recited them. In collecting the canonical text of the Quran, a key role was played by Zayid ibn Thābit, who lived next to the Prophet's mosque in Medina, and personally wrote down many of the texts, and after the death of the Prophet was entrusted by Abū Bakr with collecting from others portions of the holy text confirmed by two witnesses. The third caliph, 'Uthman ibn Affan (644-656), had the Quran codified in four official manuscripts and sent to the four provinces of Muslim empire. Christian researchers have no serious objections to the belief among Muslims that the text of the Quran was codified within 20 years of the death of Muhammad and transmitted faithfully¹⁹.

Joseph Lumbard is a Muslim scholar studying fundamentalism and tradition in the positive meaning of this concept²⁰. In his second essay here, he compares Quranic and Biblical concepts of sacredness, especially in connection with keeping the covenant: "The fact that other people have been given different creeds and rites for remembering and worshipping God thus provides a means by which one can look beyond outward differences and value people for what the Quran considers to be most important – the degree of their reverence and piety toward God. In this vein the Quran chastises those who equate outward deeds with faith itself: *Do you*

18 See his book *The History of the Qur'anic Text. From Revelation to Compilation, A Comparative Study with the Old and New Testaments*, Leicester 2013.

19 See the chapter "The Origin, Transmission and Structure of the Qur'an", in Walter H. Wagner, *Opening the Qur'an. Introducing Islam's Holy Book*, University of Notre Dame Press 2008, 140-167.

20 See J. Lumbard (ed), *Islam, Fundamentalism and the Betrayal of Tradition. Essays by Western Muslim Scholars*, 2009.

consider giving drink to the pilgrims and maintaining the Sacred Mosque to be like those who believe in God and the last Day and strive in God's way? (9:19). Such hypocrisy implies a grave lack of discernment and is a mark of failing the test to which allusion is made in 5:48" (1768). The Quran respects the covenant God has made earlier with other faith communities and looks at it as a manifestation of the "pre-eternal" covenant made by God with Adam's posterity (7:172). The history of religion is a multifaceted series of temporal reassertions of a single pre-temporal covenant. "Abraham was not chosen because he followed a particular creed and practice, but because he submitted himself entirely to God: *When his Lord said to him, 'Submit' he said: I submit to the Lord of the worlds* (2:131). In this way, the fundamental reality of submission cannot be confined to any single form; rather, universal, nonsectarian submission is the sine qua non for observing God's covenant and preexists the religion that takes the name 'submission' - *islam*. For both Muslims and non-Muslims today, *islam* is taken as a reference to the reified religion of those who followed Muhammad. But its original Quranic usage refers to the submission of all human beings to God and the attitude of submission that is believed to be inherent in true faith" (p. 1773). Jews are chastised for breaking the treaty or covenant with God (13:20: 4:154). The Quran confirms that God made, through Jesus the son of Mary, the treaty or covenant with humans (33:7). In 5:73.116-117 Lumbard sees a condemnation of false understanding of Christian doctrine on the Trinity and thinks that differences can be reconciled, except for the death of Christ on the cross (p. 1779-1780). Relying on 3:55, he points out that Christians and Muslims agree in believing that God has raised Jesus to himself: "The fundamental difference between the Islamic and Christian understanding of Jesus is that Islam follows the Qur'an in always seeking to reaffirm the transcendence of the Divine by focusing upon Jesus' humanity, whereas traditional Christian theology presupposes his divinity while confirming his humanity. This derives from the different nature of each religious tradition. Islam focuses upon the Absolute, who is one and of Himself, beyond all else, while Christianity emphasizes the manifestation of the Absolute in Jesus. These different emphases are reflected in the different religious, historical, and social circumstances under which Jesus and the Prophet Muhammad appeared. Jesus came to a mostly Jewish community that was already well versed in the teaching of Abrahamic monotheism and alert to the dangers of idolatry. The Prophet Muhammad arose within a community still under the

influence of polytheism and idol worship. The community to which Jesus preached was accused of forgetting the true meaning and purpose of scripture and focusing upon the minutiae of the law instead of the spirit. The community to which the Prophet Muhammad preached was accused of forgetting completely that there was even such a thing as revelation. Each message thus emphasized the different aspects of the Divine Word, while implicitly comprising the whole. The message of the New Testament focuses upon the Presence of the Divine in the person of Jesus. The message that the Prophet Muhammad delivered focuses on the perennial truth of the Divine Word in the Quran and in all previous revelations. It thus relegates all prophets to a secondary function in relation to the Divine Word of God itself through which all scriptures are revealed" (p. 1780-1781). By performing the five "pillars", in Islam, believers return to their primordial nature where they acknowledge the covenant with God. This scholar concludes that the submission to God is pure essence of all monotheistic religions.

Maria Massi Dakake deals in her research with interreligious dialogue and especially with Shia Islam²¹. Her essay on ethics, human rights and society according to Islam is based on five Quranic principles:

- Community of believers (*umma*) as individuals and groups are mandated to perform good and to avoid evil;
- Despite corporal punishment, justice remains the ideal;
- Social harmony should be supported;
- We are all equal in God's presence;
- Justice and duty are complementary.

She points out that the Quran sets the virtues of kindness, respect, humility and mercy as family values. She draws attention to the fact that the parents are forbidden to kill their new-born babies for fear of famine and how to treat their own adult children who refuse to accept Islam. As the family is the foundation of society, so marriage is the foundation of the family. She explains polygamy in Islam in terms of a shortage of men (who were dying as a result of wars or who were absent for long periods due to journeys undertaken for business). Although men enjoy absolute priority rights over women and children (4:34), they have no right to the slavish obedience of their subordinates, because the Quran looks at marriage as a treaty or covenant (4:20-21). When the author deals with economic justice in Muslim so-

21 See her book *The Charismatic Community: Shiite Identity in Early Islam*, 2007.

cieties, she points out that the Quran forbids the acquisition of riches by practicing exploitation. It also forbids prodigality. Among social virtues, the Quran lists modesty, temperance, restraint in speaking and acting, and respect for one's own dignity and the dignity of others.

The explosive topic of forced Islamicization and the use of armed force on behalf of religion is given to Caner K. Dagli, who grew up in the USA as the son of Circassian Muslim immigrants²². Aware that Quran texts mentioning *jihad* are being read superficially, he points out that this expression generally means a great struggle on God's way, because *jihad* is a fight against one's passions as well as a fight against persecutors. He begins from Q 22:38-41, where Muslims are permitted to defend themselves from violent aggressors: "Three points are of special significance in connection with this passage. First, the purpose of force (*repelling some by means of others*) is ultimately the maintenance of religion (the remembrance of *God's name* in houses of worship). Second, this protection is not limited to Muslims, but extends to churches, synagogues, and monasteries, meaning that God acts to preserve authentic religion as such. Third, the use of force by Muslims is framed as a defensive action in response to wrongs committed offensively against them" (p. 1807). This means that legitimate defense is framed by looking at other faith affiliations and Muslim social teaching.

Aware that Muslim extremists misuse a disputed hadith of the Prophet and the saying of Q 9:5 he draws attention to the historical context of these formulations and to political conquests practiced also by Christian rulers: "Borders were not established facts of international agreement, but rather were usually determined by how much territory one group could effectively defend. Conquest as such was not seen as an international crime (indeed there was no such concept in premodern history), and until the last century war was seen as a legitimate instrument of national policy" (p. 1810). He reminds readers that Christians in Muslim countries had to pay an extra annual tax for belonging to another faith affiliation (*jizyah*) but were not forced to fight in defense of the Muslim state. He compares the defensive war of Muslim rulers and their subordinates with Christian theology on just war and points out the hadith of the Prophet: "Do not kill old men, small children or women!" Muhammad was not only

22 Circassians are a Muslim people inhabiting the northern and north-western Caucasus. They rebelled against Russian tyranny (1825-1964) but were defeated and began emigrating. As well as Russia they now live in Turkey and in dozens of other countries. They have a population of 504,000, and 3,400 of them live in the USA (26 August 2016).

the founder of a new monotheistic religion but also of a new Muslim state, who guided his followers in defensive wars and was convinced together with them that Islam would not survive as a religion without political and military protection. Pointing to the saying of the Queen of Sheba at 27:34 *Verily kings, when they enter a town, corrupt it, and make the most honorable of its people the most abased*, he comments: "Such a mixed history is something the Islamic world has in common with every other major civilization. Accepting this view enables contemporary observers to interpret the actions of the early community based upon the ethical principles laid in the Quran and the *Hadith* and provides a framework by which to judge properly whether to celebrate or condemn the conduct of later Muslims when they resorted to force military action" (p.1815-1816).

He does not see in Muslim sources any summons to modern Muslims to make today's world Muslim by force. This is why he rejects the accusation that Islam is a warlike religion and argues instead that it is a religion that calls its followers to build harmony and peace in our shared world. "Many Muslim jurists have conceived the fundamental objectives of Islamic Law to be the maintenance and protection of life, religion, mind, lineage or dignity, and prosperity, and they view these five as indispensable rights that individuals need in order to live within a just society. As part of Islamic Law, the rules governing the use of force are directed toward those very same principles and are constrained by them. These principles prohibit the Muslims from becoming brutal aggressors, without leaving them defenseless in the face of danger or attack, thus preserving and protecting these fundamental rights, and are predicated upon the striving for justice, the protection of innocents, and the acceptance of other religions. This is the least, and the most, that can be expected from any law when it comes to war" (p. 1817).

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF HADITH SOURCES, INDEX OF CONCEPTS, MAPS

In *Appendix A* there is a list of *Hadith Citations* (p. 1862-1906) which play an important role in Islamic theology. This is followed by a Bibliography of *Hadith Sources* (p. 1907-1915). The two most trustworthy collections of such sayings are by al-Bukhari (d. 870) and by Muslim (d. 874). *Hadiths* are compilations of legal and historical material ascribed to authors of the eighth

century²³. In Appendix B, *The Time Line of Major Events related to the Quran* (p.1917-1918) lists the years in which the revelation, gradual writing and final canonical selection of the Quran took place. In Appendix C are Biographies of the 41 Commentators quoted in the *Study Quran* (1919-1930) with their CVs and the titles of their most important works.

The Index (p. 1931-1988) contains keywords for persons, place names, religious concepts, e.g. authority, charity, clear proofs etc. The Dictionary entry "God (*Allah*)" comprises six and a half pages. For the entry "Jesus" are listed more than a dozen other entries, such as "Jesus and the apostles, disavowals of divinity and Divine sonship, crucifixion of, coming of the Prophet" etc. The main entry on Jesus' mother is "Mary", but there is also "Maryam". In the entry "Sufism", readers are directed to numerous surahs and verses but also to essays within this commentary. The entry "Testimony of faith" directs the reader to "*Shahadah*".

Eleven maps are provided with names of localities and brief notes on historical events that took place in these places:

- Map 1: The Ancient World and Arabia with sites and peoples related to pre-Islamic prophets;
- Map 2: The Middle East in Sixth Century AD with the birth of the Prophet Muhammad;
- Map 3: Developments in the Broader Region during the period of the Prophet's mission (610-632):
- Map 4: Regional Map of the Ḥijāz with tribes and major military campaigns outside of Medina;
- Map 5a: Mecca and the Ḥajj Stations;
- Map 5b: 'Umrah and the Sacred Mosque;
- Map 6: Local Topographical Map of Medina during the Prophet's lifetime;
- Map 7a: Battle of Uḥud *Shawāl 3 March 625*;
- Map 7b: Battle of the Trench *Shawāl 5May 627*;
- Map 8a: Battle of Badr *Ramadan /March 624*;
- Map 8b: Conquest of Mecca, Battle of Ḥunayn and Siege of Ṭā'if *Ramadan-Shawāl 8/January-February 630*.

23 For a brief introduction see, Harald Matzki, Hadith, *Encyclopedia of Islam in the Modern World*, Macmillan Reference USA 2004,285-288 with 19 titles of critical bibliography. Al-Bukhari and Muslim collections have been translated into Bosnian: *Buharijeva zbirka hadisa*, Sarajevo 2004. (with 2,230 sayings) and *Muslimova zbirka hadisa*, Sarajevo 2008 (with 2,189 sayings).

Those who look up the title of this book on Google will find dozens of essays on *The Study Quran* in the USA, where, after the terror attack of 11 September 2001, it has become undesirable or even dangerous to be a Muslim. Early reviewers attributed to this translation and commentary the character of a new and objective work that is removed from violence and motivated by faith in Islam. Among the first Catholic reviewers was Damian Howard writing in the British Catholic Weekly *The Tablet*²⁴. Acknowledging that for Muslims *The Quran* in the strict sense is only the Arabic edition, he notes that this is a translation into English accompanied by commentary and he believes that Arabic was not included because those who know Arabic can easily access it elsewhere. He commends the fact that the best existing translations in English have been consulted but regrets the choice of archaic expressions for God and points to the translation by Egyptian scholar Abdel Haleem, who performs his research activities as Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of London²⁵. As a Christian he congratulates the editor-in-chief, Professor Nasr, who firmly supports dialogue and who has assembled collaborators who explain their sacred book in a spirit of dialogue.

The editor-in-chief and contributors of commentary and essays demonstrate that it is possible to be a Muslim in Western countries where state religions no longer exist but where all traditional faith communities are present and active in the public space. Muslim contributors to this commentary help their fellow Muslims in countries without the *Shar'iah* system to live their own faith affiliation and stay open to a constructive relationship with fellow citizens of other convictions. The contributors help Muslims to justify their faith rationally and to address unjustified prejudices against their faith. To Christians and followers of other convictions this commentary offers a picture of Muslims as non-threatening fellow citizens who have the right to be different in plural democracies.

24 Damian Howard, Deep Background: *The Study Quran, a new translation and commentary*, in *The Tablet*, 20 February 2016, p. 19.

25 *The Qur'an*. A new translation by Abdel Haleem, Oxford 2008. First printing in 2004.

CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS IN COUNTRIES ISSUED FROM FORMER YUGOSLAVIA¹

Present ratio of Christians and Muslims in Southeast Europe is a result of long historic development, not fruit of recent missionary endeavors. Christians are Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants of different denominations. Muslims are Sunni believers who accepted Islam at the hands of Turkish. The faith of one's family becomes gradually through education and adult option personal conviction and integral part of individual and group identity.

Muslims in this region are Slavs and Albanians who accepted Islam during their inclusion into Ottoman empire. This process began with 1371 Turkish victory at the river Marica in Bulgaria and went on with the battle of Kosovo Field on 15 June 1389 where sultan Murat and Serbian prince Lazar met their deaths; Serbian rulers became Turkish vassals before their territory through the fall of Smederevo in 1459 was fully included into Ottoman empire. To Serbs, Kosovo was and still is the cradle of their nationhood and of Serbian Orthodox Church. May be this is the reason why many myths about the battle of Kosovo were shaped in Serbian historiography, literature and folk-epics (N. Malcolm, 1998, 58-80). Due to Berlin Congress of European powers in 1878, Turkey had to recognize full independence of Serbia and hand over the administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austrian-Hungarian empire.

Thanks to the institute of *Millet*, Jews and Christians were allowed to stay in their places during Turkish rule if they remained loyal to new rulers and paid taxes to sultan and local officials. Turkish scholar Talip Kucukcan considers *Millet* as a kind of fair protection for Non-Muslims under Otto-

1 A Presentation at Erasmus Seminar Conference: "Translating God(s): Islam and Christianity in Southeast Europe", Istanbul, 2nd of May 2011.

man rule (Kucukcan, 2003, 480-485) but most Christian historians evaluate it in different way. Malcolm points out regarding Kosovo: "Some restrictions were imposed, and Christians in general certainly acquired a second-class status; but forcible conversion to Islam was extremely rare. As for the šariat law and Muslim fanaticism, the Ottoman Empire never became a narrowly Islamic state, and even sacred Koranic law was only one element in a complex legal system" (Malcolm, 1998, 94). He also thinks that there was no massive forcible conversion of Bosnians to Islam but there was indeed discrimination of Christians during Turkish rule, especially the Catholic Church was regarded with deep suspicion because Bosnian Franciscans were educated in Italy or Hungary (Malcolm, 2002, 51-69).

Beside cruel massacre committed by Serbian armed forces on Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica in July 1995, Bosniak Muslim historians evaluate as genocides expulsions and persecutions of Muslims which took place in Croatia after the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, then between 1804 and 1820 in Serbia after first uprising of Serbs, during second Serbian uprising in Serbia and Monte Negro in 1876-1878 and finally during the Balkans 1912 war in Serbia and Montenegro (Ahmet Alibašić, "Hronološki pregled historije islama i muslimanskih naroda", *Atlas islamskog svijeta* 2003, 799-801). Critical Christian scholars admit that a kind of "de-islamization" did take place after Ottoman rule was terminated in the region (M. Dogo, "La de-islamizzazione: fasi, metodi, risulitati", in L. Vacari, *Storia religiosa dell'Islam nei Balcani*, 283-310). This is why several hundred of thousands of Bosnian Muslims moved to Turkey in late nineteenth century afraid that they could be forcibly Christianized by the new rulers.

One can say that in times of monarchies generally Muslim élite in our region privileged Muslims and Christian élite privileged Christians. As religious and ethnic communities we all have experience of oppression and discrimination but also of good neighborly relations.

ORTHODOX MAJORITY IN SERBIA, MACEDONIA AND MONTENEGRO

1. *Serbia* is a country of 77.474 km² and 7,498.001 population. In 2002 census 6,371.584 of its inhabitants registered as Orthodox, 410.976 as Catholics, 239.658 as Muslims. In percentage this means 85% Orthodox, 5,5% Catholic, 3,2% Muslim, 1,1% Protestant, 2,6 other, unknown or atheist,

2,6% unspecified. Foundation stone of Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) took place at Constantinople in 1219 where the Patriarch gave the autocephaly to Serbian Church and consecrated Mount Athos monk Sava Nemanjić, a brother of Serbian Ruler Stefan Nemanja, as “archbishop of Serbian and Maritime lands”. “The Archbishop of Ohrid was in revolt against the Patriarch, and this move was a way of cutting half the Archbishop’s territory from under his feet. Sava returned in triumph in Serbia, kicked out the Greek bishops from Kosovo, and set about reorganizing the Church with himself as autocephalous Archbishop – a position he held until 1233 (He died in 1235, and was canonized soon thereafter)” (Malcolm, 1998, 45). Nowadays SOC comprises 38 eparchies, five of which are in Bosnia and Herzegovina, four in Croatia, four in United States and seven in other foreign countries. SOC is member of World Conference of Churches and of Conference of European Churches, both centered at Geneva.

SOC runs its Faculty of theology in Belgrade where study about 2000 young men and women and one of its professors is Radovan Bigović. He believes that the participation of Orthodox Church in ecumenical movement and in dialogue with non-Christian religions “is not a matter of tactics and diplomacy. It represents the mission of the Church – manifestation of the very identity of the Church. The question of religious tolerance and ecumenism is primarily a soteriological problem and a soteriological question, i. e. it is an expression of Church’s concern for the salvation of all” (R. Bigović, 2009, 108). I told to another professor of same Faculty the life story of a Serbian young woman in Banja Luka who grew up in agnostic family and as university student came to conclusion that Christianity makes her life meaningful. She asked her parents and grand parents for instruction in their traditional Orthodox faith but they were not able to help her. Therefore, she turned to a protestant community in her city, got baptized and is now practicing her faith. Her family and traditional Orthodox friends blame her for having betrayed her Serbian national feeling. This Orthodox professor of theology answered me: “Well, Serbs are an Orthodox people and even non-baptized Serbs belong somehow to Orthodox tradition. This is why western missionaries should not try to convert agnostic Serbs to protestant Christianity; Serbian land and people are canonical territory of Serbian Orthodox Church!” Similar answers I heard from Russian Orthodox theologians. (Cf. J. Oeldemann, “The Concept of Canonical Territory in the Russian Orthodox Church”, in T. Bremer, 2008, 229-236).

The Constitution of Serbia states that religious communities are equal in rights and separate from the state. Present Law on Churches and Religious communities was accepted by the Parliament in 2006 and it gives the status of traditional faith communities to seven of them: SOC, Catholics who are organized in four dioceses, three Protestant Churches, Muslims and Jews. These seven enjoy the privilege of having inherited their legal status from the days of the Kingdom of Serbia, which the Republic of Serbia automatically recognized. These seven Churches and Faith communities are allowed to instruct the students of public schools in their faith if there are at least eight students of that confessional identity in a school. This law particularly mentions the historical role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the development of the national identity of the Serb people. "In practice, the SOC enjoys a privileged status and plays an important social and political role in the country. On the occasion of the death of Serbian patriarch Pavle on 15 November 2009, the Government decreed three days of mourning" (A. Alibašić, "Serbia", *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, 2010, 459).

Muslim representatives of Serbia question the accuracy of the 2002 census data and refer to much higher number of Muslims, up to 700.000. As a result of historical developments, the Muslim population of Serbia is most concentrated in the region of Sandžak on its south-west, then in Preševo Valley at south-east and in Belgrade area. About 56% of Muslims in Serbia are ethnic Bosniaks, 25% ethnic Albanians, 8% Roma and 7% of other ethnicity. Ethnicity is probably the reason for disagreement in creating one Islamic community for the whole country. Muslims of Sandžak through their grand mufti Muamer Zukorlić tend to accept the grand mufti of Sarajevo as their supreme religious head, while Albanians and others do not like it emphasizing that they are an autonomous religious community. Islamic community in Serbia is organized in four muftiates: Preševo, Belgrade, Novi Sad and Sandžak. Bosniak Muslims run Gazi Isa Bey madrasa in Novi Pazar established in 1990 and the Faculty of Islamic Studies established in 1996. The Faculty publishes an annual collection of articles entitled *Islamska misao* (Islamic Thought) while students of the madrasa publish their magazine called *Softa*. Bosniak Muslims also publish their monthly magazine called *Glas Islama* (The Voice of Islam). In autumn 2009 *Glas Islama* was denied regular financial support from the Ministry of Religion. This decision is criticized by Muslim Bosniak representatives as another proof of discrimination against Muslims in Sandžak and as an

attack on freedom of expression. Only marriages concluded by a public registrar are legally valid in Serbia, but the Islamic community encourages Shari'a weddings administered by an imam.

Muslims of Belgrade have been for decades requesting from civil authorities the permission to build a new mosque in the city and open a separate cemetery for them but without success so far.

Zorica Kuburić, a sociologist of religion at the University of Novi Sad in Serbia, in her article: "Images of the Religious Other in Serbia" (Chr. Mae, 2008, 167-198) points out that in the past, people were not inclined to believe that there is anything good in other religions; misinterpretations were common and were amplified. She blames religious representatives for too slow change for better: "The historical memory of conflicts between the adherents of different religious traditions maintains a negative and frightening image of the other. In Serbia, that religious other is, on one hand, Islam, as a competing religion: some Orthodox believers consider it a 'scourge of God', a punishment for their own deviations from the faith and their own sins. On the other hand, there are foreign faiths that come from the West, previously known as *novoverci* and today as sects. In their efforts to preserve the faith of their flock, in their fear that their believers might be deceived and led on a wrong path, religious representatives use various methods, among which prevails painting of a negative image of the others and spreading fear".

2. *Republic of Macedonia*, with its surface of 25.713 km² and 2,022.547 population (census 2002) is predominantly Orthodox country because about 65% of its citizens are ethnic Macedonians, Orthodox by faith. In second half of ninth century Bulgar rulers who had recently converted to Christianity took control of Kosovo and of western Macedonian town of Ohrid. They helped to set up a diocese in Ohrid which thus became an important center of Slav culture for the whole region (Malcolm, 1998, 27). By the end of Tsar's Samuel's reign (976-1018) the archdiocese of Ohrid included dioceses in Skopje, Lipljan and Prizren. Nowadays archeparchy of Ohrid includes seven eparchies of Macedonian Orthodox Church. Since it declared its independence from Serbian Orthodox Church during the communist regime in Yugoslavia without canonical procedure, its autocephalous position is questioned by most Orthodox Churches. In Skopje operates Theological Faculty of the Macedonian Church.

In 2002 census 674.015 of Macedonian citizens declared their religious affiliation as Muslims, which was about 33%. Among these, ethnic

Albanians were 77% and Turks 12%; other significant groups among Muslims are Roma and Bosniaks. Muharem Jahja, author of the survey on Muslims in Macedonia for the *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe 2010* points out that due to high fertility rate Muslim population grows around 2.5% “so that the total number of Muslims in 2009 is probably over 700.000” (*Op. cit.*, 335). Macedonia’s Constitution describes it as a secular republic with no state religion. It guarantees freedom of religion and provides for the right to express one’s faith freely and publicly, individually and as community. The state Commission for Relations with Religious Communities and Religious Groups regulates concrete legal position of faith communities as autonomous state institution. Islamic community is recognized as one of five main faith communities in the country and represented by its legally elected leaders; it is organized in thirteen muftiates with seats in major cities around the country. “There are tens of political parties affiliated to the Muslim communities in the country, some of which take part in the government coalitions and are represented in the parliament by more than 30 MPs. Their politics are ethnic rather than religious” (Jahja, 2010, 337). Isa Bey Madrasa in Skopje was established in 1884 and is run by IRCM. Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Skopje was established in 1997. The main periodical is *El Hilal* published in Albanian by the IRCM.

The parliament of Macedonia has a 19 members Committee for Inter-Community Relations which includes ethnic and religious representatives: seven ethnic Macedonians members of Macedonian Orthodox Church, seven Albanians-Muslims, one Turk-Muslim, one Vlach-Orthodox, one Roma-Muslim, one Serb-Orthodox, one Bosniak-Muslim. Parliament is obliged to take the Committee’s proposals into consideration and to make decisions regarding them. Similar committees also exist at the municipal assembly level.

3. *Montenegro*, with its surface of 13.812 km² and 620.145 inhabitants (census 2003) got its independence from Serbia through referendum in 2006. Orthodox Christians comprise 74% of population and they are included into Serbian Orthodox Church, organized in two eparchies. Muslims comprise about 18% of population and they are organized in the Islamic community of Montenegro. While Orthodox population was divided up in the referendum in a large group of ethnic Serbs (32%), supported by their bishops and priests, who opted for remaining within Serbia and group of ethnic Montenegrins (43%) who voted for independence, about 90% of Muslims voted for independence. Muslims are ethnic Bosniaks,

Albanians, Muslims-Montenegrins and Roma. Madrasa opened in 2008 as the most important project of the Islamic Community in Montenegro. It admits only male students but the IC is working on extending the building to establish a girl's department. The new law on personal identity documents allows citizens who wear a hat or headscarf for ethnic or religious reasons to have ID photographs taken wearing the hat or headscarf. IC publishes its magazine *Elif* in Bosnian and Albanian. It also publishes religious books and regular news on its website.

Omer Kajoshaj in his contribution about Montenegro in the *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* 2010, in answering the question about interreligious relations briefly states: "No activities reported". He also mentions that the visits of Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in July 2009 and of the Turkish President Abdullah Güll on 2nd December 2009 "gave a high credibility and a positive reputation to the Islamic Community and its current leadership" (p. 365-367).

CATHOLIC MAJORITY IN SLOVENIA AND CROATIA

1. *Slovenia* was most developed among six Republics of Yugoslavia and it first initiated the process of independence in late eighties and finished on 25th June 1991. Since 1st May 2004 it is member of European Union and since 1st January 2007 the thirteenth member of the euro-zone. Its surface comprises 20.273 km² and its population is 2,039.399 inhabitants. It has 43 registered religious communities. According to 2002 census about 58% of interviewees declared themselves as Catholics, but according to the yearly survey of the Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Center at the Ljubljana Faculty of Social Sciences between 64% and 70% adult citizens declare that they belong to Roman Catholic religious community (*The State and Religion in Slovenia*, 2008, 129-332).

According to 1991 Constitution of Slovenia state and religious communities are separate; religious communities enjoy equal rights and they can pursue their activities freely; all citizens are equal before the law. The National Assembly adopted in 2004 the Agreement between the Republic of Slovenia and the Holy See on Legal Issues granting to Catholic Church the full freedom "to perform its activities under the canon law, in line with the legal order of the Republic of Slovenia". In 2007 the parliament adopt-

ed the Religious Freedom Act providing, inter alia, for state funded spiritual care in public institutions, such as army, police, prisons and hospitals. The Agreements on the Legal Status of individual Churches and faith communities have been signed with the Evangelical Church, Slovenian Catholic Bishops' Conference, Pentecostal Church, Serbian Orthodox Church and Islamic Community.

Catholics of Slovenia are organized in six dioceses with seats at Ljubljana, Maribor, Koper, Murska Sobota, Celje and Novo Mesto. Catholic Faculties of Theology operate in Ljubljana and Maribor; the Church publishes its weekly *Družina* in Ljubljana and several other magazines elsewhere.

The first Islamic community was founded in Ljubljana in 1967. At 2000 census 47.488 of interviewees declared themselves as Muslims by religion what makes 2,4% of Slovenia's population. Ethnically, 74% of these are Bosniaks coming from Bosnia or Sandžak, 11% Albanians from Kosovo and Macedonia, others are Slovenes, Macedonians, Roma. Actually, there are two registered Islamic communities: the majority one headed by the mufti Dr. Nedžad Grabus consisting of 15 local chapters and two smaller congregations, and dissident one headed by imam Osman Đogić who broke away after internal conflict blocked his re-appointment in 2006. Islamic Community in Slovenia (Đogić's flock is called IC of Slovenia) headed by mufti Grabus is a branch of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Slovenia has no purpose-built mosque with a minaret. Muslims have sought to build a mosque in Ljubljana since 1968 and have stepped up their efforts in the last decade. At the end of 2008, a location was approved for an Islamic cultural center and mosque, and the IC bought most of the land from the city, taking on substantial debt. After an anti-mosque referendum initiative was squashed by Administrative Court in June 2009, the obstacles to the mosque project are now financial rather than political" (Chr. Moe: "Slovenia", in *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* 2010, 476). Islam is taught to children in Slovenian in *mekteb* classes organized in about a dozen towns by local congregations of Muslims. From my personal contacts with mufti Grabus I know that a translation of the Qur'an into Slovenian has not yet been made but only selected texts for religious instruction of children. An important heritage site to Slovenian Muslims is a cemetery for Muslim troops from Bosnia who fought for Austria-Hungary in World War I since in that time Bosnia was included into Habsburg monarchy. In 2007 it was marked with Muslim tombstones.

While distributing to its members the bi-weekly of Bosnian Muslims *Preporod*, the IC operates a website and publishes its internal bulletin. It takes active part in interreligious dialogue at home and abroad. Mufti Grabus, inter alia, sits on a task force on intercultural dialogue in the Western Balkans supported by Slovenian government.

2. *Croatia* has surface of 56.594 km² and population of 4,440.000. According to 2001 census 87% were Catholics, 4,42% Orthodox, 56.777 identified themselves as Muslims (1,28%).

During World War II pro-Nazi regime opened concentration camps for innocent Jewish, Serbian, Roma and other civilians. One of these, known for the cruelty of the regime's soldiers and supporters, was at Jasenovac. Only the archbishop of Zagreb Alojzije Stepinac and former Sarajevo auxiliary bishop Smiljan Čekada dared to raise their voices publicly against massacre of innocent civilians (Čekada was transferred in December 1940 to Skopje where he made special efforts in saving persecuted Jews and their orphan children, and *Yad Vashem* Memorial center in Jerusalem awarded him post mortem in 2011 with "righteous among nations" tribute). Ante Pavelić, the dictator of that puppet state was unfortunately a criminal Catholic. After the war, communist regime historians in Serbia stated that 700.000 of Serbs and others were killed at Jasenovac, while contemporary Croatian historians sharply question this number. On 17th of March, during a televised solemnity at Jasenovac Memorial Museum, the Museum custodian in her welcome speech to survivors, families of the victims and representatives of state authorities said that so far the names of 81.988 victims have been traced and other speakers estimated the total number at about 100.000. Serbian ethnic representatives and Orthodox leaders expect Croatian Catholic bishops and clergy to acknowledge more openly the crimes committed on Serbs during the World War II and during the war for independence of Croatia from 1991 to 1995.

Present Catholic bishops and priests apply the guidelines of the Second Vatican Council on ecumenical and interreligious dialogue in their respective dioceses and parishes and at five Catholic Faculties of theology Orthodoxy and Islam are being taught to future priests and teachers of Catholic faith in public schools. Catholics are active in Croatian Chapter of the *Religions for Peace*. The Catholic Bishops' Conference through its Council for Ecumenical and religious collaboration takes active part in ecumenical and interreligious meetings. Such a meeting of representatives of Christian Churches, Islam and Judaism in Croatia took place in the Islamic

Center of Zagreb on 28th February this year and adopted a shared Declaration on Family entitled "The Family is God's gift to humans". In their Press release they evaluated recent events in Arab countries as a request for democratic change, not a danger of Muslim extremism (*Glas Koncila* 2011, n. 10, p. 1 and 8).

Islam in Croatia is officially recognized religion since 1916. Muslims of Croatia are ethnic Bosniaks and Albanians, mostly concentrated in Zagreb, Dubrovnik and Istria regions. They are organized in the Islamic Community in Croatia under prudent leadership of mufti Ševko Omerbašić in Zagreb with mosques in Zagreb and Gunja and 15 prayer facilities (*masjids*) in other cities since they are urban population in that country. After long fight with administration structures they got permission to build Islamic center with mosque in Rijeka and the works started in September 2009. ICC runs an Islamic high school in Zagreb. Plans for an Islamic Faculty as part of the Islamic Center in Zagreb have been initiated; for the time being imams are being educated in Sarajevo or in Arab countries. Muslim children can have their confessional religious education in public schools if their number is seven and more. I have been told by a Zagreb imam that school directors put into certificates of pupils also the notes for Muslim students who frequent their religious instruction in the Islamic center of Zagreb in schools where their number is less than seven.

Muslims of Croatia are symbolically connected with the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina so that the ICC recognizes as its supreme leader the *Reisu-l-ulema* of Sarajevo, while the grand mufti of Sarajevo confirms their mufti as the head of ICC. Muslims have the right to a day's holiday on both major festivals, 'Id al-Fitr and 'Id al-Adha (since the Muslims of Croatia and Bosnia accepted Islam at the hands of Turks they call these feasts *Ramadan Bayram* and *Qurban Bayram*). The 'Id prayers are broadcast live by the national television and radio stations and on these Muslim feasts prominent politicians, like the president of the Republic, prime minister or the mayor of Zagreb usually visit the Zagreb mosque congratulating to Muslims of their country their feasts. "As a result of the cultural proximity of Croatian Muslims with the Christian Majority, there are no social tensions and Muslims are well integrated in Croatian society. Nevertheless, negative prejudices towards Muslims, increased by ethnic war between Croats and Bosniaks in Bosnia 1993-1994, still have some influence on public opinion, which was visible in the resistance of part of the local population to the building of Islamic Center in

Rijeka. On the other hand, major political groupings and the relevant media tend to be supportive and open to the ICC and Muslims” (D. Mujadžević: “Croatia”, in *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* 2010, 123).

MUSLIM MAJORITY IN KOSOVO AND BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

1. *Kosovo* surface is 10.882 km², its population was estimated by Statistical Office of Kosovo at 2,180.686 in 2010. It was taken from the Ottomans by Serbia in 1912 and in 1918 included into Yugoslavia. In 1974 it became an autonomous province within Serbia but its autonomy was suspended in 1989 by Milošević regime. After a decade of repression, an escalating armed conflict that started in 1997 between Kosovo Albanians and Serbian forces was ended by NATO intervention against Serbia in 1999. Kosovo came under UN administration but in February 2008 the Assembly of Kosovo declared its independence. The Republic of Kosovo has been recognized so far by 65 UN member states.

About 90% of Kosovo population are ethnic Albanians; most significant minority are Serbs; other minorities are Montenegrins, Roma, Gorani, Turks, Bosniaks, Croats. International Crisis Group in its Report of 31st January 2001 said: “Kosovo Albanians do not define their national identity through religion, but through language and have a relatively relaxed approach towards the observance of the forms of the Islamic religion. Neither Islamic leaders nor Islamic theology played a significant role in either the eight-year campaign of non-violent resistance to the Serb occupation regime or the armed resistance of 1998-99. Islamic political and social fundamentalism, as that term is understood with respect to the Middle East, has very little resonance in Kosovo... During the war Serb forces destroyed numerous Islamic facilities, including virtually all Islamic libraries and archives. After the war, Albanians replied by destroying scores of Orthodox churches. These acts of reciprocal vandalism seemed motivated on both sides more by the desire to eradicate the evidence of other’s presence in Kosovo than by religious fanaticism”.

Orthodox believers of Kosovo are organized into eparchy of Raška-Prizren with the seat at Gračanica monastery. Its bishop Artemije Radosavljević criticized sharply UN representatives and troops at Kosovo for not protecting efficiently Serbian churches, monasteries and people. On

24th of June 2003 he issued a Statement against Serb political representative Oliver Ivanović at Kosovo for his return to Kosovo parliament before ensuring that essential demands of Serbs are met. A commission formed by the Synod of Serbian Orthodox Church found in February 2010 heavy disorder in his way of administrating the Church's financial resources and he was forced to retire. In November of 2010 he wrote to the Holy Synod of his Church that he rejects the official decision of retirement and is about to return to his office. He did it withdrawing to another monastery with his followers. The Synod answered with reducing him to the rank of simple monk and nominating a new bishop for Raška-Prizren eparchy.

Catholics of Kosovo are organized into the diocese of Prizren, they number about 65.000 in 24 parishes; they are ethnic Albanians and Croats. The diocese publishes its monthly magazine *Drita*. Currently the state of Kosovo refers to Islam, Catholicism and Orthodoxy as traditionally present religions. In 2005 the Law on religious Freedoms was adopted and it foresees certain privileges to the traditional religious communities but it has not yet been implemented. This is why faith communities continue to function within the legal framework inherited from the time of former Yugoslavia. Ahtisaari Plan foresees the establishment of Municipal Security Councils for each Kosovo municipality which would include also representatives of faith communities.

Muslims of Kosovo are organized in the Islamic Community of Kosovo (ICK) which consists of 25 regional Islamic councils. The ICK does not get any support from the state budget and therefore it depends on donations from its adherents to cover its pastoral activities and pay its 1.200 employees. Besa Ismaili and Xhabir Hamiti in their report about Muslims of Kosovo, bring out: "Several imams were beaten up during 2009, including ICK senior officials, the President of ICK, an administrative assistant at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, and an imam at Drenica region. The ICK publicly condemned these attacks and asked the authorities to deal with the perpetrators" (*Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* 2010, 292). There are currently 750 mosques in the country, 120 of which are new ones.

In Prishtina operates the Alaud-din Madrasa, which was established in 1952 and it provides education for boys and girls. It has branches in Prizren and Gjilan. An Institute for memorizing the Qur'an (*Hifz*) was established at Gjakova in 2005 with the support of a Turkish association. ICK is making efforts to introduce confessional religious instruction in public schools. Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIS) was established in 1992

and it is open for students from neighboring regions who would like to study in Albanian. Discussion on including the FIS into public university of Prishtina is going on.

Cemeteries are under control of municipalities, and Muslim cemeteries are separate from Orthodox and Catholic ones. 'Id al-Fitr and 'Id al-Adha are recognized as official holidays by the state and on these feasts all public institutions are closed. Representatives of state authorities, foreign diplomats and leaders of other faith communities attend the reception organized by the Grand Mufti on the day of 'Id. As part of the Islamic revival, which took place largely after the end of totalitarian Milošević regime in 1999, many young women increasingly started to wear hijab. High school and university students are allowed to attend classes wearing hijab. "In recruitment for employment there are numerous complaints about discriminatory practices against women who wear the headscarf. Nevertheless, there is a small but representational number of women who wear hijab and work in both the public and private sectors, as well as in international organizations" (Ismaili-Hamiti, 2010, 299).

ICK publishes since 1970 *Takvim*, annual Islamic calendar with articles for large audience, since 1971 quarterly magazine *Educata Islame* (Islamic Education) and since 1986 scientific review *Dituria Islame* (Islamic knowledge). Muslims who are ethnic Turks, Bosniaks and Roma do not have their periodicals in their language which would be published in Kosovo. Members of all faith communities are obliged by law to contract civil marriage first with registrar's office and then proceed to religious ceremony. Inter-religious Council of Kosovo was established through mediation of *Religions for Peace* New York office in 2000 and its efficacy depends on concrete good will of officiating leaders of Orthodoxy, Islam and Catholicism. Women's interreligious groups are more active: "Muslim and Catholic women have paid visits to Orthodox women in Gračanica. Muslim and Catholic women's groups regularly visit each other on major religious festivals. They have also been part of a joint working group against trafficking and participated in the public hearing of the draft law on abortion" (Ismaili-Hamiti, 2010, 300-301). While public television provides some space for religious scholars to speak about Islam on main annual feasts, otherwise it devotes little space to religious matters. Since recognition of Kosovo by Muslim countries is evaluated as a vital national interest, in 2009 more interest in Islam generally and in the Muslim world was manifested by media.

2. *Bosnia and Herzegovina* with its 51.209 km² surface and 4,377.043 population according to 1991 census is a country recovering from 1991-1995 war for ethnic territory after disintegration of Yugoslavia. It consists of two "entities", Federation of Bosniaks and Croats with ten cantons and Republic of Srpska from which Croats and Bosniaks have been ethnically cleansed in the armed conflict. UN High Representative can put off political representatives democratically elected, impose the laws and suspend the laws passed by entities or state parliaments.

At 1991 census about 44% of interviewees registered as ethnic Muslims, because communist regime enabled them to do so in late 1960s. In 1993 Muslim civil and religious leaders decided to take the name of Bosniaks. In doing so they had in mind the fact that most ethnic Croats in BH are Catholics and ethnic Serbs Orthodox. For centuries ethnic and religious identities in BH have been overlapping. Regarding the origin of Muslims in BH, Mirnes Kovač and Aid Smajić say briefly: "Bosnian Muslims are mainly descended from Christians (Catholics, Orthodox, or adherents of the extinct Medieval Bosnian Church) who converted to Islam during the four centuries of Ottoman rule from the middle of fifteenth century until 1878, when Bosnia became part of Austro-Hungarian Empire and remained so until 1918" (*Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* 2010, 90). On 1st of March 1992 the democratically elected government of BH organized the referendum asking the citizens do they want to remain within truncated Yugoslavia or become a new independent country. The referendum was boycotted by most of ethnic Serbs in BH (not all!) but citizens who took part in it voted for independence. BH was soon recognized by UN as a new member state but Bosnian Serbs, assisted by Yugoslav army, initiated the war for their portion of the country hoping that they would gradually join Serbia. Bosniaks and Croats call this armed conflict the war of aggression while Serbs state that it was only a civil war. May be the most proper name would be the war for ethnic territories. The war ended with Dayton Peace Accords in November 1995 and beside expulsion of ethnically different ones from their homes and destruction of their mosques or churches it took 97.207 direct victims, of whom 64.036 were Bosniaks or Bosnian Muslims. Srebrenica genocide and other cruelties committed by Serbian armed forces were explained by Ratko Mladić as revenge for Kosovo defeat and prevention against re-islamization of the Balkans. This myth has been propagated also by some Jewish extremists: "The Bosnia and the Kosovo Wars, which were conceived in much of the world only in terms of

Serbian nationalism under Milosevic, have yet another dark side to them that is not widely discussed, and that is the rise of Islam in the Balkans” (R. Israeli, 2000, 5). Declaring the different ones as danger opens minds and hearts for discrimination and crimes on them.

Muslims of BH are organized in the Islamic Community of Bosnia Herzegovina (ICBH) with eight geographical muftiates consisting of 60 *jam'as* and a military muftiate. The head of IC is *Reis al-ulema*, the position held by Dr Mustafa Cerić since 1993, who is the President of the *Riyasat* and the Grand Mufti of all Muslims in the country. The Council of ICBH (*Sabor*) elects the Rais and is the highest representative and legislative body of Muslims in BH. Bosnian Muslims living abroad are organized in five *Meshihats*: in Slovenia, Croatia, Sandjak in Serbia, Germany and Australia. Bosnian Muslims are organized also in Austria, USA and Canada. The Office for the Bosniak Diaspora in Sarajevo coordinates pastoral care of Bosniak Muslims living abroad. ICBH has also its Office for Hajj, Office for Relations with Islamic World, *Waqf* or Endowment Directorate, El-Kalem publishing center, the Center for Islamic architecture, the Muslim News Agency (MINA), the Agency for Halal Quality Certification, the Gazi Husref Bey Library, the Association of Islamic Scholars (*Ilmija*), the Tariqah Center and Radio Station *BIR*. Faith based organizations, but not directly responsible to the Riyaset, among others are Muslim Charitable Association “Merhamet”, Women’s Education Center “Nahla” in Sarajevo, Women’s Education Center “Kewser” in Zenica and many other.

ICBH runs about 1.700 mosques and *masjids*. “In larger towns, such as Sarajevo, Zenica, Bugojno, a number of mosques were built after the war as a gift from friendly countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Jordan, and Kuwait. Many mosques are still under reconstruction after being destroyed or damaged during the war, while others are new builds. The ICBH reports that 613 mosques, 218 *masjids*, 69 mektabs, 4 *zarwias*, 37 *turbes* and 405 various other *waqf* properties were completely destroyed in the 1992-1995 war” (Kovač-Smajić, 2010, 95-96).

ICBH runs six Islamic high schools or madrasas (in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Travnik, Visoko, Cazin and Mostar). Since 1977 in Sarajevo operates the Faculty of Islamic Studies (*Fakultet islamskih nauka – FIN*) which educates future imams, teachers of religion and postgraduate candidates for MA and PH degrees. In Zenica and Bihać operate Islamic Education Faculties which train teachers for Islamic education in public schools. The Faculty

of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo publishes its annual collection of scholarly papers (*Zbornik FIN-a*) and offers its precincts for interreligious conferences of foreign guests while also organizing such conferences on its own. With several professors of the Faculty I have attended interreligious conferences in Croatia, Slovenia, Germany and Austria. Professors Enes Karić, Fikret Karčić, Adnan Silajdžić, and others, in their books and articles, contribute to making Bosnian Islam a European phenomenon and value. I have heard them often repeating: "We are Muslims and Europeans and both is important for us!"

At the request of Catholic, Muslim and Orthodox religious leaders, confessional religious instruction has been admitted in public schools since 1994. Teachers of religion are being educated by respective Schools of Theology; canonical mission is being granted by the respective territorial religious leader; manuals are being prepared by believing experts in religion pedagogy. Education authorities employ and pay the teachers of this elective course in primary and high schools. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has been suggesting to introduce a non-denominational course on religions practiced in BH and elsewhere. Progress is being made but the course is still at an experimental stage.

As followers of Sunni Islam and Europeans with experience of living for 130 years under non-Muslim rulers, representatives of Muslims in BH are open for interreligious dialogue. Grand Mufti Dr. Cerić was in June 1997 co-founder of the Interreligious Council in BH (other co-founders were Nikolaj Mrdja, Orthodox archbishop of Sarajevo, Vinko Puljić, Catholic archbishop of Sarajevo and Jakob Finci, president of Jewish community in BH). Dr. Cerić signed the Open letter of 38 Muslim leaders to Pope Benedict XVI of 13 October 2006 as a response to his speech in Regensburg. Grand Mufti of BH was also one of 138 original signatories of the Appeal "A Common word between you and us" addressed to Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders on 13 October 2007 which is an invitation to dialogue based on the love of God and the love of neighbor. On occasion of the visit of Hans Küng to Sarajevo 14th and 15th of May 2009 Faculty of Islamic Studies and several Christian institutions organized the Conference on Christian-Muslim relations where the distinguished visitor spoke of modern interpretation of the Qur'an. Among seven domestic speakers I presented the Open Letter of 138 Muslim scholars to Christian leaders (my paper was published in Croatian periodical *Crkva u svijetu* 2009). Muslim publishing house in Sarajevo *El-Kalem* published in 2010 the Bosnian

translation of this letter and selected answers to it, among other the document of Christian-Muslim Forum in Rome 4-6 November 2008 with the speeches of Benedict XVI, professor Nasr, grand mufti Cerić and concluding Declaration of the participants.

During the war in BH, president Alija Izetbegović as supreme commander of BH Army looked favorably at Muslim fighters from Near East countries who came to help their fellow Muslims in their struggle for survival. These fighters had their unit within the army structure which committed some crimes on Christian civilians. After the war a number of them remained in Bosnia after having married Bosniak Muslim girls. They tried for a while to form their separate settlement administered according to *shari'a*. After the terror attack on 11th of September 2001 in New York, U. S. secret service pointed out that some of new Muslim settlers in Bosnia had criminal records and five of them were transported to Guantanamo prison of U. S. naval base. Simultaneously grew in Bosnia the phenomenon of Wahabis, mostly young Muslim men who reproach the traditional Muslims for wrong Muslim practice, try to "convert" them to proper Islam and request distance from Christians. Their number is disputed; Christians tend to exaggerate, Muslims to minimize their number and influence: "During and after the 1992-1995 Bosnian war, the first Salafis, locally known as 'Wahhabis' emerged. Their exact number is not known and, contrary to general belief, they control no mosques and their initial public influence has been steadily weakening" (Kovač-Smajić, 2010, 91). I know of several Muslim professors who expressed publicly their sharp criticism against the grand mufti for not saying explicitly that this kind of Islam is not familiar to Bosnian Muslims.

In time between 1994 and 2009 several private publishers have published brochures and books, mostly translated from Arabic or English, in which the Bible and Christianity are being ridiculed. At a Christian-Muslim conference in Stuttgart, in September 2009, with numerous participation of Bosnian Muslims I submitted my analysis of eleven such writings. Somebody of Bosnian attendants sent my text to the redaction of *Saff* in Zenica, a pro-Salafi Muslim magazine founded in 1998 with circulation around 5.000. I was criticized as spreading the hate speech, but Dr. Cerić told me in a private meeting that he got the information and he does not intend to raise this paper as an obstacle for Catholic-Muslim relations in our country.

At 1991 census 31,2% of interviewees declared themselves as ethnic Serbs. Most of them were affiliated to Orthodox tradition. Orthodox

believers in BH are members of Serbian-Orthodox Church, recognizing the Patriarch in Belgrade as their supreme leader. They are organized in five eparchies with seats at Mostar, Sarajevo, Bijeljina, Banjaluka and Bosanski Petrovac. Orthodox Church runs its faculty at Foča near Sarajevo where candidates for priesthood and teachers of Orthodox religion get their education. Orthodox bishops and priests have the experience of being majority in Banjaluka and Bijeljina and minority in Mostar, Sarajevo and Bosanski Petrovac. Those in minority situation are very cooperative in ecumenical and interreligious programs. One of these programs is IRC in Sarajevo where are active members an Orthodox bishop, a priest and a theologically educated woman.

Ethnic Croats at 1991 census were 17,4% inhabitants of BH and most of them were Catholics. Supreme administrative body of Catholic Church in BH is Bishops' Conference with its Councils and Commissions. Diocesan seats are at Mostar, Sarajevo and Banjaluka. In February 2011 the Holy See has nominated a military bishop for Catholics serving in armed forces and police unities. Catholic Church runs three Divinity Schools, two in Sarajevo and one in Mostar. Dioceses of Sarajevo and Banjaluka publish *Katolički Tjednik* (Catholic Weekly Magazine), Mostar diocese publishes its monthly magazine *Crkva na kamenu* (The Church on the rock), Bosnian Franciscans publish their monthly magazine *Svjetlo Riječi* (The Light of the World) and Herzegovina Franciscans publish *Naša Ognjišta* (Our Hearths), also monthly magazine. Due to war scarcity and ethnic cleansing Catholic population of BH was diminished from 830.000 in 1991 to about 460.000 now.

DESPITE DIVERGING VIEWS OF PAST CRUELITIES AND PRESENT TENSIONS, BELIEVERS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING UP A PLURALISTIC CIVIL SOCIETY

Christians and Muslims in countries issued from former Yugoslavia sharply disagree in present evaluation of Ottoman rule in our region from mid fourteenth to beginning of twentieth century. Catholics and Orthodox Christians disagree in looking at their language and ethnic rights in Yugoslavia from 1918 to 1991. Muslims and Orthodox diverge in evaluating the cruel events

after disintegration of Yugoslavia, from destruction of Croatian villages in East Herzegovina in October 1991, to besiege of Sarajevo from April 1992 to November 1995 and to Srebrenica genocide in July 1995. Serbs of Serbia and of Kosovo complain that cruelties of Milošević regime were used as an excuse by Kosovo Albanians to fight for political independence. This is why the government of Serbia and Serbs of BH, Croatia, Montenegro consider Kosovo as southern province of the Republic of Serbia. Albanians of Kosovo cannot understand why Serbia does not let them live in peace as new independent state of Europe and why more UN members do not recognize their independence.

Inspired by the works of Costa Carras, the collaborators of Joint History Project in Southeast Europe were aware that the history of each nation separately and of the region as a whole is not treated as continuous, homogeneous and harmonious. They produced four volumes alternative educational material for history teachers at high school level as Workbooks: 1 – The Ottoman Empire, 2 – Nations and States in Southeast Europe, 3- The Balkan Wars and 4- The Second World War (published by Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, Thessaloniki 2005). Christina Koulouri in General Introduction to Workbook 1 pointed out the conviction of the taskforce that it would not be possible to compile a uniform, homogenizing history of Southeast Europe in a single textbook which would be used in all countries. It is self-evident and legitimate that history manuals are addressed to students of individual nation but they should not be nationalistic: “National history to be taught in the school should not be nationalistic history. Taking as a given fact that dominant form of history in the school is national history and the history of the neighboring peoples is also taught from an ethnocentric viewpoint, we do not propose to replace national history but to change the way it is taught” (p. 10). In early April 2011 these four Workbooks have been published in Bosnian and publicly presented. I hope courageous teachers of history in BH will gradually use them in preparing their lessons. New generations of our citizens and fellow believers should be enabled to reconcile their specific identities with common needs and values of other people with whom they share their country.

Christianity and Islam as universal religions exceed the boundaries of ethnic and national communities; beside cherishing individual and group identities they educate believers for living in broad human family and respecting human dignity of diverse ones. Despite our diverging views of

past cruelties and present tensions, our respective faith can and should educate us for contributing to pluralistic civil societies. Ina Merdjanova and Patrice Brodeur use the concept of *conversation starter* in presenting the role of religions in peacebuilding: "Contrary to the evocative warning of Richard Rorty that religion turns into a 'conversation stopper' for people of different religious backgrounds, we, as scholars of religion and practitioners of interreligious dialogue, see religion-related issues as a good starting point for important conversations between people of different worldviews. Moreover, we also believe that such conversations can grow into crucial dialogues without which peacebuilding is difficult to imagine" (Merdjanova-Brodeur, 2009, 9). Based on their field research they believe that interreligious cooperation should not be restricted to clergy and official representatives but complemented by laity and grass root interactions (*Op. cit.*, 126-127). I fully agree, but in traditional societies like BH faith ministers (priests and imams) who preside weakly prayer services can quite efficiently educate their own congregations for responsible living in pluralistic society and contributing to just and lasting peace. May God help us in this noble endeavor!

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CAN CHRISTIANS OF DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS INTER-ETHNIC RECONCILIATION?¹

We citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) disagree in naming the armed conflict in our country, which took place after the disintegration of Yugoslavia 1991-1995. Ethnic Bosniaks and ethnic Croats call it “the war of aggression” while ethnic Serbs “the civil war” because they decline any possibility to have been aggressors in their own country. This is why I like using, as a working expression, “the war for ethnic territories”². The relative majority of our population is Bosnian Muslims, about 44% according to the 1991 census. They are Slavs for centuries sharing this country with ethnic Serbs

- 1 A Presentation at the Consultation of Societas Oecumenica, Belgrade, 26-31 August 2010. Published in, Peter De Mey-Andrew Pierce (ed): *Mission und Einheit. Gemeinsames Zeugnis getrennter Kirchen? Tagungsbericht der 16. Wissenschaftlichen Konsultation der Societas Oecumenica - Mission and Unity: Common Witness of Separated Churches? Proceedings of the 16th Academic Consultation of the Societas Oecumenica*, Leipzig 2012, 245-257.
- 2 For general information on war conflict and reconciliation efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina I suggest monographs I have been using, like R. Kostic, “Nationbuilding as an Instrument of Peace? Exploring Local Attitudes towards International Nationbuilding and Reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, *Civil Wars X,4* (London, December 2008), 384-412. R. Kostic, “Nema suglasja medju bosanskohercegovackim narodima o buducnosti BH”, *Ipsos Puls Agency*, Zagreb 2010. Z. Maros, *Il perdono con riferimento particolare alla Bosnia ed Erzegovina: una riflessione*, Esercitazione per la Licenza in Teologia Morale, Academia Alfonsiana, Roma 2007. P. Mojzes (ed), *Religion and War in Bosnia*, Scholar Press, Atlanta, Georgia 1998. *Tales of War and Peace. Religious Leaders During and After the War in Bosnia: Calculated Hypocrisy or Paving the Way for Peace? A Case Study for the Knowledge Forum on Religion and Development Policy*, Pax Christi, Utrecht, March 2008. M. Velikonja, *Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Texas A and M University Press 2003. M. Zovkic, “Begegnungen zwischen den geistlichen Oberhäuptern Bosnien-Herzegowinas in den Jahren 1991-1995”, in *Die gekreuzigte Kirche in Bosnien-Herzegowina. Die Zerstörung von katholischen Sakralbauten in Bosnien-Herzegowina (1991-1996)*, Kroatisches Informationszentrum, Zagreb 1997, 35-81.

(31%) who are Orthodox and ethnic Croats (17%) who are Catholics. A Baptist pastor in Sarajevo, Tomislav Dobutović, in his survey of minority religious communities in BH has listed eleven registered Churches of reformed orientation with about 2500 members. In contrast to Orthodox leaders and believers who are ethnic Serbs and to Catholic leaders and believers who are ethnic Croats, Christians of this reformed orientation have as their members converts of different ethnic identities and therefore they are not looked as siding with one of the three ethnic communities³. Theoretically, they could significantly contribute towards inter-ethnic reconciliation but their influence is modest, due to their short history in BH and the small number of adherents.

The war for ethnic territories in BH has produced inter-ethnic tensions and mistrust, which cannot be healed through the mere presence of NATO troops, foreign diplomats or foreign NGOs. Stephen R. Goodwin in his 2006 doctoral dissertation pointed out the failure of foreign troops and diplomatic structures to produce efficient reconciliation and inter-ethnic trust in BH; he asks for assistance to the Faith communities within the country, which would enable them to do it⁴. Recent sociological, political and theological research studies have discovered in organized Faith communities a source and resource for reconciliation and mutual trust in pluralistic societies⁵. Some researchers speak of faith-based diplomacy⁶ but we in BH have a strong secularist mentality as a remnant of the past socialist regime where religion can be easily manipulated or systematically marginalized.

3 T. Dobutovic, "Minority Religious Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina" in I. Mustafic (ed), *Religije u Bosni i Hercegovini. Monografija vjerskih zajednica – Religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Profile of Religious Communities and Churches* (in local language and English, Interreligious Council in BH, Sarajevo 2011, 217-225.

4 See St. Goodwin, *Fractured Land, Healing Nations. A Contextual Analysis of Religious Faith Solidarities Towards Peace-Building in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main 2006, 141, 198, 269.

5 See Gr. Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe. A Memory mutates*, Oxford University Press 2000. Gr. Davie, *The Sociology of Religion*, SAGE Publications, London 2007. D. Johnston- C. Sampson (ed), *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, Oxford University Press, New York 1994. R. Schreiter, "Religion as Source and Resource for Reconciliation", *Concilium* 2003, 5, 109-116. M. Volf, *The End of Memory. Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan 2006. M. A. Weingradt, *Religion macht Frieden. Das Friedenspotential von Religionen in politischen Gewaltkonflikten*, Verlag G. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 2007.

6 See A. Mackenzie, *Faith in Diplomacy*, Caux Books, 1842 Caux, Switzerland 2002. D. Johnston (ed), *Faith-Based Diplomacy. Trampling Realpolitik*, Oxford University Press, New York 2003.

INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL IN SARAJEVO

In July 1996, Dr. William Vendley, the (then) secretary general of the *World Conference of Religions for Peace* (WCRP) centered in New York, visited the religious leaders of BH in Sarajevo (Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic and Jewish) and announced his intention to open in Sarajevo, an office which would assist religious leaders and ministers with reconciliation and peace building initiatives. He opened the WCRP office in October of that year, nominating a foreign person as director and employing four persons that were recommended by the four religion leaders with their seats in Sarajevo. On June 9, 1997 the four leaders signed their Statement of Shared Moral Values and committed themselves to collaborate in peace education. This was the official beginning of the Inter-Religious Council (IRC) in BH. The working team of the IRC produced in 1999 *Glosar religijskih pojmova* (Glossary of basic religious concepts) of Islam, Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Judaism. They also drafted the new Law on freedom of religion and the legal status of faith communities in BH, which in 2004 the parliament officially adopted after adding in some amendments from a secular point of view before it was promulgated. For about two years following the promulgation, a team of civil law experts and theologians offered a series of round table discussions in different towns of our country, explaining the rights and duties of civil authorities and believing citizens contained in the new law. In the meantime, and thanks to the personal contacts of the Jewish religious leader, Jakob Finci, the municipality of Stari grad Sarajevo gave a suitable office to be shared by the WCRP and the IRC in the central area of the city. Before that very needed and most welcome donation, the leaders and their collaborators used to rotate the meeting place to the premises of the presiding leader. But now a permanent secretariat could be established and maintained. It comprises a manager accepted by the leaders and four employees, one from each of the traditional faith communities. In April 2005, WCRP made it possible for IRC personnel to take over the office, and in December of that year WCRP closed its office in Sarajevo. As the delegate of the Catholic archbishop to the IRC from its inception, I regret to say that the same donors, who through their financial support from 1996 to 2005 generously enabled the WCRP and IRC to function in BH, are now reluctant to continue their help. This led to the IRC nearly closing its office and halting organized common activities. In 2007, the IRC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council of BH Ministers which since that time has granted annual help

from its budget for IRC's operation. A similar Memorandum was signed in 2010 with the District of Brčko Government, while the Federation and the Republica Srpska Governments grant financial support occasionally.

In 2005 the IRC published the book *Običaji muslimana, pravoslavnih, rimokatolika i Jeverja u BiH* (Customs of Muslims, Orthodox, Catholics and Jews in BH). The authors were five ladies who knew well their respective religion and customs at the level of believing families and local communities. Thanks to donors, in 2008 an edition of this book in the Braille alphabet was published and distributed to institutions that assist blind persons in the country. Later this year the IRC will publish the monograph on Churches and Faith communities in BH where individual theologians present their communities to other fellow citizens with the intention that we should know how "the others" see themselves. Each depicted community will illustrate its section in the book with pictures of its significant artifacts and sacral buildings. The text will be double columned, in the "local language" (Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian) and English.

Among the regular projects of the IRC I can mention only two. The first is an annual seminar for about 30 students of Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic theology in Sarajevo where a theme interesting for all participants is explored and discussed by invited professors and students. At the 2009 seminar we studied the 2007 open letter of Muslim scholars to Pope Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders, entitled *A Common Word between us and you*⁷. The second project is the twice a year monitoring list of attacks on priests, imams, churches, mosques or cemeteries. The IRC may only use the material published in the media or reported by local faith communities without being able to send an independent investigator to verify what really happened.

In 2010, the IRC established its field branches in Bijeljina, Brčko, Orašje and Goražde. For any structural dissemination of IRC, the leaders and employees of Sarajevo central office have to find local imams and priests who would be ready to cooperate and municipal authorities which would give them an office and operational finance support. The IRC is not a type of ministry for religions at the governmental level of the country but an association of believing religious leaders and ministers who see

7 The text of this open letter is available on web site and in the form of the book *A Common Word between us and you*, The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Jordan, January 2009. In 2010 the Letter has been translated into Bosnian and published by El-Kalem publishing House of Islamic Community in BH. In English and Bosnian version of the book is presented the meeting of Catholic-Muslim Forum which took place in Rome in November 2008 as Catholic response to this initiative of Muslim scholars and leaders.

the need for their cooperation as believers in view of building up a just and tolerant civil society. This is why we call ourselves IRC *in* BH, not *of* BH. We respect the right of every Faith community to directly contact the civil authorities at the municipal and state levels for its needs, rights and problems. We can adopt texts and projects based on the principle of consensus because any overruling would cause the termination of membership on the side of the over-voted member. Due to our coordinated manner of work, we are sometimes slow and cautious, but we are grateful to all who support us and appreciate our endeavors⁸.

MODEST CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ORTHODOX AND CATHOLIC BISHOPS

The Orthodox bishop of Sarajevo left the city in 1992 when the siege was about to begin and returned in 1996 after the Dayton Accords were signed and anti-Serbian hostility was partially diminished. Muslim, Jewish and Catholic representatives who remained in the city met during the war and participated in the encounters of religious leaders from the former Yugoslavia abroad when they were given the guarantee for a safe exit and return. Several meetings took place in Switzerland, attended by the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church or his delegate. At these meetings Appeals were adopted to the parties in armed conflict and fighting believers to not misuse religion as a motivation for war cruelties. On the 17th of May 1994 the Russian Patriarch Alexey and the Serbian Patriarch Pavle came to the Sarajevo Airport and asked the regional religious leaders to join them. The Catholic archbishop Vinko Puljić participated, but the Muslim leader, Dr. Mustafa Cerić refused to attend for two reasons - the airport was controlled by foreign soldiers and the Serbian Patriarch had not expressly condemned the destruction of mosques in BH by Serbian fighters⁹.

During the first years after the war, Muslim leaders emphasized that justice should be met before any process of forgiveness and reconciliation could be inaugurated. This means all war criminals should be prosecuted.

8 As is doing R. Schreiter, „Religion as Source and Resource for Reconciliation”, *Concilium* 2003, 5, p. 114.

9 Cf. M. Zovkić, „Begegnungen zwischen den geistlichen Oberhäuptern Bosnien-Herzegowinas in den Jahren 1991-1995”, *Die gekreuzigte Kirche in Bosnien-Herzegowina*, Zagreb 1997, 67-68.

Gradually they saw that this would be a long multi-year process and there was an immediate need for meetings between bishops, muftis, priests and imams. These meetings would be very meaningful to our respective believers who may then come to the conviction that different ones can live together in peace. One of the signs of such change for better is *The Platform of Islamic Community in BH for Dialogue* which was drafted by three professors of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo at the request of their religious leaders in 2005 and since the 21st of January 2009 is on the web site of the Islamic Community (IC). The first section contains principles, the second deals with inter-ethnic relations, human rights and violence, and the third section highlights the Bosnian Muslim perspective of the 1991-1995 war in BH. In it the IC of BH condemns any use of violence on behalf of religion, especially on behalf of Islam and it quotes Qur'an 60:8 as basic text for dialogue with followers of other beliefs.

The Serbian Orthodox Church in BH is organized in five eparchies: Trebinje, Sarajevo, Zvornik-Tuzla, Banja Luka and Bihać-Petrovac. Its bishops, priests, monks and believers are in canonical union with their Patriarch in Belgrade and ruling bodies of their Church but at the level of BH operate the *Episkopski savjet* (The Council of Bishops) and *Katihetski odbor* (The Committee for religious instruction). The Orthodox priest Vanja Jovanović, in his essay on the Serbian Orthodox Church in BH for the monograph *Religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina* says: "From 1992 to 1995 in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a civil war. The Church shared the destiny of its people in the wartime and after the war alike. Episcops had to leave their seats in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Mostar and Bihać. Large number of Orthodox faithful got hurt or displaced from their ancestral homes. Many churches were reduced to rubble or heavily damaged. After the war the Church is involved in the process of renewal and reconciliation".

The Catholic Church in BH is organized in four dioceses: Trebinje, Mostar, Sarajevo and Banja Luka. After BH became recognized as a new state, the Holy See established in it the Bishops' Conference as the supreme governing body for Catholics in the country with about a dozen of its advisory Councils and Commissions. From March 1998 to December 2006 Catholic and Orthodox bishops of our country held seven meetings in which they produced shared Messages to their fellow Christians and other citizens of good will¹⁰. In their Christmas Message of the 28th of

10 English translation of these messages is available in the book *Pastoral Letters, Statements and Appeals of the Catholic Bishops of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1997-2009*, Bishops' Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo 2010, 175-198.

December 2004 they reminded their flocks that all Christians were heirs of the same Gospel of peace, that they should strive to recognize the truth of the past, respect the dignity of every person, build jointly a more just society and not leave their homes because of present difficulties: "Despite everything that may have occurred between us, we need to endeavor as Christ's faithful to be closer to one another and to nurture mutual Christian friendly relations. We have jointly urged to this on several occasions until now! We firmly believe that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina within the framework of justice and equality can build and love this country as their joint Homeland"¹¹.

After the fall of the communist regime, Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic religious leaders came to agreement in 1992 that confessional religion instruction should be introduced into the public schools for children of believing parents. This was granted by the political and educational authorities in the way that religious authorities provide the manuals and entrust theologically educated teachers of their faith with the office of teaching their respective students. In the first edition of religion manuals the image of "others" was sometimes ridiculed or wrongly presented. A mixed committee of religion pedagogues was formed to revise all the manuals and corrections were accepted in new editions of these manuals¹². One of objections of secular educational personnel and foreign representatives in BH was: confessional teaching on religion of the students reveals the differences among them and it could hurt their relations in ethnically mixed schools. The response of theologians was: ethnic and religious differences are not shame or sin; therefore, students should get used to cherish their own identity and respect the identity of others. In 2003 field workers of OSCE in BH tried to introduce a new subject for children of agnostic parents in public schools called "Culture of religion" and they ordered a kind of manual for such a subject as an experimental program. The bishops promulgated on the 4th of November 2003 their Declaration "Joint Attitude of the Episcops and Bishops about Religious Instruction and the 'Culture of religion'". In it they reminded the BH public that 95% of public school students have accepted confessional religious instruction and bishops see in this a "denial of the defiant and constant ill-intended claims that teaching national, cultural and religious diversity would be the source of intolerance and even conflict". They insisted that

11 *Pastoral Letters*, 195.

12 Cf. Aid Smajic, "Images of Religious Other in Textbooks for the Public Primary Schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *Islamic Studies* 42 (2008), 1, 39-63.

parents should be asked about the culture of religions as a new subject for their children, but in any case, it can be an alternative subject for the small number of students who do not frequent confessional religious instruction. The bishops concluded their pastoral letter: "On behalf of our Particular Churches we express our determination to accept and build positive human and religious values for the good of all citizens and nations in this our joint homeland. In that spirit we are open to cooperation and dialogue with all well-intended people and institutions"¹³.

Most foreign observers and left minded intellectuals within the country cannot understand why religious leaders in BH sided with the needs and interests of their respective communities during the war and go on doing so in the post-war social restoration. Nevertheless some of them admit: "The analysis of the context of BH leads to the conclusion that the process of rebuilding society would greatly benefit from integrating religion, specifically by taking into account the spiritual and cultural needs of its populations. While religion can certainly contribute to the building of a democratic and tolerant society, a solution for the pressing problems that BH faces today calls for a broad approach in rebuilding society on all levels and in several sectors. Religion in itself does not present a ready-made solution. Rather it needs to be embedded in a greater framework of a functioning state that is carried by a strong civil society. Religious leaders and religious communities now have the chance to define their position in a new society and make a great contribution to a heterogeneous and strong society"¹⁴.

DIVERGING VIEWS OF THE STATE SLOW DOWN RECONCILIATION EFFORTS

The present political and social situation in BH is known for efforts by the international community to make it a viable state integrated into the UN and European structures and for the unwillingness of the democratically elected political representatives at the state level to adopt and implement necessary reforms. BH emerged as one of new countries issued from the former Yugoslavia after the 1992 Referendum on independence and the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords. Partitioned into two quasi states euphemistically called

13 *Pastoral Letters*, 182-183.

14 *Tales of War and Peace*, Utrecht 2008, 55.

“entities”, it is not able to efficiently take care of the social needs of its citizens. Should the High Commissioner and other representatives of international structures impose the reforms and so accelerate its disintegration or wait for years until our democratically elected representatives reach consensus regarding functioning of our country?

The Swedish scholar of Bosnian descent Roland Kostić approached this problem from the viewpoint of nation building in BH. From September to December 2005 he conducted a survey among 2500 members of the three ethnic communities of our country asking for their views on Nation-building symbols (flag, anthem), reconciliation and truth about the war, the interventions of OHR and the democratization process. With other researchers he rightly believes that mutual acknowledgment of the suffering, developing a shared view of the wartime events, and envisioning of the common future by former enemies are the cornerstones of social integration needed to achieve a durable peace after the war. While respondents sharply disagreed in what kind of state they would like to live, the majority did agree that BH as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country is possible: “Two thirds of people in B-H believe in the possibility of a peaceful future without external supervision. Yet regional differences persist. The respondents in the Croat- and Bosniak-dominated areas are equally optimistic about the prospects for a common future; 69 percent in Bosniak and Croat parts share this view. The interviewees in the Serb-dominated areas are somewhat more pessimistic, with 55 percent having a positive view of the common future. In other words, 10 years after the signing of the peace agreement a durable peace is a reality for many in BH. This finding brings hope since a self-sustaining peace is clearly desired by the local population”¹⁵ (Kostić, 2008, 394; cf. 399). He concludes that foreign representatives did produce peace but not inter-ethnic reconciliation.

R. Kostić made new research on the same subject interviewing 1500 inhabitants of BH in January 2010 and published the results by the end of March 2010. According to these empirical findings, 80 per cent of ethnic Serbs in BH would like to get rid of enforced inclusion into present state of BH and join Serbia but stay in the territory which is now covering Republika Srpska; 80 per cent of Bosniaks would like to reform Dayton BH and make it a more centralized country while 70 percent of ethnic Croats would like to reform present BH into more viable country with stronger

15 R. Kostic, “Nationbuilding as an Instrument of Peace? Local Attitudes towards International Nationbuilding and Reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, *Civil Wars* X,4 (London, December 2008), 394 and 399.

central institutions and more justice for all. Inter-ethnic mistrust or hate did not increase in the meantime, because in parts with Serb majority population 68 per cent would accept a Croat family as neighbors and 62 per cent a Bosniak family; among ethnic Bosniaks 89 per cent would accept ethnic Croats as neighbors and 83 per cent would accept ethnic Serbs; among ethnic Croats 79 per cent would accept Bosniaks as neighbors and 75 per cent would accept ethnic Serbs. He concludes: "Research of ethnic distance among three peoples of BH demonstrates that behind the differences on the vision of the future for their common state does not necessarily lie in inter-ethnic hate but primarily in diverging political interests. This research of ethnic distance shows namely that most respondents are ready to live together with other ethnic communities in BH"¹⁶. So the war seems to be over for quite a foreseeable time, but just peace and a viable state with dynamic civil society is not yet achieved.

The Parliament of Serbia adopted on the 31st of March 2010 the Declaration on Srebrenica condemning most severely the crimes committed on the Bosniak-Muslim population of Srebrenica in July 1995. In its n. 3, the Declaration recommends a reconciliation process: "The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia calls upon all former conflicting sides in BH, as well as in the other states of the former Yugoslavia, to continue the process of reconciliation and strengthening of the conditions for common life based on national equality and full observance of human and minority rights and freedoms so that the committed crimes would never be repeated". Bosniak leaders and the media in BH were disappointed by not naming expressly as genocide, the crimes committed on innocent civilians in Srebrenica, while Serb leaders were disappointed by the Declaration as such. I wonder why this declaration has not been taken by religious leaders and theologians as a good opportunity for a new phase of trust building and reconciliation among the ethnic and religious communities in BH. It is obvious that the diverging views of cruelties that took place during armed conflicts and of the present state system is slowing down the process of reconciliation which can be effected only by ethnic communities within the country, not imposed by foreign troops or diplomatic representatives. I see here the big chance and role for faith communities.

The Auxiliary bishop of Sarajevo Msgr. Pero Sudar in his interview to the Banja Luka daily paper *Nezavisne novine* on the 14th February 2010 answered 13 questions of journalist Adis Šušnjar about the crisis of moral-

16 R. Kostic, "Nema suglasja medju bosanskohercegovackim narodima o buducnosti BH", web site of *Ipsos Puls Agency*, Zagreb 2010, p. 2.

ity in BH, the education system, inter-religious dialogue and civil courage. Here is his evaluation of the faith communities and theologians: "My impression is that ecumenism and religious dialogue in our country are not enough convincing. I deeply regret to say it, but everything else would be against my conviction and, if you want, concrete experience. I think that fundamental reason is lack of sincerity and courage in dealing with authentic theological themes. I am afraid that all efforts have been reduced to political, social, folkloristic and promotional levels. I doubt that such a dialogue can essentially influence the situation in our society. At faith level, we need open faith talks and irreversible human acceptance based on theological guidelines and oriented towards raising the spiritual level of our justified differences in a necessary togetherness". Obvious reason for not enough efficient ecumenical dialogue and cooperation is siding with political interests and needs of one's ethnic community. Catholic bishops, theologians, priests and teachers of religion in public schools do side with their fellow Croats. Orthodox bishops, theologians, priests and teachers of religion in public schools do side with the dreams of their fellow Serbs. Religious leaders give the impression of waiting for civil authorities to resolve crucial problems of our society and then they would be more involved in building up a just civil society. I believe that servants of God's people can and should do more in trust building and reconciliation process, even before crucial problems of state system are resolved, because empires and states rise and die out but peoples of a region remain, sharing same values, needs and problems. It will take a bit more time and prophetic courage before teachers of religion, theologians, faith ministers and religious leaders dare to admit – publicly and honestly – that "their people" did commit crimes and cruelties on "others". Forgiving and asking for forgiveness is costly in BH even fifteen years after the war¹⁷.

In conclusion, the answer to the question from the title of my presentation is nevertheless positive. We Christians believe in God who forgives and requests our forgiveness to fellow humans. I believe that BH as one state with its three ethnic communities and other citizens is possible, but we believers must work on it as a shared task motivated by our faith. BH is a country with citizens and peoples of multiple identities. The sooner we believing citizens and faith communities accept this reality with all our minds and hearts, the more efficiently we will contribute to inter-ethnic reconciliation and social cohesion.

17 See Z. Maros, *Il perdono con riferimento particolare alla Bosnia ed Erzegovina: una riflessione*, Roma 2007, 113-116.

FORGIVING AND ASKING FORGIVENESS AMONG ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA¹

I have been invited to contribute as a Catholic theologian living in Eastern Europe to this issue of *Concilium* on Reconciliation. The way one reflects on this theme from within Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) largely depends on one's ethnicity. I am an ethnic Croat, a citizen of B&H, and since 1963 a priest in the Sarajevo archdiocese who has spent his active years in Sarajevo. I received my S. T. D. from the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Zagreb in 1968 and in 1972 I received my S. S. L. from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. From October 1972 to June 2009 I taught New Testament exegesis to candidates for the ministerial priesthood in Sarajevo and from January 1991 to May 2012 I was adviser to the Catholic archbishop of Sarajevo, Cardinal Vinko Puljić, on ecumenical and interreligious relations. I would ask readers to keep this background in mind while reading my reflections on the proposed theme.

SLOW JUSTICE FOR INTERETHNIC ATROCITIES COMMITTED DURING THE 1992-1995 WAR

Ethnic historians in the countries that emerged from former Yugoslavia sharply dispute whose ethnic territory BiH was and should still be: Bosniak,

1 Published in Croatian edition of *Concilium* 1/2013, 153-169 and in abridged form in German edition, *Concilium* 1/2013, 105-112.

Croat or Serb². According to the census of April 1991 BiH had 4,377,033 inhabitants. Ethnic self-identification in that census was as follows: Bosniaks-Muslims 1,630,033 (43.5%), Serbs 1,320,738 (31.2%), Croats 760,852 (17.4%) and Yugoslavs 242,683 (5.5%). Most of those who declared themselves as Yugoslavs were living in mixed marriages; for the sake of family harmony they did not emphasize religious and ethnic diversity. These people were held up by the pre-war monarchy and by the post-war communist regime as ideal citizens and were often selected for plum government jobs.

The first democratic elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina as one of the six Republics in what was then Yugoslavia took place in November 1990. The Catholic bishops of BiH in a pastoral letter read out by priests at the Sunday liturgy on the eve of the election, encouraged their flock to take part in the election and to vote for non-communist candidates, since Catholics had had a negative experience of the communist regime since 1945. Following the election, a multiethnic coalition government was formed, but after Slovenia and Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, the BiH government organized a referendum on 1 March 1992 asking citizens if they wanted BiH to become independent or remain within a truncated Yugoslavia. Although voting was hampered in most localities with an absolute Serb majority, 63.04% of citizens did take part in the referendum, and 62.63% of these voted for Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty.

In April 1992, ethnic Serbs, aided actively by Yugoslav army personnel who supplied weapons and logistical assistance, launched a full-scale war to secure ethnically "clean" territory in BiH. They expelled hundreds of thousands of Bosniaks-Muslims and Croats from their homes and destroyed around 600 mosques and around 300 churches.

Although fighters on all three sides did sometimes carry external signs of their religious identity, domestic observers and foreign scholars agree that this was not a religious conflict³.

2 For a brief but selectively documented survey of Bosnian history see Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia. A Short History*, PAN Books 2002. For a collection of essays on the reasons for and the consequences of the disintegration of Yugoslavia see Charles Ingrao and Thomas A. Emmert (ed), *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies. A Scholars' Initiative*, Purdue University Press 2009.

3 See Paul Mojzes (ed), *Religion and the War in Bosnia*, Atlanta, Scholar Press 1998. Mitja Velikonja, *Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Texas A&M University Press 2003. Stephen R. Goodwin, *Fractured Land, Healing Nations. A Contextual Analysis of Religious Faith Sodalities towards Peace-Building in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang 2006.

With US mediation, the war was brought to an end by the Dayton-Paris Accords in November-December 1995. The country was partitioned into two "Entities": the Federation of B&H largely populated by Bosniaks and Croats, and Republika Srpska where an absolute Serb majority had been created and where the safe return of expelled Bosniaks and Croats was prevented by the Serb authorities, a policy that was not initially moderated by UN or other international officials on the ground.

"Estimates of the death toll of the war have ranged from 25,000 to 300,000, with about 200,000 being the accepted figure until 2007, when a three-year investigation of the Research and Documentation Center put the total number of direct victims at 97,207, of whom 64,036 were Bosniaks or Bosnian Muslims. The study also revealed that more than 83% of civilian deaths were Bosniaks, rising to nearly 95% in Eastern Bosnia and more than two million people fled their homes during the war, including over one million to neighboring states and the West"⁴. According to uncertified estimates, between 16,000 and 20,000 Muslim women were raped.

The worst massacre of the war took place in and around Srebrenica in July 1995 when Serb forces commanded by General Ratko Mladić killed 8,373 Muslim men and boys, whose names have been collected by the BiH Federation Commission for Missing Persons. A report issued in 2002 by the authorities in the Republika Srpska stated that 1,800 Bosnian Muslim soldiers had died in combat at Srebrenica and a further 100 had died as a result of exhaustion. The Government of Republika Srpska, acting on instructions from the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, formed a new committee in 2004 to investigate the events at Srebrenica. The official report issued by this committee listed 8,731 confirmed missing or dead persons as a result of the events at Serebrenica. In April 2010, however, the President of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, claimed in an interview that the number of Muslim victims was 3,500. A sober and well documented selection of witness statements is available in the English-language edition of Wikipedia under the title "Srebrenica Massacre"⁵. From August 1995 to November 1995 there was an organized attempt to remove the bodies from massive gravesites and transport them to second-

4 Mirnes Kovač and Aid Smajić, "Bosnia and Herzegovina", in: *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe Volume 2*, edited by Jørgen S. Nielsen, Samim Akgönül, Ahmet Alibašić, Brigitte Maréchal, Christian Mae, Leiden, Brill 2010, 89-105, quotation from p. 91.

5 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Srebrenica_massacre This 27-page article comprises 309 endnotes and a selected bibliography in English (7 August 2012).

ary and tertiary gravesites. At the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), established by UN Resolution 827 in 1993, in the case “Prosecutor v. Blagojevic and Jokic” the trial chamber found that this reburial effort was an attempt to conceal evidence of the mass murders. On 30 September 2003 former US President Bill Clinton opened the Srebrenica Genocide Memorial at Potočari, which honors the victims of the genocide. Bereaved families have been able to bury their loved ones with dignity at formal ceremonies held annually since 2003: as of July 2012, 6,838 victims of the Srebrenica genocide have been identified through DNA analysis of body parts recovered from mass graves and 5,657 victims have been buried at the Potočari cemetery. At the request of their families, other identified victims have been buried in their home cemeteries.

On 16 November 1995 Radovan Karadžić, former president of the Republika Srpska, and Ratko Mladić, former commander of the RS Army, were indicted by the ICTY. Both spent years on the run with the help of supporters. Karadžić was arrested on 21 July 2008 and Mladić on 26 May 2011. Other indictees surrendered or were captured and transported to The Hague. General Radislav Krstić was convicted of aiding and abetting genocide and sentenced by the ICTY to 35 years. On June 10 2010, senior Serb police officers Vujadin Popović and Ljubiša Beara were found guilty of genocide, extermination, murder and persecution at Srebrenica and were sentenced to life in prison.

The ICTY authorized Serbia and BiH to establish national tribunals for war crimes and these tribunals are now trying cases. Some Serb intellectuals, often with the support of international commentators, continue to argue that atrocities committed by Serb forces in Srebrenica in 1995 were a legitimate reaction to Bosniak-Muslim raids on Serb villages around Srebrenica and they reject the conclusion that these atrocities constituted genocide, since women and children were transported to Bosniak-controlled territory. The ICTY and courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina have upheld the charge of genocide on several occasions.

In addition to Srebrenica, massacres took place elsewhere in BiH⁶. For example, on 16 April 1993, at the beginning of the armed conflict between Bosniaks and Croats, Croat units invaded the Muslim village of Ahmići near Vitez in central Bosnia and killed 116 civilians. The ICTY sentenced the local militia leader, Dario Kordić, to 25 years for this crime. In

6 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_massacres_in_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina (7 August 2012).

the nearby Croat village of Križančevo Selo on 22 December 1993 a Bosnian Army unit composed of Muslims killed 74 Croats. In Sijekovac near Bosanski Brod, following a clash between Bosniak and Croat military units and Bosnian-Serb units and civilians in March 1992, the bodies of 59 people, including 18 children, were found. In the Croat village of Grabovica in Herzegovina, which was occupied by Bosnian Army units from May 1993, the ICTY found that 13 Croat inhabitants, taking no active part in the hostilities, were murdered on 9 September by unidentified Bosniak soldiers. In 2008, the Supreme Court of the BiH Federation confirmed three local court convictions and 13-year sentences handed down to three perpetrators of this crime.

When war-crimes sentences are announced, by the ICTY in The Hague or by local courts in BiH, Croatia or Serbia, the people who have been convicted, or members of their family or representatives of their ethnic group invariably complain about the severity of the punishment, while victims and the families of victims express shock over the leniency of sentences. Serb politicians in BiH have sharply criticized the ICTY and local courts for what they say is an excessive focus on crimes committed by Serbs during the 1992-1995 war, and they complain that the prosecution of war crimes by Bosniaks and Croats against Serb civilians has not received the same attention. This dissatisfaction with the justice process, which has also been extremely slow and ponderous, has offered a pretext for inflammatory rhetoric by some politicians in BiH and has been an obstacle to reconciliation.

APOLOGIES BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES

Readers who are familiar with the history of Southeast Europe will remember that Yugoslavia was established in 1918 following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled in the region for centuries. Belgrade was chosen as the capital of Yugoslavia because Serbia had enjoyed full independence from Turkey for around 60 years and was already an internationally recognized state. Most Serbian politicians, intellectuals and religious leaders saw the emergence of Yugoslavia as the legal enlargement of Serbia, which now went under a new name

because the territories of five peoples and two large ethnic minorities (Croats, Bosnian Muslims, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Slovenians, ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina) had been added to it. Foreign powers and the ruling parties in the country hoped that members of the six peoples and the two principal ethnic minorities would gradually come together in a harmonious and democratic nation.

Sources of discord included the language used by official institutions (and even the name of the language), the treatment of history in school textbooks, the rights to which members of different ethnic and religious communities were entitled, and regional economic investment (including the issue of how to spend revenue from tourism on the Adriatic coast). Failure to resolve these and other disputes go a long way towards explaining why in 1990-92 the citizens of five Yugoslav republics voted not only to throw out the communist regime but also to end the existence of Yugoslavia as one country with six peoples in six republics.

Under the slogan "All Serbs in One State" Serbian President Slobodan Milošević sought to carve a new entity out of former Yugoslavia – at tremendous physical and human cost. On 27 August 1991 the European Arbitration Commission headed by former French Justice Minister Robert Badinter was established. The Commission proposed that the boundaries of the former republics be recognized as the boundaries of the new recognized states. Between late 1991 and the middle of 1993 the Commission presented fifteen opinions pertaining to legal issues arising from the break-up of Yugoslavia⁷.

Serb Orthodox church leaders supported the idea of Yugoslavia as a homeland for all Serbs, but they nonetheless participated in meetings of regional religious leaders convened during the conflict⁸. In statements following these meetings Catholic, Jewish, Muslim and Orthodox leaders pleaded for an immediate ceasefire and called for peace talks to resolve existing problems.

In light of the destruction of churches and mosques, during which the perpetrators sometimes wore emblems of their Catholic, Muslim or Orthodox identity, religious leaders – inspired by Rabbi Arthur Schneier,

7 See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arbitration Commission of the Peace Conference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arbitration_Commission_of_the_Peace_Conference) on... (10 August 2012). This five-page article points in endnotes to essential sources.

8 See Antun Škvorčević, "Peacemaking and ecumenical attempts by church leaders during the war in Croatia", in *The Wounded Church in Croatia. The Destruction of the Sacral Heritage of Croatia (1991-1995)*, Zagreb, The Croatian Conference of Bishops 1996, 33-47. Mato Zovkić, "Begegnungen zwischen den geistlichen Oberhäupter Bosnien-Herzegowinas in den Jahren 1991-1995" in *Die gekreuzigte Kirche in Bosnien-Herzegowina. Die Zerstörung von katholischen Sakralbauten in Bosnien-Herzegowina 1991-1996*, Zagreb, Kroatisches Informationszentrum 1997, 35-81.

President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation centered in New York – publicly characterized crimes committed in the name of religion as crimes *against* religion.

Since media reporting of the murder of innocent civilians and the destruction of places of worship often reflected the interests of warlords and their respective ethnic communities, religious leaders were often unable to receive timely and verified information about tragic events. This may explain why none of the religious leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina immediately condemned those groups from their own ethnic community that perpetrated such crimes. The process of verifying what happened and who was responsible often lasted for years.

On 3 May 1995, while the war was still going on, the Catholic bishops of BiH addressed Catholics and society at large through a Pastoral Letter commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II⁹. They cited the anniversary as an appropriate occasion “to pray not only for deceased Croat Catholics, but for the innocent victims of other ethnic identities who are gone with the harshest wind of this war... Our remembrance of these victims should not be an occasion to create new wounds.” The bishops quoted Pope John Paul II in his homily addressed to all the parties to the Bosnian conflict on 8 September 1994 “We forgive and we ask forgiveness!”

The premise of Christian thinking articulated by the Pope is that “rotating ‘guilt’ and ‘punishment’ will never end if we do not forgive.”

After the war, between 1998 and 2006, seven meetings of Catholic and Orthodox bishops took place in BiH¹⁰. In the press release after the first meeting in Tuzla on 17 March 1998, the participants said: “We jointly condemn any injustice caused to people and any destruction caused to our places of worship. We empathize with all those who have suffered or are still suffering, and we pray to God to grant them comfort and peace. We ask for the respect of inviolable rights and the freedom of every human being and nation, and above all the right to an identity, home and homeland and one’s own property. We regret and repent the evil that was committed in the war by members of our communities even though these were not committed in the name of our Churches. We forgive those who caused evil and in the name of the Gospel we pray for mutual forgiveness.

9 English translation in *Pastoral Letters, Statements and Appeals of the Catholic Bishops of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1990-1997*, Sarajevo, Biskupska konferencija Bosne i Hercegovine 1998, 74-77.

10 English translation of their press releases in *Pastoral Letters, Statements and Appeals of the Catholic Bishops of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1997-2009*, Sarajevo, Bishops’ Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 175-198.

We express our willingness for reconciliation and to build sincere human relations and co-existence.”

For some time, Muslim religious leaders in BiH expected an explicit apology from the Serb Orthodox patriarch and bishops, to Bosnian Muslims for the Srebrenica genocide and other atrocities and for the destruction of mosques by Serb forces. Several general condemnations by Serb Orthodox leaders of what had happened were viewed as being insufficient. In June 1996, foreseeing that the process of acknowledgement and apology would take a long time, Grand Mufti Dr Mustafa Cerić joined three other senior figures who have their seats in Sarajevo (Orthodox Metropolitan Nikolaj Mrdja, Catholic Archbishop Vinko Puljić and President of the Jewish community in BiH Jakob Finci) in establishing the Interreligious Council (IRC) as an NGO that would promote dialogue and cooperation motivated by faith.

The initial education of employees selected by religious leaders from their respective communities was given by the *World Conference of Religions for Peace* (WCRP), which is centered in New York, thanks to the then Secretary General Dr William Vendley. The IRC is still active, although it has experienced some financial difficulties.

In 2005 Grand Mufti Cerić entrusted three professors of the Faculty for Islamic Studies in Sarajevo with preparing a draft text of a Platform for Dialogue of the Islamic Community (IC) in BiH. On 21 January 2009 the draft was posted on the IC website, where it can be read and commented on. It is a document of five pages in three sections: I. The Islamic Community and interreligious dialogue; II. Interethnic relations, human rights and violence; III. Bosnia and Herzegovina: its past and future. According to Section I, the IC supports full religious freedom on the whole territory of BiH, it favors special dialogue with representatives of monotheistic faith communities and it affirms the practice of good neighborly relations. In section II, the IC rejects any use of violence motivated by faith. It also “condemns state terrorism which due to the state monopoly of power can produce dire repercussions. The IC especially condemns individuals and groups who claim the right to perform terrorist acts on behalf of Islam. They do not represent Islam or world Muslims and by their acts they perform violence on Muslims and on Islam, besides the direct violence on victims of their acts.” According to Section III, in the 1992-1995 Bosnian war “religion was misused but it was not a war of religions because it was not waged to convert Muslims to another religion but primarily to exterminate Muslims... Muslims of BiH were the greatest victims in this war

because the systematic crime of genocide and so-called ethnic cleansing was perpetrated against them... Criminal responsibility is indeed individual, but all those who by their votes, public statements, consistent denial of crimes, or in any other way helped criminals during the war or continue to do so even today bear political and moral responsibility... Srebrenica is a huge stain not only on Serbs inside and outside BiH and the Serb Orthodox Church but also on the major part of the international community and the international public. We consider inaccurate the assertions that Muslims could not perpetrate major crimes because they were not powerful enough. We are convinced that Islam contributed to the fact that Bosniaks behaved in the recent war better than others." The document expresses dissatisfaction with the post-war phenomenon in which "all try to exaggerate their own suffering" and proposes that each ethno-religious community repair what its members destroyed. It concludes that "the three sides are not equally guilty in regard to the past war."

In a subsection entitled "Peace, justice, reconciliation and coexistence", Qur'an 60,8 is quoted as the Muslim foundation for dialogue, and it is pointed out that in order to create a durable peace, justice must be done and truth must be accepted, though peace can be reached even before justice is done and truth fully accepted. Verbal apologies are not enough for reconciliation because victims must be compensated and displaced persons must be given the opportunity to return to their homes in a sustainable way. "There is no alternative to reconciliation, dialogue and coexistence in multicultural Bosnia and here is a major role for faith communities and churches. Dialogue and coexistence are not just our tactics or for our intellectual satisfaction but a strategic determination, because in them we see the way to our survival." The document is still in the drafting phase and changes may be made before it is finalized.

On 15 and 16 April 2010, Croatian President Ivo Josipović paid an official visit to Sarajevo and BiH. Addressing the BiH Parliamentary Assembly he touched on the issue of war victims and proposed that Croatia and BiH work in partnership to build peace, stability and prosperity for the region. "There are no criminal peoples but only criminals and evil deeds which are all the worse if they have been committed in the name of a people," President Josipovic said. "Here in BiH Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs have their victims, their sufferers to whom I express my deep respect and condolence, regardless of their ethnicity. Every lost life is a loss for all of us. Tomorrow I will visit the places of terrible crimes in order to condemn the crime once

again, to show respect to the victims whose only sin was the fact that they were 'the other', different ones. In this visit, religious leaders, politicians, citizens, relatives of the victims will join me. I consider this a noble willingness to forgive and to have a common future. Only through law and justice can we cleanse our peoples of the evil of mutual accusations for past evil deeds and ensure that the evil never takes place again." The President apologized for Zagreb's role in fuelling bitter ethnic divisions during the 1992-1995 war: "I deeply regret that Croatian politics contributed to the suffering of people and divisions that still torment us. The politics of the 1990s must be abandoned once and for all. For a new era we need new politics."¹¹

At both memorial places, Ahmići and Križančevo Brdo, President Josipović was accompanied by Grand Mufti Cerić and Archbishop Puljić. The President placed a wreath at both tombstones with the inscription: "To the innocent victims, from the President of the Republic" and in his short statement he said: "We are all here united in the desire to pay homage to the victims, to remember the victims and to say: never again! Here ethnic communities have suffered much and they deserve a better future."¹² Television pictures of President Josipović and the two religious leaders of communities that had once been in conflict had an enormously positive public impact.

The President was criticized by ethnic Serb media for not speaking enough about the impact of the war on the Serb population and by ethnic Croat media for what was said to be an overly simplified admission of Croatia's involvement in the sufferings of Bosniaks during the conflict, but his courageous actions and words were important pointers towards reconciliation and mutual forgiveness. The editor-in-chief of the Croat Catholic Weekly *Glas Koncila*, Ivan Miklenić, characterized Josipović's words and gestures during his visit to BiH as "a contribution to reconciliation."¹³

On 31 March 2010 the Parliament of Serbia adopted a Declaration on Srebrenica¹⁴. The Preamble states that: "Striving to keep the memory of

11 Croatian text of the speech available at <http://dovla.net/2010/04/govor-ive-josipovica-u-parlamentu-bih/>. Summary in English at www.dw.de/dw/article/0,,5467958,00.html and www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/apr/21/croatia-fragile-progressive-voice (11 August 2012). The author of this article, british journalist Heather McRobie, drew approval and criticism from readers. She argues against the principle of three constituent peoples in BiH prescribed by the Dayton Constitution, and deplores the fate of "others" (ostali).

12 http://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokolj_u_Ahmićima (11 August 2012).

13 *Glas Koncila*, No 17, 2010, p. 2. He also pointed out that the President should have formulated more carefully two controversial sentences which were sharply criticized by Croat politicians and media.

14 English translation available at <http://srebrenica-genocide.blogspot.com/2010/04/text-of-declaration-on-srebrenica.html> (11 August 2012).

the victims of the brutal armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, in which all nations suffered grave hardships, forever alive; in line with the ruling of the International Court of Justice, the United Nations supreme judicial body, delivered in the case brought by Bosnia and Herzegovina against Serbia and Montenegro on 26 February 2007... the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia passed the Declaration condemning the crime in Srebrenica." In the text, Serbian Parliamentarians express their "condolences and apologies to the families of the victims that everything possible had not been done to prevent the tragedy". They support the trials taking place at the ICTY and they call on "all the former conflicting sides in BiH, as well as in other states of former Yugoslavia, to continue the process of reconciliation and strengthening of the conditions for common life based on national equality and full observance of human and minority rights and freedoms so that the crimes that were committed will never be repeated." In conclusion, the parliamentarians express a desire that the highest authorities of other states that emerged from former Yugoslavia will condemn crimes committed against Serbs and apologize to the families of Serb victims.

This is a great declaration if we keep in mind the socio-political context of Serbian parliamentarians. It was bitterly criticized by most Serb leaders in BiH for what they described as its slavish obedience to the expectation of "big brothers" in the EU and the UN. Bosniak-Muslim politicians and theologians criticized the Declaration for not accepting the qualification of "genocide" regarding the Srebrenica massacre.

While official statements do not necessarily communicate what is in the minds and hearts of signatories, over the long term such statements are likely to have an impact and start a process of changing people's mentality.

DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THE EXPULSION OF MUSLIMS FROM LJUBUŠKI IN 1993

Forgiving and asking forgiveness among ethnic communities in BiH is a long-term and demanding process. I would like to illustrate this by reference to a documentary, "Neđo of Ljubuški", which was presented in the town hall of Ljubuški on 16 July 2012. To make the content of this film and the controversy it aroused understandable to foreign readers, I will briefly des-

cribe what happened in the municipality of Ljubuški during the 1993-1994 conflict between Bosniaks and Croats.

After about a year in which Bosniaks and Croats had maintained an alliance to defend their localities against invading Serb forces, an armed conflict between Bosniaks and Croats erupted in Central Bosnia and Herzegovina. Non-combatant residents who were ethnic minorities in certain localities were driven from their homes and forced to seek temporary shelter in areas where they were part of the ethnic majority. This is why in March 1993 about a thousand Croats who had been expelled from settlements in Central Bosnia reached Ljubuški Municipality. According to the 1991 census Ljubuški Municipality was home to 27,182 residents, 25,180 (92,6%) of whom declared themselves as ethnic Croats, 1,569 (5,7%) as ethnic Bosniaks or Muslims, 64 as Serbs, 222 as Yugoslavs and 147 as "other".

In the Muslim village of Gradska there were around 45 families and the village had a mosque. The arrival of the expelled Croats coincided with news that Muslims who had up to that time fought in units of the Croat Defense Council (HVO – military units of Croats and Bosniaks in Herzegovina and Bosnia) had abruptly joined the Army of BH (predominantly Muslim) and this generated mistrust between Croats and Bosniaks in the municipality.

Fr. Velimir Mandić of the Herzegovina Franciscan Province was parish priest in Humac-Ljubuški parish from 1988 to 2000. He believes that this new inter-ethnic suspicion was the reason the Croat military authorities in Ljubuški ordered Muslim members of the HVO to assemble in front of the police station, from where they were taken to the "Heliodrom" sports complex in Mostar which had been turned into a temporary concentration camp for Bosniaks. At the same time, the municipal authorities announced that Bosniaks who had been deported would be released if relatives or friends would provide a signed undertaking that they were ready to accommodate them outside BiH. Soon such guarantee letters flooded the fax machines of Croat institutions in the town. Among others, the Franciscans of Humac-Ljubuški received and passed on such letters. Zoran Vukšić, a Croat who was the director of SICOM, a local factory producing construction material, told Fr. Mandić on 13 August 2012 that several Muslims worked at the factory, including Selam Maksimović, and that guarantee letters for these workers and for other local Muslims arrived through the fax machine at the factory and Mr. Vukšić gave them to Mr. Maksimović to pass on. Fr. Mandić asked the town authorities to protect Muslim settlers from possible reprisals by incoming Croats who had

been evicted from their homes in Central Bosnia, but without adequate success. When the imam of Gradska mosque was about to leave, Fr. Mandić gave him DM 500 in personal support and a member of the Muslim community asked Fr. Mandić to keep the key of the mosque (which the priest was unable to accept as he expected to be transferred imminently to another parish). Some Croats looted the homes and properties of Muslims who had left and in 1995 the minaret of the mosque was vandalized.

Neđo Galić (1949-2010) owned a photography shop in Ljubuški; he was known as a committed communist and a collaborator with the secret police during the communist regime. He was deeply disturbed by the ethnicization of BiH and after his Muslim fellow citizens were taken to the Heliudrom complex he provided through his fax machine authentic and fake guarantee letters for hundreds of them. When he judged that the situation in Ljubuški had become impossibly nationalistic, Galić moved with his family to the Czech Republic as a refugee but he returned after the war and continued running his photography shop.

The documentary film “Neđo of Ljubuški” was made by Svetlana Broz, a respected Belgrade cardiologist and journalist whose humanitarian work has nonetheless attracted criticism from some quarters¹⁵. The grand-daughter of former Yugoslav leader, Josip Broz Tito, Ms Broz is known for her 1999 book *Good People in an Evil Time – Portraits of Complicity and Resistance in the Bosnian War* in which she depicts courageous individuals who risked their lives to help endangered neighbors of a different ethnicity during the conflict¹⁶.

In the documentary, Ms Broz presents statements by Neđo Galić’s widow, Štefica, the couple’s three grown-up children and several Muslim friends regarding the guarantee letters for detained Muslims from Ljubuški in August 1993. The film does not refer to the fact that other people also provided guarantee letters, that no Muslim civilians were killed in Ljubuški, that no Muslim women were raped, or that Muslims gradually returned to their homes in the municipality after the war, repairing their houses and the mosque, while most of the exiled Croat families were unable to

15 Her thirty-year old son Ivan in an interview with the weekly political magazine *Slobodna Bosna*, No. 679 of 19 November 2009, p. 34-39 maintains that he and his sister Sonja were maltreated by their mother and her new husband. Acknowledging that his mother is extraordinarily intelligent and educated, he claims that she “undertakes everything with a view to material profit”. Invited by the interviewer, Mirha Dedić, to comment on her son’s statements Ms Broz declined.

16 The second Bosnian edition published in 2000; foreign publications: in 2001 Czech, 2002 Polish, 2003 English, 2006 Spanish, 2008 Italian - www.svetlanabroz.org (14 August 2012).

return to their homes in Central Bosnia. When he fell seriously ill, Galić asked his wife to bury him in the nondenominational cemetery in Mostar because he feared that the nationalist mood in Ljubuški might result in his grave being vandalized. Mrs Galić did as her husband asked and the documentary includes a scene in which she visits her husband's grave.

After the documentary was shown there was a demonstration by protestors angered by the film in front of Ljubuški town hall and a wave of reactions appeared in the print and electronic media. The debate continued for two weeks. Bosniak authors praised the courage of the late Neđo Galić and his family, while Croats expressed fury with Svetlana Broz and Mrs. Galić for offering what they said was an incomplete picture of the situation in Ljubuški in 1993.

Svetlana Broz told one interviewer that her aim had been to prompt the Croats of Ljubuški to offer a belated condemnation of the atrocities that were committed against the Muslim minority in their midst during the war. However, the result of her intervention may have been to deepen existing wounds¹⁷. Those who wish to change mind-sets and contribute to interethnic reconciliation and forgiveness in BiH have to take into account ethnic sensitivities and the continuing vulnerability of victims and perpetrators.

CONCLUSION

Forgiving and asking for forgiveness among ethnic communities in BiH depends on establishing incontrovertible facts. We are still far from having a complete and authenticated account of what really happened, or from winning general acceptance of such an account. Proceedings of the ICTY and of local courts continue to be viewed by many as being influenced by the political calculations of "big brothers" or the "international community" whatever these terms may be taken to mean.

In addition, the process of forgiveness and trust-building has been long and slow because of continuing disagreement among the ethnic communities over what kind of state they want Bosnia and Herzegovina to be. Is the "Dayton BiH" of one state with three ethnic communities and "others" viable?

17 See Maja Radevic, "Schindler iz Ljubuškog", *Slobodna Bosna*, 19. 7. 2012, 60-62.

Whatever the future political solution (an efficient state or three ethnic mini-states within present boundaries) those of us who were born here, regardless of our ethnic or religious affiliation, and who want to go on living here need to promote interethnic trust. Foreign diplomats and soldiers cannot build this trust and reconciliation. This is work that we must do ourselves. The sooner we accept that fact the more effective our contribution to the common good will be.

Faith ministers have a unique capacity to educate their own congregations in the ways of interethnic trust and forgiveness. Being a Christian believer, I see an additional source of strength and motivation in our faith¹⁸. Muslims, Catholics, Orthodox and Jews of this country believe in a God who created all humans as free beings and who wants us to live as good neighbors in the context of our ethnic and religious diversity. We believe in a God whose forgiveness we need and who enjoins us to forgive one another. This is a fundamental truth that I have always sought to affirm among the members of my own ethnic group and among all of my fellow citizens.

18 See Mato Zovkić, "Can Christians of different denominations in Bosnia and Herzegovina contribute to inter-ethnic reconciliation?", in: Peter De May-Andrew Pierce-Oliver Schuegraf (Eds), *Mission und Einheit / Mission and Unity*, Leipzig, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt 2012, 245-257.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN POLITICAL CONTEXT OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA¹

The present ratio of Christians and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the result of a long historical development, not the fruit of recent missionary endeavors. Christians are Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants of different denominations. Muslims are Sunni believers who accepted Islam during Ottoman period in Bosnia. The individual's family faith gradually – through education and adult choice – becomes a personal conviction and an integral part of personal and group identity.

As well as the appalling massacre committed by Serb forces against Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica in July 1995, Bosniak Muslim historians evaluate as genocide the expulsion and persecution of Muslims which took place in Croatia after the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, then between 1804 and 1820 in Serbia after the first uprising of Serbs, during the second Serb uprising in Serbia and Montenegro in 1876-1878, and finally in Serbia and Montenegro during the Balkan War of 1912². Reputable Christian scholars acknowledge that a kind of “de-islamization” took place after Ottoman rule ended in the region³. Several hundred thousand Bosnian Muslims moved to Turkey in the late nineteenth century because they were afraid that they could be forcibly Christianized by the new rulers.

It is fair to say that in the era of imperial rule, Muslim authorities tended to favor Muslims and Christian authorities tended to favor Christians. Each religious and ethnic community has experienced oppression

1 A Presentation at CCEE Conference in Torino, 2nd of June 2011.

2 Cf. Ahmet Alibašić, „Hronološki pregled historije islama i muslimanskih naroda“, in Dževad Hodžić (ed), *Atlas islamskog svijeta*, Sarajevo 2003, 799-801.

3 M. Dogo, “La de-islamizzazione: fasi, metodi, risultati”, in L. Vaccari (ed), *Storia religiosa dell'Islam nei Balcani*, Milano 2008, 283-310.

and discrimination. At the same time, all of the communities also have experience of good neighborly relations.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a land area of 51,209 km² and a population of 4,377,043 population according to the 1991 census, is a country recovering from the 1991-1995 war for ethnic territory that followed the disintegration of Yugoslavia. It consists of two "entities", the Federation of Bosniaks and Croats, which has ten cantons, and the Republika Srpska, from which Croats and Bosniaks were ethnically cleansed during the armed conflict. The High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, appointed by the Peace Implementation Council, has the authority to remove elected officials, and enact or suspend legislation when such action is deemed necessary to uphold the peace process.

In the 1991 census about 44% of respondents registered as ethnic Muslims, something they had been able to do under the communist regime since the late 1960s. In 1993 Muslim civil and religious leaders decided to adopt the name "Bosniak". In doing so they had in mind the fact that most ethnic Croats in BiH are Catholics and most ethnic Serbs are Orthodox. For centuries ethnic and religious identities in BiH have overlapped.

Regarding the origin of Muslims in BiH, Mirnes Kovač and Aid Smajić say briefly: "Bosnian Muslims are mainly descended from Christians (Catholics, Orthodox, or adherents of the extinct Medieval Bosnian Church) who converted to Islam during the four centuries of Ottoman rule from the middle of the fifteenth century until 1878, when Bosnia became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and remained so until 1918"⁴.

On 1st of March 1992 the democratically elected government of Bosnia and Herzegovina organized a referendum asking citizens if they wanted to remain within a truncated Yugoslavia or become a new independent country. The referendum was boycotted by most ethnic Serbs in BH (though not all!). Citizens who took part in the referendum voted for independence.

BH was quickly recognized by the UN as a new member state but Bosnian Serbs, assisted by the Yugoslav army, initiated a war to secure a portion of the country which they hoped eventually to join with Serbia. Bosniaks and Croats describe this armed conflict as a war of aggression, while Serbs refer to it as a civil war. Perhaps an appropriate description would be a war for ethnic territories.

4 Mirnes Kovač and Aid Smajić, "Bosnia and Herzegovina", in Jorgen S. Nielsen (ed), *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, Leiden 2010, 90.

The war ended with the Dayton Peace Accords in November 1995. In addition to the expulsion of ethnic minorities from their homes and the destruction of mosques and churches the conflict took the lives of 97,207 victims, of whom 64,036 were Bosniaks or Bosnian Muslims.

The Srebrenica genocide and other atrocities committed by Serb armed forces were characterized by Ratko Mladić as being revenge for the mediaeval defeat at Kosovo and part of an effort to prevent the re-Islamization of the Balkans. This myth has also been propagated by some Jewish extremists: "The Bosnia and the Kosovo Wars, which were conceived in much of the world only in terms of Serbian nationalism under Milosevic, have yet another dark side to them that is not widely discussed, and that is the rise of Islam in the Balkans" (R. Israeli, 2000, 5). Declaring that citizens who are different are also dangerous opens minds and hearts to discrimination and crimes against minorities.

Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina are organized in the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ICBH) with eight geographical muftiates consisting of 60 *jam'as* and a military muftiate. The head of the IC is the *Reis al-ulema*, a position held since 1993 by Dr Mustafa Cerić, who is the President of the *Riyasat* and the Grand Mufti of all Muslims in the country. The Council of the ICBH (*Sabor*) elects the Reis and is the highest representative and legislative body of Muslims in BiH. Bosnian Muslims living abroad are organized in five *Meshihats*: in Slovenia, Croatia, Sandjak in Serbia, Germany and Australia. Bosnian Muslims are organized also in Austria, the US and Canada. The Office for the Bosniak Diaspora in Sarajevo coordinates pastoral care of Bosniak Muslims living abroad. The ICBH also has an Office for the Hajj, an Office for Relations with the Islamic World, a *Waqf* or Endowment Directorate, the El-Kalem publishing center, the Center for Islamic Architecture, the Muslim News Agency (MINA), the Agency for Halal Quality Certification, the Gazi Husref Bey Library, the Association of Islamic Scholars (*Ilmija*), the Tariqah Center and Radio Station *BIR*. Faith-based organizations that are not directly responsible to the Riyaset include the Muslim Charitable Association, "Merhamet", the Women's Education Center "Nahla" in Sarajevo, the Women's Education Center "Kewser" in Zenica and many others.

The ICBH runs about 1,700 mosques and *masjids*. "In larger towns, such as Sarajevo, Zenica, Bugojno, a number of mosques were built after the war as a gift from friendly countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Jordan, and Kuwait. Many mosques are still under recon-

struction after being destroyed or damaged during the war, while others are new builds. The ICBH reports that 613 mosques, 218 *masjids*, 69 mektabs, 4 *zarwias*, 37 *turbes* and 405 various other *waqf* properties were completely destroyed in the 1992-1995 war”⁵.

The ICBH runs six Islamic high schools or madrasas (in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Travnik, Visoko, Cazin and Mostar). Since 1977 the Faculty of Islamic Studies (*Fakultet islamskih nauka – FIN*), which educates future imams, teachers of religion and postgraduate candidates for MA and PHD degrees, has operated in Sarajevo. In Zenica and Bihać there are Islamic Education Faculties, which train teachers for Islamic education in public schools. The Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo publishes an annual collection of scholarly papers (*Zbornik FIN-a*) and makes its premises available for international interreligious conferences as well as organizing such conferences on its own. With several professors of the Faculty I have attended interreligious conferences in Croatia, Slovenia, Germany and Austria. Professors Enes Karić, Fikret Karčić, Adnan Silajdžić and others have through their books and articles helped to show that Bosnian Islam is a European phenomenon, intrinsically part of the European value system. I have often heard them say: “We are Muslims and Europeans and both are important for us!”

At the request of Catholic, Muslim and Orthodox religious leaders confessional religious instruction was introduced in public schools in 1994. Teachers of religion are educated by the respective Schools of Theology; the canonical mission of the territorial religious leaders is recognized, and religious education texts are prepared by believing experts in religious pedagogy. The education authorities employ and pay the teachers of this elective course in primary and high schools. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has proposed the introduction of a non-denominational course on the religions practiced in BiH and elsewhere. Progress is being made but the course is still at an experimental stage.

As followers of Sunni Islam and Europeans with experience of living for 130 years under non-Muslim rulers, Muslim representatives in BiH are open to interreligious dialogue. Grand Mufti Dr. Cerić was in June 1997 one of the co-founders of the Interreligious Council in BiH (other co-founders were Nikolaj Mrđa, the Orthodox Archbishop of Sarajevo, Vinko Puljić, the Catholic Archbishop of Sarajevo and Jakob Finčić, the President

5 Kovač and Smajić, *Art. cit.*, 95-96.

of the Jewish community in BiH). Dr. Cerić signed an Open letter of 38 Muslim leaders to Pope Benedict XVI dated 13 October 2006 in response to the Pope's lecture in Regensburg. The Grand Mufti of BiH was also one of 138 original signatories to the Appeal "A Common word between you and us" addressed to Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders on 13 October 2007, which was an invitation to dialogue based on the love of God and the love of neighbor. In 2010 the *El-Kalem* Muslim publishing house in Sarajevo published the Bosnian translation of this letter along with selected answers to it, including a document of the Christian-Muslim Forum in Rome on 4-6 November 2008, speeches of Benedict XVI, Professor Nasr, Grand Mufti Cerić and the concluding Declaration of the participants at the November 2009 conference.

During the war in BiH, President Alija Izetbegović as supreme commander of the BH Army looked favorably at Muslim fighters from Near Eastern countries who came to help their fellow Muslims in their struggle for survival. These fighters had a unit within the army structure which committed crimes against non-Muslim civilians. After the war a number of them remained in Bosnia having married Bosniak Muslim women. For a certain period they tried to form a separate settlement administered according to *shari'a*. After the terror attack on 11th of September 2001 in New York, the US intelligence services drew attention to the fact that some new Muslim settlers in Bosnia had criminal records. Five individuals were transported to Guantanamo Bay. Simultaneously, Bosnia witnessed the phenomenon of Wahhabis, mostly young Muslim men who reproach traditional Muslims for what they regard as wrong Muslim practice, try to "convert" them to proper Islam and stress the need to keep a distance from Christians. The number of Wahhabis is disputed; Christian commentators tend to exaggerate, while Muslim commentators are inclined to minimize their number and influence: "During and after the 1992-1995 Bosnian war, the first Salafis, locally known as 'Wahhabis' emerged. Their exact number is not known and, contrary to general belief, they control no mosques and their initial public influence has been steadily weakening"⁶. I know of several Muslim professors who have publicly expressed sharp criticism of the Grand Mufti for not saying explicitly that this kind of Islam is alien to Bosnian Muslims.

In the period between 1994 and 2009 several private publishers published pamphlets and books, mostly translated from Arabic or English, in

6 Kovač and Smajić, *Art. cit.*, 91.

which the Bible and Christianity are ridiculed. At a Christian-Muslim conference in Stuttgart in November 2009 where many Bosnian Muslims participated I presented an analysis of eleven such writings⁷. One of the Bosnian participants at the conference sent my text to the editorial staff of *Saff* in Zenica, a pro-Salafi Muslim magazine founded in 1998 with a circulation of around 5,000. I was criticized for spreading hate speech, but Dr. Cerić told me in a private meeting that he was fully informed about the real situation and that he did not intend to raise my conference paper as an obstacle to Catholic-Muslim relations in our country.

Due to wartime disruption and ethnic cleansing the Catholic population of BiH has fallen from 830,000 in 1991 to about 460,000 today. Christianity and Islam as universal religions exceed the boundaries of ethnic and national communities; besides cherishing individual and group identities they educate believers to live in the broad human family and to respect the human dignity of people who are different. Despite our diverging views of past atrocities and present tensions, our respective Faith can and should educate us to contribute to pluralistic civil societies.

Ina Merdjanova and Patrice Brodeur use the concept of *conversation starter* in presenting the role of religions in peace-building: "Contrary to the evocative warning of Richard Rorty that religion turns into a 'conversation stopper' for people of different religious backgrounds, we, as scholars of religion and practitioners of interreligious dialogue, see religion-related issues as a good starting point for important conversations between people of different worldviews. Moreover, we also believe that such conversations can grow into crucial dialogues without which peace-building is difficult to imagine"⁸. Based on their field research they believe that interreligious cooperation should not be restricted to clergy and official representatives but complemented by the laity and by grassroots interaction⁹. I fully agree, though in traditional societies like BiH faith ministers (priests and imams) who preside at weekly prayer services can make an effective contribution to educating their own congregations to live responsibly in a pluralistic society and to contribute to a just and lasting peace. May God help us in this noble endeavor!

7 Cf. Mato Zovkić, „Dialogische und polemische Wahrnehmungen des Christentums durch Muslime in Bosnien-Herzegowina. Ein Beitrag auf der Tagung *Brückenschläge – Bosnischer Islam für Europa*, Akademie der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart, 20.-22. 11. 2009“, *Vrhbosnensia* 14 (2010), 1, 159-171.

8 Ina Merdjanova and Patrice Brodeur, *Religion as a Conversation Starter. Interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding in the Balkans*, Continuum, New York 2009, 9.

9 Ina Merdjanova and Patrice Brodeur, *Op. cit.*, 126-127.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH AND THEOLOGY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA¹

I am writing this report at the repeated request of Prof. A. Franz of European Society for Catholic Theology, but due to time limit it can be only partial. On the other hand, I am glad to contribute towards this incomplete information as an ESCT member from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH), which is a European country with a majority Muslim population where Catholics are a relative minority.

DRASTIC REDUCTION OF THE CATHOLIC POPULATION AFTER THE 1995 PEACE ACCORD

May I briefly remind my audience that BH is a small country of only 51.564 sq. km., which according to the census of April 1991 had 4,377.033 inhabitants. Ethnically, 43.5% declared themselves as Bosnians-Muslims, 31.2% as Serbs-Orthodox, 17.4% as Croats-Catholics and 242,683 as ethnic Yugoslavs (5.5%). After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, which consisted of six republics with six ethnic communities or peoples, on 1st March 1992 the democratically elected government of the BH Republic organized a referendum asking its citizens to declare whether they wished to remain within a

1 This is one of reports on situation of Catholic theology in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, at the Conference of European Society for Catholic Theology, in Henjice, Check Republic, February 15 and 16, 2008. Ppublished in: Albert Franz-Wolfgang Baum (Hg), *Theologie im Osten Europas seit 1989: Entwicklungen und Perspektive*, Lit. Berlin 2009, 12-21.

truncated Yugoslavia or gain independence. The result of the referendum was a majority in favour of independence, and we were soon recognized as a new member state of the UN. On 6th April, Serbian armed forces besieged Sarajevo and, assisted by Yugoslav army weapons and troops, launched a war for ethnic territories during which they took control of 72% of the country's territory. The Dayton Peace Accord of November 1995, mediated and imposed by the USA, brought the war to an end by partitioning the country into two so called entities, and "froze" the effects of ethnic cleansing, because the conditions to ensure safe and sustainable return for the majority of refugees and displaced persons were never implemented. A journalist writing in the Sarajevo daily paper *Oslobodjenje* on 7th April 2007 estimated that 1,343,805 citizens of BH who fled the war in their homeland are still living in foreign countries.

The Catholic Church in BH is organized into four dioceses: Trebinje, Mostar, Sarajevo and Banjaluka. In the northwest regions, known as the Krajina and Bosanska Posavina, about 220,000 Catholics had to leave their parishes. There are now only about 14,000 Catholics living there. This territory belongs to the Banjaluka Diocese and the Sarajevo Archdiocese, a region accorded by the Dayton Accord to Republika Srpska. In 1991 there were 830,000 Catholics living in these four dioceses; now there are only about 450,000. In December 1994 the Holy See established the Conference of Bishops in BH. The bishops meet regularly three times a year, and once a year with their colleagues the Bishops of Croatia, because about 98% of the Catholics in BH are ethnic Croats. They go to *ad limina* visit every five years, run different Commissions and Committees, individual bishops conduct pastoral visits to their parishes, and priests perform the usual pastoral activities serving their respective diocesan and parish communities.

THREE SCHOOLS OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

In September 1991, at the request of the Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic religious leaders, the democratically elected government agreed to allow confessional religious instruction in public schools. The education authorities also agreed to the proposal of the bishops and muftis regarding teachers of religion who would be educated at their confessional theological colleges. Before the 1991-1995 war, Catholic candidates for the priesthood

were educated at the Franciscan Theological Seminary in Sarajevo and the Vrhbosnian Theological Seminary, also in Sarajevo (the mediaeval name of the town preceding present-day Sarajevo was Vrhbosna). Now these institutions immatriculate boys and girls who would like to be teachers of religion or perform other functions for which the study of Catholic theology is required. About 140 students are studying for their degree at each of these Schools of Theology. In 1982, the Bishop of Mostar established a Theological Institute for the education of Catholic lay persons interested in a deeper knowledge of their faith. Since 1992 the students of this institute have been following the curriculum for future teachers of religion.

Professors at the Franciscan Theological Seminary publish a periodical entitled *Bosna Franciscana*, while the periodical of the Vrhbosnian Theological Seminary is called *Vrhbosnensia*. Besides contributing to the theological periodicals of BH and Croatia, individual professors from these three theological colleges publish books on subjects from their fields of research.

Biblical scholars seem to be among most productive. In 2004 the Bosnian Franciscan Bozo Lujic, an expert on the Book of Jeremiah², published a book on Old Testament prophets, in chronological order from the ninth to the second century BC.³ A year later he published his collected exegetical articles on Jesus of the canonical gospels, focusing on Jesus' anthropology.⁴ In 2004 his confrère, teaching biblical studies at Franciscan Theological Seminary, Anto Popovic, published a book of his collected exegetical essays, in which he deals with Paul's attitude towards the Jews according to 1 Thess and Rom, Paul's use of his apostolic freedom according to 1 Cor 9, and other subjects.⁵ A year later he published his major commentary on the 1993 Document on the interpretation of the Bible in the Church, intended as a theological manual for the biblical discipline of hermeneutics.⁶ In January 2007 he published his manual on the history of New Testament times, covering the geography of the Fertile Crescent,

2 Cf. his dissertation *Iskustvo Boga i čovjeka u Jeremijinoj knjizi* (The Experience of God and man in the Book of Jeremiah), Zagreb, Kršćanska sadašnjost (=KS) 1985.

3 *Starozavjetni proroci* (The Prophets of the Old Testament), KS, 2004, pp 455.

4 *Isusova antropologija* (The Anthropology of Jesus), KS 2005, pp 539.

5 *Biblijske teme. Egzegetsko-teološka analiza odabranih tekstova Staroga i Novoga zavjeta s Dodatkom* (Bible Themes. Exegetical-theological Themes from the Old and New Testaments with Appendix), Zagreb, KS 2004, pp 368.

6 *Načela i metode za tumačenje Biblije. Komentar Papina govora i dokumenta Biblijske komisije 'Tumačenje Biblije u Crkvi'* (Principles and Methods of Interpretation of the Bible. A Commentary on the Pope's discourse and the Document by the Biblical Commission 'Interpretation of the Bible in the Church'), Zagreb, KS 2005, pp 416.

Roman rule in Palestine from 63 BC to 135 CE, Jewish institutions and sects, and Graeco-Roman religions⁷. In January 2008 he published a new book of his collected essays on exegetical and hermeneutical topics⁸.

While on the subject of the activities of exegetes in BH, I should mention the new, improved edition of the Saric Bible.⁹ In 1940, when preparing to commemorate thirteen centuries of links between the Holy See and Croats as a new people on the north-eastern side of the Adriatic Sea, Croatian bishops entrusted Ivan Saric, the Archbishop of Sarajevo, with a new translation of the entire Bible into Croatian. In addition to his theological education, which culminated in a doctorate in biblical studies from the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Zagreb, the translator was a writer with experience in translating from Latin, German, French and English. He published his translation of the Bible in three volumes in Sarajevo in 1941, 1942 and 1943. Exegetes who reviewed his translation soon realized that he relied heavily on the 1937 German translation of the OT by Eugen Henne and the German translation of the NT by Konstantin Rösch, also dating from 1937. In April 1945 he left Sarajevo and lived as political emigrant for the rest of his life in Madrid. There his secretary Luka Brajnovic prepared a new, somewhat improved edition in one volume in June 1960, two weeks before Saric died on 16th June 1960. His translation of the NT was published separately in 1953 in Spain and in 1967 in Austria for Croat emigrants and "Gastarbeiter" in America, Australia and Western Europe. In early 2004 the Croatian Bible Society, based in Zagreb, entrusted three exegetes from Bosnia with the revision of Saric's translation with a view to a new edition. Karlo Visaticki, a priest of the Banjaluka diocese who teaches Old Testament studies in Djakovo, Croatia, checked the OT books preserved in Hebrew; Bozo Odobasic, a priest of the Sarajevo archdiocese who teaches OT studies at the Vrhbosnian Theological Seminary, took care of the Psalms, while I revised the seven OT books preserved in Greek and the entire NT. The new publisher asked us to harmonize Saric's translation with Hebrew and Greek original text, to modernize the short introductions to individual

7 *Novozavjetno vrijeme. Povijesno-političko i religiozno-kulturno okruženje* (New Testament Times. Historico-political and religious-cultural background), Zagreb, KS 2007, pp 440.

8 *Od slike Božje do Božjeg sinovstva. Povezanost Staroga I Novoga zavjeta na primjeru egzegetsko-teološke analize svetopisamskih tekstova* (From God's image to divine sonship. Correlation of the Old testament and the New Testament exemplified by exegetical and theological analysis of selected texts of the Scriptures), Zagreb, KS 2008, 318 Pp.

9 *Biblija. Sveto Pismo Staroga i Novoga zavjeta*. Prijevod: Ivan Šarić. Biblijska revizija Karlo Višaticki, Božo Odobašić, Mato Zovkić (Bible. Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, Translation by Ivan Šarić. Biblical revision by K.V., B. O., M. Z.) Zagreb, Hrvatsko biblijsko društvo 2006, pp 1386.

books, and to reduce the interpretative notes to a minimum. Marko Aleric, an expert on the Croatian language in Zagreb, harmonized Saric's language with modern standard Croatian. The Saric Bible was published in one volume in December 2006 with a print-run of ten thousand copies and is selling very well. By permission of the publisher, another publishing house in Zagreb published Saric's improved New Testament for Christmas 2006, with a print run of fifteen thousand copies. In December 2007 a new, improved edition was published in fifteen thousand copies.

I should also mention some other theological books written by Bosnian Franciscans. In 2000 their professor of spiritual theology, Marko Semren, published a book on Bosnian Franciscans who during their 700 years of activity were prominent for their spirituality.¹⁰ In 2005 their professor of ecclesiology, Luka Markesic, published his book on the Church.¹¹ In 2006 the Franciscan Theological Seminary published a book of collected essays in honour of their retired confrère Velimir Blazevic, who was professor of Canon Law. In addition to the 18 Catholic contributors, there were two Muslims, both experts on juridical matters.¹² In March 2007 their retired professor of Church history Andrija Zirdum published his *History of Christianity in Bosnia and Herzegovina*.¹³

Msgr. Ratko Perić, the Bishop of Mostar-Duvno, is the most widely published of the professors at the Theological Institute in Mostar. Before his nomination to the office of bishop in Mostar in 1992 he taught ecumenical theology in Zagreb, Rome and Sarajevo,¹⁴ and also taught Mariology for a while.¹⁵ He is the author of dozens of books containing biblical meditations given to priests, nuns, seminarians and students during retreats.¹⁶ Bozo Goluzza, a professor of Church history, has published a man-

10 *Život i umiranje pod križem. Svjedočenje kršćanske i franjevačke duhovnosti bosanskih franjevac* (Living and Dying under the Cross. Testimony of Christian and Franciscan Spirituality by Bosnian Franciscans), Sarajevo, Svjetlo riječi 2000, pp 234.

11 *Crkva Božja. Postanak – povijest – poslanje* (The Church of God. Its Origin, History and Mission), Sarajevo, Svjetlo riječi 2005, pp 294.

12 M. Karamatić-M. Sikirić-I. Šarčević (ed): *Magister interpretesque legis ecclesiae. Zbornik u čast fra Velimiru Blaževiću*, Sarajevo, Franjevačka teologija 2006, pp 254.

13 *Povijest kršćanstva u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Plehan, Slovoznak 2007, pp 500.

14 Cf. his book of collected essays on ecumenism, *Ekumenske nade i tjeskobe* (Ecumenical Hopes and Anxieties), Mostar, Crkva na kamenu 1993, pp 361.

15 Cf. his book in this field of research, *Prijestolje mudrosti* (Seat of Wisdom), same publisher 1995, pp 298.

16 Cf. two of these, *Da nisam ja, Gospodine. Duhovne vježbe po Dvanaestorici* (Surely it is not I, Lord? A Retreat according to the Twelve), same publisher 2005. *Savle, brate, zašto me progoniš? Duhovne vježbe po Pavlu* (Saul, my brother, why persecutest thou me? A Retreat according to Paul), same publisher 2006.

ual on this subject.¹⁷ Ante Pavlović, a professor of religion pedagogy and catechetics, has published a book of his collected essays on the family, school education and the parish community.¹⁸

Since 1986, the Vrhbosnian Theological Seminary has been publishing the collected papers or proceedings of conferences on Church history in Bosnia in its series "Studia Vrhbosnensia". The second series consists of publications of theological manuals translated from other languages or written by its professors, and the third series consists of books authored by its professors.¹⁹

LIFE AND DIALOGUE WITH BOSNIAN MUSLIMS

The Muslims of BH are old Slavic settlers who converted to Islam during more than four centuries of Turkish rule (1463-1878). When the European powers at the Berlin Congress entrusted Austria-Hungary with the administration of this former Ottoman province in Europe, many Muslims of BH were unsure whether to remain under Christian ruler or move to Turkey. About 150,000 emigrated to Turkey, fearful of possible forcible Christianization. The vast majority of them did remain, however, and the new government enabled them to organize themselves into a Muslim community with its own elected and self-managing leaders, and opened a Shariah School for them in Sarajevo, to provide for the education of Muslim judges who would be in charge of family and inheritance disputes. The Muslim School of Law was abolished by the communist regime in 1945. They are now proud of the title of *Reisu-l-ulema* for their grand mufti, established during the 40 years of Austro-Hungarian rule in BH, of their nine muftiluks (eight territorial units similar to a Christian diocese, plus a military personnel unit), 60 medzlis (equivalent to a Christian parish), five medresas (Muslim high schools), two Teacher Training Colleges, and the Faculty of Islamic Studies established in Sarajevo in November 1977.²⁰ The Diaspora of Bosnian Muslims is religiously organized in Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Austria, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey.

17 *Povijest Crkve* (History of the Church), Mostar, Teološki institut 1999, pp 569 + 15 maps.

18 *Putovima vjerskoga odgoja. Obitelj, škola, župna zajednica* (Along the roads of education in faith. Family, School, Parish Community), Mostar, Crkva na kamenu 2005, pp 285.

19 Cf. one of these, T. Vukšić: *Mi i oni. Siguran identitet pretpostavlja susretanja. Miscellanea de oecumenismo* (We and They. A safe identity presupposes encounters), Sarajevo, Vrhbosnanska katolička teologija 2000, pp 342.

20 Data from the official Address Book *Adresar-telefonski imenik Islamske zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Sarajevo, MINA 1999.

Since the Bosnian Muslims are heirs to the Sunni tradition, most of their religious leaders, theologians and simple believers are tolerant in their neighbourly relations with their Orthodox and Catholic fellow citizens. During the 1991-1995 war for ethnic territories after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, military and humanitarian aid from Muslim countries was accompanied by the "import" of Wahhabi sectarians, who now preach and practice hostility towards "infidels" and try to convert their fellow Muslims from what they regard as the "wrong" kind of Islam to "true" Islam as they understand it. These or other extremists have translated from the Arabic dozens of pamphlets and books deriding New Testament and Christianity. The book by the French convert to Islam Maurice Bucaille, entitled *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science*, was reissued in 2001 with the addition of polemical articles by Bosnian authors (the first translation was published in 1978). Among the books by Bosnian authors that I find most polemical is one by Hajrudin Pekarić Dino on Jesus in Christianity and Islam, stating his admiration for Jesus of the Qur'an and regretting the fact that Christians have accepted the Pauline epistles and four canonical gospels, not the apocryphal Gospel of Barnabas.²¹

Notwithstanding the casual influence of Wahhabis and polemical publications, the official leaders and theologians of Muslim community in BH favour tolerant coexistence in a pluralistic civil society and support existential dialogue on the basis of good neighbourly relations. Prominent among theologians who support dialogue is the academic, 2003-2007 dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Enes Karić, known for his dissertation on translations of the Qur'an into South Slavic languages,²² for his own translation of the Qur'an into Bosnian in 1995,²³ for his research on Muslim thought in BH during the twentieth century,²⁴ for numerous essays²⁵, or collected essays of other authors²⁶. Other Muslim theologians

21 H. Pekarić Dino: *Isus/Isa (a. s.) u kršćanstvu i islamu* (Jesus/Isa in Christianity and in Islam), Tuzla, PrintCom 2005, pp 401.

22 *Hermeneutika Kur'ana*, Zagreb, Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo 1990.

23 Before his translation, a kind of "textus receptus" was the translation by Besim Korkut adapted for use in the Muslim Community of Yugoslavia by Dr. Ahmet Smajlović. Karić's translation published in 1995 contains the Arabic text and Bosnian version in parallel, with short but important exegetical notes. The pocket edition of his translation published in 2006 does not contain the Arabic text and explanatory notes.

24 *Povijest muslimanskog mišljenja u Bosni i Hercegovini XX stoljeća* (A History of Muslim Thought in BH during the twentieth century), Sarajevo, El-Kalem 2004, pp 694.

25 *Kako tumačiti Kur'an* (How to Interpret the Qur'an, Sarajevo, Tugra 2005, pp 407. Summary in English, pp. 383-388.

26 *Tumačenje Kur'ana i ideologije XX stoljeća* (Interpretation of the Qur'an and ideologies of Twentieth Century), Sarajevo, Beamust 2002.

in BH who write about dialogue are Resid Hafizovic²⁷ and Adnan Silajdzic.²⁸

For the benefit of Muslim students, Silajdzic has published a selection of items on Christianity written by Christian authors.²⁹ Along the same lines, in this case for Catholic students, the Bosnian Franciscan Luka Markešić has prepared a selection of articles on Islam authored by Muslim theologians (five Bosnian and nine foreign).³⁰

Since 1997, professors at the Vrhbosnian Theological Seminary, which is where I teach New Testament exegesis, have been holding their annual Open Study Day on the last Saturday in November. It also deals with religions in civil society, with Muslims and Christians in BH and elsewhere, with bioethics and similar questions. Muslim speakers are invited and take an active part in the proceedings. Among our professors who have contributed to inter-religious conferences are Tomislav Jozić³¹, Franjo Topić,³² M. Zovkić,³³ and others. In January 2007 my translation into Croatian of the book *Bibel und Koran. Was sie verbindet, was sie trennt* by the German New Testament exegete Joachim Gnllka was published in Zagreb.³⁴

We Catholics have the guidelines of Vatican II and of later documents of the Holy See as inspiration and impulse for ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. The Conference of Bishops of BH has a Committee for contacts

27 Cf his book *Muslimani u dijalogu s drugima i sa sobom* (Muslims in Dialogue with Others and Among Themselves), Sarajevo, El-Kalem 2002.

28 Cf his books *Islam u otkriću kršćanske Europe. Povijest međureligijskog dijaloga* (Islam Discovered by Christian Europe. A History of Inter-religious Dialogue), Sarajevo, Fakultet islamskih nauka 2003. *Muslims in Search of an Identity*. Translated by Saba Risaluddin, El-Kalem, Sarajevo 2007, pp 107.

29 *Kršćanstvo: Objava, vjera, teologija* (Christianity: Revelation, Faith, Theology), Sarajevo, Fakultet islamskih nauka 2004, pp 531.

30 *Islam: Objava i Predaja, Vjera, Klasično i moderno muslimansko mišljenje* (Islam: Revelation and Tradition, Faith, Classical and Modern Muslim Thought), Sarajevo, Franjevačka teologija 2006, pp 390.

31 He is profesor of moral theology. Cf. his book *Društvena teološka etika*, Sarajevo, Vrhbosanska katolička teologija 2000, 198 pp.

32 He teaches Fundamental theology comprising also world religions and Islam especially. Cf. his article in German: "Der christlich-muslimische Dialog in Bosnien-Herzegowina", Anna Magdalena Hollwöger (Gesamtredaktion): *Identität und offener Horizont. Festschrift für Egon Kapellari*, Graz, Styria Verlag 2006, 489-509.

33 Beside publishing and translating books on the New Testament, I am also interested in the teaching of Vatican II and of John Paul II on relations of the Church towards Judaism and Islam. Cf. my book *Međureligijski dijalog iz katoličke perspektive u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Interreligious Dialogue from a Catholic perspective in BH), Sarajevo, Vrhbosanska katolička teologija 1998, pp 304.

34 J. Gnllka: *Biblija i Kur'an. Što ih povezuje, što razdvaja* (The Bible and the Qur'an – what they have in common and what differentiates them) Zagreb, Kršćanska sadašnjost 2007.

with other Christians and Muslims presided by Msgr. Pero Sudar, auxiliary bishop in Sarajevo, and I am one of its members. Dialogue in our Church is no longer the private choice of enthusiasts but an integral part of our mission and pastoral activities. The Orthodox and Muslim communities have no magisterium but they do have some documents by their respective leaders for dialogue with others. Here I should mention the *Declaration of European Muslims* by Dr. Mustafa Cerić as Grand Mufti of the Islamic Community in Bosnia, presented at several interreligious conferences in 2006.³⁵ As one of the Bosnian Muslim leaders to whom it is equally important to be a Muslim and a European, he points out that “No reasonable person can accept that such violence against innocent people be carried out in his or her name. So, Muslims across the Globe have condemned the terrorist attack in New York, the massacre in Madrid and the terror in London in the strongest terms possible.” He asks Europe to “accept the Muslim values and to appreciate the sweat of Muslim workers and intellectuals in building a prosperous and free Europe.” He asks Muslims in Europe to read and learn (Qur’an, 96:1), to be honest and fight for their rights (Q 22:78), having in mind the future of their children (Q 59:18). He would like Muslims in Europe to be committed to a comprehensive joint program for religious dialogue that will “build awareness of the complexities of the secular context in which religions exist today” and contribute towards “common efforts for truth, justice and peace.” Muslim religious leaders of BH have asked three of their theologians to prepare a draft text entitled *Platform of the Islamic Community in BH for Dialogue*.³⁶ This is now being discussed by groups of imams before its official promulgation. It consists of three sections: first, “the Islamic community and interreligious dialogue,” second, “International relations, human rights and violence,” and third, “Bosnia and Herzegovina: its past and its future.” In the third section the drafters point out: “There is no alternative to reconciliation, dialogue and common living and churches and religious communities have an exceptionally important part to play. Dialogue and common living are not our tactics or intellectual delicacy but a strategic option, because we see in them the only way to our survival.”

35 The English original and Bosnian official version can be found at the web site of *Islamska zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine*, Sarajevo.

36 *Platforma Islamske zajednice u BiH za dijalog*. I got a copy of this seven pages long draft by Ahmet Alibašić, one of the drafters, in June 2006. Other two are Nedžad Grabus and Fikret Karčić.

CONCLUSION

In 1991 the Archdiocese of Sarajevo, where I live and work as a Catholic theologian, had about 528,000 believers in 150 parishes. According to official Church statistics collected for *Annuario Pontificio 2008*, in 2007 it had only 206,138 believers in the same number of parishes³⁷. Since 2005 the number of diocesan Catholics has diminished by about 8,000. Therefore, the first task of the Catholic Church in BH is to serve its believers by helping them to remain in this complicated country on its way to political stabilization and social restoration after the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the war for ethnic territories. Indeed, we are ready to share this country with our Muslim, Orthodox and other fellow citizens. We theologians are mostly dedicated to education of candidates to the ministerial priesthood and to the vocation of teachers of the Catholic faith in public schools. We endeavour to participate in conferences of theologians in BH, Croatia and some foreign countries in order to keep up to date with the field of our teaching and research. We also maintain personal contacts and dialogue with our Orthodox and Muslim colleagues, convinced with them that a full integration of BH into European juridical, social and economic structures would help us to cope more efficiently with our diversities while we preserve and cherish our respective religious and ethnic identities.

37 Cf. Official bulletin *Vrhbosan* 2008, n. 1, p. 35-37.

THE LETTERS OF RECONCILIATION OF THE POLISH AND GERMAN BISHOPS FROM 1965 ARE STILL AN INSPIRATION FOR INTEGRATION IN EUROPE¹

In November 2015, Poland and Germany and the Catholic Bishops' Conferences in these two European countries solemnly celebrated the 50th anniversary of the letter in which the Polish bishops on 18th November 1965 publicly forgave the German people for the injustices committed towards the Polish people throughout history, especially during the Nazi occupation from 1939 to 1945. The Polish bishops also asked the German people in the same letter to forgive the injustice that the Poles had inflicted on them throughout history. The German bishops, gathered at the Second Vatican Council in Rome together with the Polish and other Catholic bishops of the world, responded on 5th December 1965 by accepting the proffered hand of reconciliation and in turn asked for forgiveness of crimes that the Germans had inflicted on the Poles. Polish Ambassador Piotr Nowina-Konopka suggested to Dr. Mustafa Cerić, the former Grand Mufti of Bosnia and a prominent Bosniak intellectual, that an appropriate letter be addressed to the Polish and German bishops as successors of the signatories of the letter of reconciliation of 1965. Dr Cerić readily did this with an open letter on October 26th 2015, which was signed by 15 other prominent Bosniaks, asking the European bishops to contribute to the acceptance of Bosniak and other Muslims in Europe who are not and do not wish to be a threat to Christians and other citizens of a pluralistic Europe.

1 Published in Muhamed Akšamija (ed), *Letter, pismo, Brief, list*, Centar za dijalog Vesatijja, Sarajevo 2017, 20-30.,

The main celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Letters was held at the Shrine of Jasna Gora, in Czestochowa, Poland, on November 22nd 2015 under the chairmanship of the President of the Episcopal Conference of Poland, Archbishop Stanislaw Gandecki and Cardinal Reinhard Marx, president of the Bishop's Conference of Germany. For the occasion, President Andrzej Duda of Poland and President Joachim Gauck of Germany signed a Joint Declaration on the permanent fruits of these letters for these two countries and for Europe over the past 50 years. Previously, in Rome on 26th October, a similar ceremony had been held in the German Catholic institutions, the Campo Santo Teutonico (a college for doctoral student priests, with a church and a small cemetery in the Vatican) where Archbishop Gandecki outlined prospects for the future of Poland and Germany emerging from the courageous gestures of the Polish and German bishops in 1965.

Interested readers will find in this brochure the full text of these three letters. Therefore, I wish to introduce them from the context of the historical circumstances in which they originated, using necessary clarifications from the *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche* (11 volumes, Freiburg / M 2006) and around a dozen items downloaded from the Internet. Readers who are seeking broader insight on the Second Vatican Council after 50 years may be interested in reading the latest book: *50. obljetnica svečanog otvaranja i početka Drugoga vaticanskog koncila. Zbornik radova* (The 50th anniversary of the opening ceremony and the beginning of the Second Vatican Council. Collected Essays), Zagreb 2015.

LETTERS OF RECONCILIATION BY THE POLISH AND GERMAN BISHOPS IN 1965 WERE WRITTEN IN ROME DURING THE CONCILIAR REFLECTION ON THE CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD

In the Catholic tradition there is the positive practice of regional and ecumenical Councils in which the bishops and invited theologians discuss new issues of faith and the ecclesiastical order. Regional Councils are convened and lead by local bishops. Ecumenical Councils are convened by a pope as the successor of St. Peter leading the ecclesial community of Rome. Pope John XXIII announced a general Council in January 1959, whereby he gave prominence to the updating (*aggiornamento*) or healthy adaptation of the

church to social and cultural changes, in order to be a sign of salvation that God offers to all nations. The first phase of two years consisted of collecting proposals from bishops and ecclesiastical schools. The Second Vatican Council opened on 11th October 1962. During sessions conducted over a period of four years, the bishops attended working meetings in Rome for about two months at the end of each year. During the year, theological experts incorporated into future documents the proposed reflections that were submitted in writing or recorded in plenary sessions. The Fourth Session lasted from September 4th to December 8th 1965: the main document that the bishops discussed and adopted was the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world" (*Gaudium et Spes*).

The first part of this document set out the Christian doctrine of man's calling in the historical world and the second part addressed the biggest problems of humanity in present times. Among the problems illuminated by this document were marriage and the family, the promotion of cultural prosperity, economic and social life, mission and the life of the political community, the promotion of peace and building of the community of nations (cf. II Vatikanski sabor, *Dokumenti*, Zagreb 1972, 349-427). In the approach to international peace, justice and authentic development, this document requires the cooperation of Catholics in the different nations, as well as shared initiatives with members of other religions and all people of goodwill (No. 88-90).

The participating bishops from different continents and countries, interacting during the plenary sessions of the Council for four years and especially searching to build a more humane and just world, were able to inform one another about the official policies of their respective countries. Thus, the Polish bishops began to ask themselves what they could do to contribute to the reconciliation of their people with the German people after all the violence that they had inflicted on each other, especially after the crimes against Poles and against the Jewish people, during the Nazi occupation of Poland from 1939 to 1945. The Germans at the time lived in two states: the so-called Democratic Republic of Germany with a Communist regime and the strong presence of the Russian army, and the Federal Republic of Germany, which respected Western-style democracy but in 1965 had not yet granted diplomatic recognition to East Germany. During the defeat of the Nazi regime in Poland the country was occupied by Soviet troops, who stayed for the next 45 years, preserving the Communist regime that had been imposed. The Communist authorities favoured the

distrust and hostility that existed between Poles and Germans, in this way discouraging any tendency among Poles towards Western-style freedom.

Unlike Hungary and Albania, the Polish Communist authorities issued passports to young priests whom the bishops or their religious superiors selected for postgraduate studies in Rome. After graduation, these priests returned home wanting to continue their religious mission as well as to serve their people. Fifteen of them were my colleagues at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome from 1969 to 1972 and I admired how they spoke about their people with pride and criticized the Communist regime in their country with great caution.

THE POLISH BISHOPS IN THEIR OPEN LETTER IN 1965 TO THE GERMANS NOT ONLY OFFERED FORGIVENESS, BUT ALSO ASKED FOR FORGIVENESS

In order to understand the prophetic gesture of the Polish bishops, one must remember the key events of Polish history ("A Short History of Poland", the University of Buffalo, 2000, Google, Dec. 27 2015). The Polish ruler Mieszko I accepted around the year 950 the supremacy of the German Emperor Otto I, in order to protect his country from the invasions of other Germanic princes. In 965, he married the Czech princess Dobrava and under her influence along with his courtiers soon accepted Christianity of the Latin rite. Thus, Poland, in contrast to its eastern Slav neighbours who received Christianity from missionaries from Constantinople (Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians) joined the circle of Western Europe. In the year 1000, the German King and Emperor Otto III visited the son of Mieszko I, Boleslaw I the Brave in Gniezno, the Polish capital at the time, where the Poles and Germans venerated the tomb of St. Adalbert of Prague (d. 956), the Apostle of the Slavs whom Boleslaw allowed to carry out missionary activity among the Prussians and who was killed in 997. King Casimir the Great (1333-1370) strengthened the country by raising castles with stone buildings and walls, and invited Jews who were persecuted by other European rulers to settle in his domains. They contributed to the economic reconstruction of the country and continued to settle for years to come. He had no male heirs, so his daughter Jadwiga married the Lithuanian prince Vladislav Jagiello who thus became the king of Poland (1386 to 1434) and founded the Ja-

giellonian dynasty. During his reign, Prussia, under the leadership of the Teutonic Knights, invaded Poland, but was defeated in 1410 by the combined armies of Lithuania and Poland. In 1493, the Parliament was introduced composed of the Sejm and the Senate. In the 16th century, the Renaissance spread to Poland, and the freedom afforded to people of different religious beliefs was increased. In 1573 in Warsaw, the Law on the freedom to practice different religions was adopted. Artists of the Italian Renaissance came and were responsible for several significant buildings. Until this time, scientific and literary works had been written in Latin but in this period texts began to be written in Polish. After the Jagiellonian dynasty died out, the royal nephew Sigismund III Vasa, the son of a Swedish king, who had been brought up as a Lutheran but who became an ardent Catholic when he assumed the throne, inherited the Swedish and Polish throne (1566-1632). The Swedes for religious reasons removed him from power and invaded Poland. In the second war against Poland (1655-58), the aggressors conquered the entire country except for the fortified monastery of Jasna Gora at Czestochowa, where the faithful worship the miraculous image of the Mother of Jesus. This contributed to its growth as the Polish national shrine, representing in a special way resistance to German occupation and Communist rule.

Poles are very proud of the fact that it was their king, Jan III Sobieski, who played a decisive role in preventing the capture of Vienna by the Ottomans in 1683. In the 18th century, foreigners dictated the size of the Polish army, and the Russians forced them to agree to the presence on their territory of Russian troops. Count Joseph Pulaski founded the Confederation for Resistance against the Russians in 1768, and his son, General Casimir, fought against the invaders for four years. The rebels were defeated and in 1772 Poland was for the first time divided among neighbouring states. Casimir Pulaski moved to the USA in 1777. The Second partition of Poland was conducted by the Prussians, the Russians and the Austrians in 1795 and the country remained partitioned until the end of the First World War. The Poles rose up against the Russians in 1830 and 1863 but these rebellions ended in defeat.

As fighting between Russia and Germany intensified in 1918, the Poles, led by Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, gained liberation from foreign rule, but they could only keep their newly-acquired independence for 21 years. When Hitler's army attacked Poland in early September 1939, the Soviet Red Army invaded from the east. When on August 1st 1944 the Polish resistance began an open rebellion against the Germans, the Russian army

stood to one side, and the rebellion lasted only 63 days. Approximately 250,000 inhabitants of Warsaw were killed and an outraged Hitler ordered that the buildings that remained should be razed. During the period of German occupation, approximately three million Polish Jews were brutally murdered in concentration camps. The Nazis also sent Poles to concentration camps: large numbers were killed, including six bishops and about 2,800 priests.

After the war, the victors meeting in Potsdam (July-August 1945) decided to move the Polish-Russian border at the expense of Poland and also to move the border with East Germany on the Oder-Neisse line at the expense of Germany so that about 3.3 million Germans mainly from the province of Silesia were “humanely relocated” to Germany. Poles from areas annexed to Russia were transferred to Poland. According to statistics collected by the Croatian historian Ivo Banac, around 31 million citizens of Eastern Europe were subject to relocation (“Intervju: 70. obljetnica svršetka drugog svjetskog rata, nažalost, u ozračju novih sukoba”, *Katolički tjednik* 2015, no. 18, pp. 8-11). Polish Catholics wanted the Catholic bishops of Germany to make the case for maintaining the original Oder-Neisse border, which in 1965 was unacceptable to Germans of all denominations and political orientation.

Led by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the letter was signed by 33 other Polish bishops who were in Rome. At the start of the letter they address their “closest western neighbours”, announcing that the following year they will celebrate with their people the thousand-year anniversary of Christianity in Poland at the national shrine of Jasna Gora. They refer to the Polish ruler Mieško who received Christianity together with his courtiers in 966. This happened in the Middle Ages when it was a commonplace for all citizens to accept the faith of their rulers. The Polish bishops include in the historical foundations of the Christianity of their people the pilgrimage of the German Emperor Otto III to Gniezno together with the Polish ruler Boleslav the Brave in 1000. Over time, “the Polish style of religion was developed, where religion and nation are closely interwoven and coalesce with one another, with all the positive as well as negative aspects of this problem.” They point out that the veneration of the Mother of Jesus by the Poles is associated with St. Adalbert of Prussia whom the Slavs call Vojtjeh (he was a descendant of the Czech family Slavnik) in Gniezno, through which Poland belongs to Western culture. Vojtjeh-Adalbert studied theology in Magdeburg, a city of German language and cul-

ture that served as a model for the establishment of Polish cities. Since the German Emperor was the protector of Polish rulers as his vassals, German traders, builders and artists had settled in Poland keeping their surnames but adapting to their environment and becoming "Polonized" and it was from this that "Hitler and others derived a simple conclusion with fatal consequences: Krakow and the whole of Poland are simply a German colony". The Polish bishops pointed out in the letter that they owe a huge gratitude to Western and German culture. One of Westerners who had a beneficial effect was St. Bruno of Querfurt (974-1009), a native of Eastern Saxony, who studied in Magdeburg and was a bishop in Poland, evangelizing Slavs, Lithuanians and Prussians. The bishops also cite St. Hedwig, the Duchess of Silesia, whom the Slavs called Jadwiga (1174 - 1243). She was the mother of seven children and had a positive impact on the political decisions of her husband and his opponents. She was a benefactor of the poor so that they called her the mother of the country. She endorsed the building of the Trebnitz monastery where she lived until her death. Her grave is still visited by German and Polish pilgrims who respect her as the builder of trust between Germans and Poles (*Brückenheilige*). The bishops point out here: "The best bridges between peoples can only be built by holy people, who are honest and who have clean hands."

Among the newer Polish spiritual leading figures cited by the bishops is the Franciscan Maximilian Kolbe (1894 - 1941) who at the time of the Nazi aggression headed a Catholic publishing house; he was arrested in 1941 and deported to Auschwitz. When at the end of July 1941 three prisoners escaped, deputy camp commander Karl Fritsch chose 10 convicts to punish with death by starvation in an underground pillbox. One of those selected was Frantyszek Gajowniczek, a married man and the father of a family, who cried out: "My poor wife, my poor children!" Kolbe volunteered to take his place and was accepted. After two weeks the remaining nine had died, while the guards gave Kolbe a lethal injection. His body was burned on 15th August 1941. He was canonized in Rome, by the Polish Pope John Paul II in 1982. The bishops also cited the Polish university in Krakow, which was founded in 1363 by King Casimir the Great, where a number of German scientists studied, among whom was the astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473 - 1543). The Rector of the University Pawel Włodkowitz (1370 - 1435, Latin name Paulus Vladimiri) was also noted. During the Council in the Swiss town of Constanz (1414 -1418) he placed the conflict between the Poles and the German Crusading order in the context of the doctrine of

a righteous war (*de bello justo*) and rejected the use of force in the propagation of Christianity, emphasizing the natural rights of non-Christians. The Prussian members of this order had been responsible for all Germans being given the mocking title of “crusaders” in Poland. The German occupation during World War II was declared by the bishops as a time of destruction and extermination, when six million people paid with their lives. Every Polish family was still mourning their dead in 1965, while any German uniform represented a spectre and an occasion for hatred against the Germans: “We remember this terrible darkness only so that it is understood today.”

They admit that their distrust of the Germans as their western neighbour is a generational problem. They accept that the present Polish western border on the Oder-Neisse represents to Germans a bitter consequence of the last war but point out that to them it is a matter of survival. They pay tribute to the Germans who tried to oppose Nazism and perished because of it, and they say that they wish to end polemics and open a dialogue in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. They are encouraged to open this dialogue by the upcoming celebration of the millennium of Christianity among the Polish people, which will conclude a nine-year period of spiritual preparation. They invite the German bishops to become involved along with the faithful in this celebration and to invite Protestant citizens to do the same. Then they boldly and humbly declare: “In this pan-Christian and at the same time very human spirit, we extend our hands to you from the benches of the Council, the session of which is drawing to its close, we offer our forgiveness and ask for your forgiveness. And if you, German bishops and Council participants, fraternally accept the extended hand, only then can we in good conscience celebrate in Poland, in a totally Christian way our millennium. We cordially invite you to Poland to attend this celebration.”

The bishops published their letter in the press. The representatives of the Polish authorities of that time strongly condemned the letter for offering and seeking forgiveness, claiming that only the political representatives can forgive on behalf of the whole nation. Most Polish Catholics also condemned the letter of their bishops, believing that the Germans as a nation did not deserve forgiveness. In the following period the bishops had to explain to their fellow Catholics and to state authorities what they had wished to express through the letter.

Archbishop Stanislaw Gandecki on 25th October 2015, speaking at the ceremony in Rome, pointed out that the letter represented a synthesis of

Polish history through a thousand years and that it had enraged the Communist government which acted as if the history of the world began with its own revolution. The letter was a contribution to the moral reconstruction of the Polish nation, but it could not be based primarily on compliance with all aspects of justice. One of the signatories was the Archbishop of Krakow, Karol Wojtyła, who, as Pope John Paul II in the encyclical “God is rich in mercy” in 1980 pointed out that along with justice, nations should be guided also by the principle of love.

As the German bishops in their reply do not say that they accept the permanent loss of the territory of Silesia, with the new border going to Poland, Cardinal Wyszyński wrote in 1970 to German Cardinal J. Döpfner: “Our warmly extended hand was not unreservedly accepted”. The German people needed to gain a general feeling for this, which was fulfilled in 1972 by 160 public officials with the *Memorandum of Bensberg* inviting the German bishops to accept the new border between the two countries. Among the signatories of this letter was Professor Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI. After the two German states (FRG and GDR) signed the so-called Basic Agreement (*Grundlagenvertrag*) on mutual recognition on December 21st 1972, they in fact recognized the new border between Poland and Germany. Archbishop Gandecki pointed out that this letter began the process of reconciliation and a vibrant response by the German bishops came in the form of generous financial aid to Polish dioceses and religious orders in the following decades.

According to Archbishop Gandecki, permanent results of the letter would be:

- Respect for common saints who were models of faith and humane activity in history;
- Linking identity and memories in order to promote Christian values in these two nations in the past and present;
- Patience and perseverance in building consensus and unity;
- Continuous work on reconciliation with mutual forgiveness and trust in the Truth.

He concludes: “Since the writing of this *Message*, things have changed in the world and in the Church, including relations between the Churches in Poland and Germany. Poles enjoy the freedom that they had achieved and Germany the unity of which they could only have dreamed 50 years ago. What then seemed impossible, at least in the short term, has become a reality. In

the context of European unity, the borders between our countries have been opened, which has facilitated and deepened relations between their citizens at different levels” (Wikimedia Commons, *President of Polish Episcopal Conference Marks Anniversary at Rome Event*, Google, Dec. 27, 2015).

GERMAN BISHOPS SAY THEY SEE THE LETTER OF THEIR
POLISH BROTHERS AS A SIGN OF THE COMMON FUTURE THAT
THEY HOPE FOR AND STRIVE FOR

The German bishops responded on December 5th 1965, three days before the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. The letter was signed by the Archbishop of Cologne, Cardinal Josef Frings, with Cardinal J. Döpfner, Munich Archbishop L. Jäger, the archbishop of Paderborn and 38 of other German bishops who were present in Rome. Their response may be best understood in the context of German history. Although Charlemagne (747 to 814) was crowned as the so-called Holy Roman Emperor and nominally ruled the territory of today’s Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland, the German tribes continued to live in their principalities, dukedoms and towns as small states. The Protestant reform initiated by Martin Luther (1483 to 1546) divided these tribes and peoples into Lutherans, Catholics and Calvinists, which led to the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), the devastation of which is comparable with that of World War Two. The Peace of Westphalia adopted the Latin legal principle “*Cujus regio illius religio – to whom belongs the region, decides about religion*”, in the sense that civil and religious freedom in a particular territory could be enjoyed by residents who accepted the faith of the ruler. Over the next two centuries the most powerful German states were Prussia in northern Europe with Protestant kings and Austria in Central Europe with the Catholic Habsburg dynasty. After the defeat of Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna in 1815 acknowledged that German territory included about 40 states. The revolutions of 1848 offered Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV an opportunity to take power in a unified Germany, but he declined. The unification of the German states was largely achieved by Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898), who from 1862 to 1890 served as Chancellor of Prussia. Bismarck provoked through diplomatic manipulation Prussian wars with Denmark, Austria and France and so produced the unification of Germany in 1871 under the dynasty of the Pru-

ssian kings. In the area of domestic policy Bismarck is known for so-called cultural struggle (*Kulturkampf*). Part of this struggle was the Chancellor's attack on the German Catholic Bishops who had accepted at the First Vatican Council in 1870 the new Catholic dogma of papal infallibility and primacy and thereby allegedly committed themselves to be promoters of foreign political interests in their own country. The bishops responded with a theological interpretation of religious truths which are separate from any political stance on the part of the Pope.

The German Empire took part in the First World War (1914-1918) with the goal of realigning Belgium and Poland as vassal states and expanding their colonial possessions in Africa. With the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, Germany had to give up some of its territory, accept payment of war reparations, reduce the size of its armed forces, abolish the monarchy and establish a republic. This was for all Germans a bitter defeat, and one that made Hitler's promise to restore Germany's dignity and rights appear compelling and plausible. In 1933, Hitler was elected Chancellor; he headed the Nazi regime for 12 years. After the defeat of Hitler in 1945, Germany was partitioned into two countries: the three post-war zones that were temporarily administered by the United States, the United Kingdom and France became the Federal Republic of Germany with a democratic government and a provisional capital in Bonn. In the eastern zone under Soviet administration the Democratic Republic of Germany was established with a Communist regime. In August 1989, bloodless revolutions led to the collapse of the Communist regime in East Germany (*die Wende*), then in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia. At the end of the same year the Communist regime in Romania was toppled violently. With the skilful policy of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the two German states were united peacefully. Throughout the period in which there were two German states the Holy See did not accede to the organization of new dioceses: Berlin and its surroundings constituted one diocese that belonged to both German states. Catholic bishops throughout the period manifested their incorporation in the universal Catholic Church and solidarity with their own nation, which is clearly seen from their letter to the Polish bishops.

The German bishops begin their letter by stating that they accept the initiative of their Polish brothers with the hope that their dialogue will improve and strengthen the fellowship between the Polish and German peoples. Then they express their gratitude to the bishops of France and Britain for coming to Cologne in 1948 to celebrate the Jubilee of the Ca-

thedral whereby they demonstrated Christian fraternity in Europe. They promise that they will come the following year to celebrate the millennium of Christianity among the Polish people. They go on to state that they accept the veneration of saints in common who are linked historically and beneficially to Germany and Poland. Then follows a humble recognition of the atrocities that were committed: "The Germans, on behalf of the German people, did terrible things to the Polish people. We know that we have to deal with the consequences of the war that were difficult for our country as well. We understand that during the German occupation, painful wounds were left behind, and that even with the greatest goodwill are difficult to heal ... We are grateful that in spite of the endless suffering of the Polish people, you remember the difficult fate of millions of expelled Germans and refugees." Gently addressing the issue of guilt and pleas for forgiveness, the German bishops first offer a reminder that all Christians must recognize their personal and collective guilt before God, praying Our Father as Jesus' prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses!" Only then can Christians pray for the forgiveness of those to whom we have committed injustice: "Asking for forgiveness is an invitation to everyone who has been wronged to look at this injustice through the merciful eyes of God and to allow a new beginning. This new start is above all under the weight of the bitter consequences of the war, which was started and lost by Germany. Millions of Poles have had to move from the east to the areas assigned to them. We know very well what these regions mean to Poland because of this. And millions of Germans were forced to leave their homeland, where their ancestors lived. "

The German bishops knew that the new incomers, whom the established residents called exiles, spoke mostly of the right to homeland in the region from which they had been driven. The bishops explain that this was not preparation for a new aggression: "They were clear that now a new generation was growing up that still considered their fatherland the land that had been given to their fathers." The bishops with the faithful wished to contribute to the elimination of hatred, hostility and revenge, to overcome all the unfortunate consequences of the unjust war in a way that was appropriate and just. "Be sure that no German bishop wants anything other, and will never support anything other than the friendly relations of both nations in complete sincerity and genuine dialogue." In the concluding section, they recall the experience of participation in the Council, where the bishops were not immediately clear about the pro-

posed texts but worked together to come to a consensus. Therefore, they pledge to continue the dialogue and come to Czestochowa and the other Polish shrines where common saints are venerated because in these places Polish people today pray for strength and blessings from God. Joyfully, they point out that at the time of the conciliar sessions they conducted a pilgrimage to St. Peter's Cave in Rome and there found the small chapel of Our Lady of Czestochowa with the image of St. Hedwig, whom the Polish people regard as the best expression of Christian building of bridges (*Brückenbau*) between Poland and Germany. Ready to learn from this saintly woman venerated in common, they give thanks for the quest for forgiveness, they accept with fraternal respect the extended hand, and they offer the prayer to God, through the intercession of Mary, Queen of Peace, "May the demon of hatred never separate our two peoples."

The journalist Tony Barber, in an article for the *Financial Times* on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of these letters points out that the letter of the Polish bishops was the first step towards friendship between Poles and Germans: "But it also appears today as an act of moral imagination whose scope was greater than most people understood back in 1965. The letter is imbued with the hope of a refounded Poland, brave enough to tell painful historical truths to itself. Over the past 25 years, it has served as an impulse behind Poland's search for reconciliation not only with Germans, but also with others, notably Jews and Ukrainians." Then he quotes the letter of Alexander Kwasniewski who as President of Poland in July 2001 published a public apology to the Jewish community for the execution of hundreds of Polish Jews committed by Poles in the eastern town of Jedwabne in July 1941 under the shadow of the Nazi occupation. This made it possible in 2014 in Warsaw for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews to be opened, in which the central theme was the cultural role of Jews in Polish national history from the Middle Ages onwards. This helped citizens to discover the Jewish elements in the history of Poland and to erase the stereotype of Poland as a nursery for European anti-Semitism. This new wave has contributed to reconciliation between Poland and Ukraine, two countries that inflicted violence upon each other in the past. Today, Poland as a member of NATO and the EU is contributing to the rapprochement between Ukraine and Europe.

Journalist Lauren Owens published an article in *Polish News* on November 23rd 2015 about the joint appeal of the Polish President Andrzej Duda and German President Joachim Gauck on the occasion of the cele-

bration in Czestochowa. Both Presidents pointed out that in 1965 there was an awareness of war trauma and that the Germans had only begun to see the scale of the crime and damage that had been inflicted not only by the German government but by many Germans. In their assessment this was a brave gesture at the time of the Cold War, when Poles feared “west-German revanchism” and this fear was deliberately incited by the Communist government. Duda and Gauck gladly point out: “We the presidents of Poland and Germany, with a feeling of endless gratitude, state this as an act of establishing a peaceful neighborhood. On behalf of our nations we heartily express gratitude to all who have followed the path prepared by the Message of the Polish bishops and contributed to the Polish-German reconciliation ... In both countries, the Church went ahead of politics in the process of bringing together Poland and Germany, although the government of West Germany shortly thereafter, according to its eastern policy, had taken the measures started by the socialist forces”. They recalled the gesture of Chancellor Willy Brandt in 1972, when he knelt before the monument to the heroes of the Warsaw ghetto and the sign of peace exchanged by Helmut Kohl and Tadeusz Mazowiecki at the Mass of reconciliation in Křižova on 12th November 1989, two months after a non-Communist government in Poland was appointed, and three days after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Presidents concluded: “Today, the Poles and Germans are much more than just good neighbours. They are partners in the same alliance. One of the main goals set 50 years ago by the Message of the Polish bishops became a reality after 1989. Free Poland is once again a member of the European family.”

GRAND MUFTI EMERITUS DR. M. CERIĆ ASKS BISHOPS TO ACCEPT MUSLIMS WHO HAVE LIVED IN EUROPE FOR CENTURIES AND THOSE WHO ARE SETTLING HERE FOR REASONS OF SAFETY

Reis emeritus Cerić states at the beginning of his letter that he had accepted the initiative of the Polish ambassador because the pastoral letter of the Polish and German bishops from 50 years ago “incites today a sense of peace and friendship”. The Roman celebration of this anniversary is the right

time for the message that “better is the heart that loves than the one that hates; better is the hand that writes a kind word than the one that kills.” Although aware that all the signatories of the Message from 1965 are deceased, he knows that a new generation of bishops heading church institutions in Poland and Germany can influence the faithful and other citizens in their countries. Therefore, he addresses them directly with “Dear bishops; Dear friends!” He recalls the persecution of the early Muslims from Mecca, who were taken in by the Christian king Negus of Abyssinia and thereby left a trail in the Qur’an 5:82, which suggests the friendly relations of the followers of Jesus and Mohammed.

Aware that a small number of extremist Muslim theologians read the Qur’an with incitement to hostility toward Christians, Dr. Cerić includes himself among the majority of Muslims who see in their holy book the inspiration for tolerance and friendly relations with Christians. This is immediately reminiscent of the Letter of Muslim notables of 24th September 2014 addressed to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and other fighters of the so-called Islamic State (ISIL), which was signed by 126 members of the Ulama from different countries, including the Grand Mufti of Egypt and the Mufti of Jerusalem and all Palestine. The original is in Arabic, but it was translated into English under the auspices of the signatories and summarized in 24 theses that are accessible to those who have no professional training in Islam and those who are not Muslim. Signatory number 38 is “Prof. Mustafa Cerić, the former Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina “. The key thesis of the summary is clear for the Muslim majority, in which signatory number 38 is proud to be included:

- It is forbidden in Islam to oversimplify the Sharia and to ignore the accepted Islamic sciences;
- In Islam, it is forbidden to kill the innocent;
- In Islam, it is forbidden to kill delegates, ambassadors and diplomats and it is therefore forbidden to kill journalists and assistant workers;
- In Islam, forced conversion is prohibited;
- In Islam, it is forbidden to deprive women of their rights;
- In Islam, it is forbidden to bring legal punishments (*hudud*) without following the correct procedures that ensure justice and mercy;
- In Islam, it is forbidden to attribute evil to God;
- In Islam, it is forbidden to proclaim a Caliphate without the consent of all Muslims.

Relying on Q 49:13 Dr. Cerić sees in the diversity of peoples and cultures God's will, arguing that no religion, no nation can be happy and live prosperously in isolation. He views Europe "in a specific communion with the Islamic world in space, history, culture and economy." He continues: "Therefore, I feel free to invite you not to close your European doors in front of those who seek refuge with us, nor to raise your walls against those who come to us because of their destroyed home and homeland." This recalls the hundreds of thousands of refugees who in our time are fleeing from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and other Muslim-majority countries because of the violence they are exposed to. As a result of its history, he states, Europe is ready for the ethics of community. He believes that the bishops who signed the letter of 1965 contributed to Europe today being "a continent of peace, coexistence, social justice and prosperity for all people of goodwill."

In this context he considers it inexplicable that the genocide in Bosnia against the Bosniak people took place, since Bosniaks are a European people who inherited a thousand-year tradition of honour and human dignity, human rights and freedom and unity in diversity. Grateful to Pope Francis for his visit to Sarajevo on 6th June 2015, during which the head of the Catholic Church called the capital city the Jerusalem of Europe, the Grand Mufti Emeritus calls for conditions to be established under which the Holocaust and genocide can never occur again. With the diagnosis that we are all in fear of Islam, European Christians are in fear of incoming Muslim migrants, and European Muslims are in fear of those who spread the evil of fear of Muslims, he recalls that the Letters of 1965 reflect the experience of fear of the other and fear of those who are different. Therefore, in these letters he sees the importance for all Europeans "to believe that truth, justice, peace and reconciliation are values of the first order". He hopes for a benevolent acceptance of the letter that has been signed by himself and by prominent Bosniak Imams and intellectuals who feel themselves to be thoroughly European. They accept other Europeans and want to be accepted for the common good, and point out that it is not necessary to be afraid of Islam or Muslims who in their very name "Muslims" carry the meaning of peace-loving people. In this spirit, he cites four quotations from the Qur'an, from which can be seen the origin of all humans from progenitors Adam and Eve (2:35), respect for what God has revealed through Moses and Jesus (2:136) and the believers' view on Jesus' Mother (3:42; 3:47; 3:45).

He concludes by inviting the bishops of Europe as Christian religious leaders to join him in the prayer that he has repeatedly recited for the

victims of the Srebrenica genocide and also at inter-religious meetings in which he has actively participated. This prayer is composed of traditional texts from the Bible and the Qur'an and can be prayed by the faithful of the three monotheistic religions. The invocation that, for me, stands out is as follows: "If we catch the fear of tyrants, empower us with Moses' justice. If we are offered hatred, save us with the love of Jesus." By this last invocation he recalls the Open letter of the Muslim leaders from Jordan and other countries to Pope Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders in October 2007 entitled *The common word for us and you* (also translated into Bosnian and published in Sarajevo in 2010 as a book by CNS). In this perceptive document, signed by the Grand Mufti of Bosnia and several Bosniak intellectuals, Muslim scholars base the possibility of dialogue with Christians on Jesus' proclamation of the love of God and neighbour as the highest ethical value, and the Qur'an background for such learning and behaviour. The Catholic response to this outstretched hand of Muslims was the establishment of the Catholic-Muslim Forum, which was first held in Rome on 4th to 6th November 2008, and Reis Ceric actively participated at this event. In the end, all the participants were received by Pope Benedict, who heard their greetings among which was that of Grand Mufti Cerić, to which the Pope gave his message of support. The Pope gave the Council for Interreligious Dialogue the task of fostering the continuation of this dialogue.

* * *

In the Catholic tradition there is a practice of pastoral letters by the bishops of individual dioceses to their congregations or of the Episcopal Conference in each country. The Polish and German bishops in 1965, at the conclusion of Vatican II, used this form of addressing pastoral proposals to each other and to their own faith communities, ready to contribute to reconciliation and trust among Poles and Germans following World War II. They were aware that they were not representatives of the political or judicial power of their countries and that they could only suggest, not order the path of reconciliation and trust. Their prophetic gesture began to bear fruit especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe. Polish historian and political scientist Pawel Kowal in an article on the occasion of this anniversary described the venture of the Polish and German bishops as pastoral letters diplomacy ("*Diplomacy of Pastoral Letters*", *New Eastern Europe*, 18th November 2015).

It created a climate whereby the Polish and Ukrainian bishops signed a joint letter of reconciliation between the two nations on June 18th 2005 and the President of the Episcopal Conference of Poland, Archbishop Michalik, and Russian Patriarch Kirill on August 17th 2012 signed “The Joint Message to the Polish and Russian people”.

Reis emeritus Dr. Mustafa Cerić accepted this form of public communication and asked the current European bishops to create a spirit of openness, along with the faithful and with the civil authorities, towards Muslims who are not and do not want to be a threat to European countries. He constructively used his affiliation with the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina and his resolve to contribute to the preservation of Bosniak ethnic and religious identity. I hope that Christians in our country and other countries in Europe will accept this initiative of Bosniak intellectuals in a constructive and open way.

I welcome the initiative for these three letters to be published in Bosnian in Sarajevo, because Christian, Muslim and other readers of this book may find in it material for peaceful existence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other countries of Europe, while respecting the ethnic and religious identity of each other within the confines of communion, along with differences that may remain important to us.

RECEPTION OF VATICAN II TEACHING ON THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCHES BY CROAT-CATHOLIC AND SERB-ORTHODOX THEOLOGIAN¹

The vast majority of Croats living in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are Catholic, while Serbs living in these countries and in Serbia are Orthodox. From 1918 to 1991 they were all included in Yugoslavia, which disintegrated a decade after the death of Tito and one year after the fall of the communist regime in 1990. Ecumenical relations in this region were and still are aggravated by political tensions and by atrocities committed by both sides during World War II and during the wars that accompanied the disintegration of Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1995. Since 1965, Catholic bishops and theologians have sought to present and implement the teaching of Vatican II, including a new relationship with Eastern Orthodoxy. The Serbian Orthodox Church participates in the work of the International Catholic-Orthodox Commission for Dialogue but has remained aloof from ecumenical collaboration with Croats-Catholics. I would like to examine in this paper the teaching of Vatican II on the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the response of Catholic and Orthodox theologians to this teaching.

1 A Contribution to Collected Essays in honor of Church historian Petar Vrankić. Published in *Begengung der Kirche in Ost und West im Spiegel der synodalen Strukturen. Historisch-theologische Beiträge. Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Petar Vrankić*, Herausgegeben von Johannes Grohe, Gregor Wurst, Zvezdan Strika, Hermann Fischer, EOS-Verlag Erzabtei St. Ottilien 2017, 449-474.

VATICAN II RECOGNIZES THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION OF THE EPISCOPATE, AND THE EUCHARIST IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCHES

Sixteen documents drafted and adopted by Vatican II are shaped by pastoral language and the spirit of dialog. The ecclesial character of the Eastern Orthodox Churches is presented in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium* (LG), and in the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio* (UR). Both were approved by vote of the participants on 21 November 1964², and they reflect the patient work of the commissions and the deliberations of the bishops during the second and third sessions of Vatican II³.

In the first chapter of LG the universal church is presented as the sacrament of salvation in human history flowing from the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. It is an instrument of God's kingdom on earth, similar to the human body, with diversity of members and functions. "This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, *subsists* in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him. Nevertheless, many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible confines. Since these are gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, they are forces impelling towards Catholic unity" (LG 8,2)⁴. This US translation retains the Latin theological expression *subsistit* in order to save all the nuances purposely included in it. The German translation has "... ist verwirklicht in der katholischen Kirche". From the history of the text we know that the formulation of 1962 had "*de jure* only the Catholic Roman Church is called the Church"; in 1963 the draft version was *est* and in final *subsistit*. J. M. R. Tillard rightly connects this saying with LG 15, where separated Christians are depicted as genuinely bonded with the Roman Church in various

2 I find reliable and accessible the article by Joachim Schmiedl, "Chronik des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils", in: Peter Hünermann-Bernd Jochen Hilberath (hrsg), *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil, Band 5: Theologische Zusammenfassung und Perspektiven*, Verlag Herder 2006, 585-594.

3 See John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2008, 160-246. He presents the year 1963 with the second session as "A Majority Prevailing", and 1964 with the third session as "Triumphs and Tribulations".

4 Quotation from Austin Flannery, O. P. (general editor), *Vatican II. The Conciliar and Post-conciliar Documents*, Costello Publishing Company, Northport, New York 1975, 357. I will be using this translation in my essay.

degrees, due to baptismal faith and sacraments⁵: “The Church knows that she is joined in many ways to the baptized who are honored by the name of Christian, but who do not however profess the Catholic faith under the successor of Peter. For there are many who hold sacred scripture in honor as a rule of faith and of life, who have a sincere religious zeal, who lovingly believe in God the Father Almighty and in Christ, the Son of God and the Savior, who are sealed by baptism which unites them to Christ and who indeed recognize and receive other sacraments⁶ in their own Churches or ecclesiastical communities. Many of them possess the episcopate, celebrate the holy Eucharist and cultivate devotion of the Virgin Mother of God” (LG 15). We can briefly recall that Eastern Orthodox Churches have validly ordained bishops and priests who preside during the Eucharist and guide their own flock in liturgical devotion to the Mother of Jesus as *theotokos*, God-bearer, she who has given birth to God.

In 1966 the Serbian Orthodox theologian Dimitrije Dimitrijević (1907-1987) published an article on Orthodox reactions to the ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council⁷. He quotes Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983), who welcomes the Catholic summons to radical renewal of their own Church in light of ecumenical rapprochement and points out to his Serbian Orthodox readers that Vatican II calls non-Catholic Christians brothers in Christ, recognizing their ecclesiastical character. “Based on teaching about the Church as the mystical body of Christ which comprises all validly baptized, the communion of other Churches with the Roman Catholic Church is explicitly mentioned. In this way separated brothers are acknowledged as believing in Christ the Son of God with much love, as sealed with the sacrament of baptism, as having all or some of the sacraments, as being united in the Holy Spirit who conse-

5 J. M. R. Tillard, “L’Église catholique relit sa catholicité devant Dieu et l’ensemble des baptisés”, in : M. Lamberigts & L. Kenis (ed), *Vatican II and its Legacy*, Leuven University Press 2002, 107-127. See Dirk Ansorge, “Sichtbare Einheit oder versöhnte Verschiedenheit? *Unitatis redintegratio* und der ökumenische Dialog heute”, in Dirk Ansorge (ed), *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil. Impulse und Perspektiven*, Aschendorff Verlag, Münster 2013, 160-198. In the last five pages there is a bibliography of good monographs and articles.

6 In the official Latin version “alia sacramenta”, not “caetera sacramenta” to differentiate the faith regarding sacraments on the part of Christians stemming from the reformation and full sacramental doctrine on the part of Eastern Orthodox Churches.

7 Dimitrije Dimitrijević, “Reagovanja pravoslavnih na ekumenizam Drugog vatikanskog sabora”, *Pravoslavna misao*, Beograd IX (1966), 1, 20-38. He wrote extensively on the Orthodox approach to ecumenism and took an active part in ecumenical initiatives within Yugoslavia and abroad. From 1963 to 1987, 24 of his essays were published in German and one in French. See: “Bibliografija protojereja-stavrofora dr. Dimitrija Dimitrijevića”, *Bogoslovlje XXXI* (1987), 1, 201-217.

crates and saves and that they can be saved also in their own Churches”⁸. This is a clear allusion to LG 8 and 15 although he does not quote the Conciliar text expressly.

The official title of the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio* (UR) suggests that significant elements of unity among separated Christians already exist and that they can and should be reintegrated. In the document the ecumenical movement is characterized as the work of the Holy Spirit. In contrast to pre-Vatican II triumphalist ecclesiology, which requested “others” to join “us” as we are, this document acknowledges that in the course of the history of the Church “often enough men of both sides (*utriusque partis culpa*) were to blame” (UR 3,1) for rifts and dissensions. This is why a “primary duty of Catholics is to make a careful and honest appraisal of whatever needs to be renewed and done in the Catholic household itself, in order that its life may bear witness more clearly and faithfully to the teachings and institutions which have been handed over from Christ through the apostles” (UR 4,4). Catholic renewal of doctrine, structures and spiritual life “has noticeable ecumenical importance” (UR 5). The bishops assembled at Vatican II humbly admit that “Christ summons the Church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she always has need, insofar as she is an institution of men here on earth” (UR 6,1). This is quiet acceptance of a long-disputed Protestant principle, “*Ecclesia semper reformanda est*”, for which the French Dominican priest Yves Congar (1904-1995) struggled through his ecumenical writings and patient endurance of discrimination within Catholicism⁹. This Conciliar text is a kind of introduction to Chapter II of UR “The practice of ecumenism” in which Catholics are encouraged “to become familiar with the outlook of our separated brethren”, which mostly can take place at ecumenical meetings where “each can treat with the other on an equal footing” (UR 9).

Chapter III of UR deals with Churches and Ecclesial Communities separated from the Roman Apostolic See. Eager not to minimize the differences between various Christian bodies or to overlook the bonds that continue to exist, the Decree depicts the special position of Eastern Orthodox Churches in sections 14-18. Vatican II compliments these Churches for having preserved the Christian faith concerning the Trinity and the

8 D. Dimitrijević, *Art. cit.*, 32.

9 See, among other works, his *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église*, Paris 1950 (reprinted in 1968). See also his booklet *Coment l'Église Sainte doit se renouveler sans cesse*, Chevotonge 1963². Karl Rahner, “Das neue Bild der Kirche” in his: *Schriften zur Theologie*, Band VIII, Zürich 1967, 329-354. “Grundsätzliche Bemerkungen zum Thema: Wandelbares und Unwandelbares in der Kirche”, *Schriften zur Theologie* Band X, 1972, 241-261.

Word of God made flesh from the Virgin Mary, despite long past and more recent sufferings. UR then continues: “Everyone knows with what love the Eastern Christians celebrate the sacred liturgy, especially the Eucharistic mystery, source of the Church’s life and pledge of future glory. In this mystery the faithful, united with their bishops, have access to God the Father through the Son, the Word made flesh who suffered and was glorified, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And so, made ‘sharers of the divine nature’ (2 Pet. 1:4), they enter into communion with the most holy Trinity. Hence, through the celebration of the Eucharist of the Lord in each of these Churches, the Church of God is built up and grows in stature, and through concelebration, their communion with one another is made manifest. . . These Churches, although separated from us, yet possess true sacraments, above all – by apostolic succession – the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are still joined to us in closest intimacy” (UR 15,1.3).

The Catholic experts who contributed to drafting this Conciliar teaching must have followed the renewal of Eucharistic ecclesiology in Eastern Orthodox Churches which was initiated by Nikolai Afanasiev (1893-1966), a Russian emigrant who was professor at St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris and an observer at Vatican II¹⁰. Other influential theologians of Eucharistic ecclesiology are Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983) and Joannis Zizioulas (born in 1931), metropolitan of Pergamon. For Schmemmann the Eucharist is the true form of the Church as the “sacrament in which the Church performs the passage, the *Passover*, from this world into the Kingdom, offers in Christ the whole creation of God, seeing it as ‘heaven and earth full of His glory’ and partakes of Christ’s immortal life at His table in His kingdom”¹¹. One of his works is: *Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*, 1988. Zizioulas in his 1965 doctoral dissertation at the University of Athens presents an episcopocentric structure of the Church as normative, constituted in the essential role of the bishop as the one who presides during the Divine Liturgy and over the Eucharistic community. The second edition of this dissertation was translated into French and published in 1994. In 2001 its English translation was published in the USA: *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Liturgy During the First three Centuries*. US Orthodox theologian Robert M. Arida in his 2008 article on essential marks of Orthodox ecclesiology says:

10 See Victor Aleksandrov, “Nicholas Afanasiev’s Ecclesiology and Some of Its Orthodox Critics”, *Sobornost* 31.2 (2009), 45-68. Text available at Google (23 November 2015). Aleksandrov points out that Afanasiev coined the term “eucharistic ecclesiology” and that most critics “deal with imagined, not real Afanasiev”.

11 Alexander Schmemmann, “Ecclesiological notes”, *St. Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No.1, 1967, pp. 35-39. Text available at Google.

“Ecclesiology is first and foremost a Eucharistic phenomenon – a Eucharistic event – on which rest all discussions regarding conciliarity as well as catholicity in its quantitative and qualitative expressions. Metropolitan Maximus of Sardis strongly affirms that ‘without reference to the Eucharist, the entire ecclesiology of primitive Christianity becomes meaningless’. We can add that without reference to the Eucharist the ecclesiology of any period of Church history becomes compromised and therefore distorted. It is the Eucharist that forms the most basic image *of* and context *for* conciliarity”¹². Conciliarity or synodality is a well-known mark of the Church in Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology. To a degree it is interchangeable with the New Testament concept of *koinônia*. Through the Spirit the Church exists as the sacrament of salvation offering to the faithful a real encounter with Christ in history. *Koinônia* prevents isolationism and alienation¹³.

The section on Eastern Orthodox Churches in UR evaluates their monastic spirituality highly and encourages Catholics to avail themselves more frequently of the spiritual riches of the Eastern Christian tradition. The Churches of the East have power to govern themselves according to their own discipline, being better suited to their faithful (UR 16). Traditions of the Eastern Churches are rooted in Holy Scripture, fostered and given expression in liturgical life, and nourished by the living tradition of the apostles (UR 17). This section of UR concludes with an optimistic hope for the gradual realization of full unity, pointing to Eastern Christians living in Western countries who can contribute to friendly collaboration, increasing the spirit of love without bickering or rivalry, the cornerstone of Churches heading towards full unity is Jesus Christ (UR 18). D. Dimitrijević summarizes the teaching of Vatican II on the Eastern Orthodox Churches in UR 14-18

12 Father Robert M. Arida, “Manifestations of ‘Orthodox’ Ecclesiology”, (February 2008), http://holymtrinityorthodox.org/articles_and_talks_/Ecclesiology.htm (25 October 2015), p.

1. See also Evgeny Pilipenko, “Einheit als sakramentales Ereignis. Überlegungen zur ökumenische Koinonia-Vision aus der Perspektive der orthodoxen Theologie”, Thomas Bremer-Maria Wernsmann (ed), *Ökumene überdacht. Reflexionen und Realitäten im Umbruch*, Frankfurt/M 2014, 223-236.

13 See Philip Kariatlis, “Affirming koinonia ecclesiology: an Orthodox Perspective”, *Phronema*, Vol. 27 (1), 2012, 51-66. Text available on the Internet (22 November 2015). Maksim Vasiljević, “Unitas et alteritas u eklisiologiji sinodalnosti”, *Vrhbosnensia* 1/2006, 29-48. Summary in English on p. 48. The author is a Serbian Orthodox professor of theology and a bishop, now performing his ministry among diaspora Serbs in the USA. This essay was his presentation at the Conference on synodality of the Church organized by the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Sarajevo on 19 November 2005. With other Orthodox theologians he draws synodality from Eucharistic communion presided by the bishop of the respective eparchy. Since the Church is an icon of God’s kingdom and the diocesan bishop is an icon of Christ, the local Church is united with other local Churches, which is especially manifest at each Eucharist and in each church council.

in the following way: "The attitude towards the Orthodox Church is exceptionally favorable. When solemn documents or statements speak of Churches or ecclesiastical communities which exist beside the Roman Church, then they primarily mean the Orthodox Church. An explicit section of the Decree on ecumenism is dedicated to 'the special consideration of the oriental Churches'. Here are also mentioned the patriarchates which display with pride their apostolic origin, and the Orthodox Church is acknowledged as a treasury of evangelical and apostolic heritage by which the Church in the West has also been enriched and that communion in liturgical matters, under certain conditions and with the approval of respective ecclesiastical authorities, is not only possible but also desirable. Since all Orthodox Churches do have authentic sacraments, and primarily due to apostolic succession – the sacraments of priesthood and of Eucharist, which enable them to remain in very close kinship with the Roman Church"¹⁴.

CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANs EXPLAIN THE TEACHING OF VATICAN II AND SEEK CONTACT WITH ORTHODOX COLLEAGUES

On the eve of Vatican II Franciscans in Zagreb, with the support of Archbishop Franjo Šeper, started *Glas Koncila* (The Voice of the Council, GK), on 4 October 1962 as a Catholic periodical dedicated to informing a large audience about the Council. It gradually developed into an attractive monthly magazine read with great interest by Catholics and other citizens who were looking for texts with a non-Marxist view of society; in the mid 1970s it reached a circulation of 140,000 and since January 1985 it has been published weekly. After the transition to democracy in Croatia and other countries that emerged from the former Yugoslavia, secular media began including segments about important religious news in their coverage and this may have contributed to the current average circulation of *Glas Koncila* which is around 20,000, rising to 40,000 on the major feastdays. Its long term editor-in-chief Živko Kustić (1930-2014), a married Greek Catholic priest of the Križevci eparchy in Croatia, showed journalistic savvy when publishing politically risky texts that nevertheless did not result in the magazine being

14 Dimitrije Dimitrijević, *Art. cit.*, 32-33.

banned by the communist regime¹⁵. In 1966 and 1967 Professor Tomislav Šagi-Bunić (1923-1999), who was theological adviser to Archbishop Šeper at Vatican II, commented on the continuation documents and the spirit of the council, paying special attention to ecumenism and dialogue¹⁶. Professor Vjekoslav Bajsić (1924-1994), in GK and other theological periodicals, sought to open Catholic minds to the witness of the Church in pluralistic society. Professor Bonaventura Duda (born in 1924), a Bible scholar who presided over the group of theologians and Croatian language experts who published the new translation of the Bible in 1968, drew the attention of a large audience to post-Conciliar papal documents and implementation guidelines. Professor Josip Turčinović (1933-1990), in collaboration with Bajsić, Duda and Šagi-Bunić directed the newly established center for Conciliar research and publications *Kršćanska sadašnjost*. In 1970, after separate translations of several documents into Croatian from 1964 to 1968 (SC, UR, DV, LG, NAE, GS), he presented all the documents in Latin and Croatian in book form with a chronology of main events and indexes of biblical quotations, ecclesiastical sources and subjects¹⁷. This book became a standard reference work not only for Catholic students and professors of Theology but also for Serbian and Macedonian Orthodox seekers of revealed truth.

Among other Croat theologians who followed and presented the ecumenical movement in their research, I should briefly mention Professor Ratko Perić, a priest of the Trebinje-Mrkan diocese who from 1974 to 1990 taught Ecumenical Theology to seminarians in Sarajevo, Zagreb and Rome and in 1992 was appointed Bishop of Mostar-Duvno. Following his experience of writing and attending ecumenical conferences he wrote a commentary on *Unitatis redintegratio* in 1987¹⁸. In his book of collected ecumenical essays¹⁹ he listed the series of attempted or implemented dialogue encounters between Croat Catholic and Serb Orthodox bishops

15 One of the initiators of *Glas Koncila* was Fr. Bonaventura Duda, OFM. In his article "Prihvat II. Vatikanskog koncila u Hrvatskoj" (Reception of Vatican II in Croatia), Nedjeljko Ančić (ed), *Koncil u Hrvatskoj*, Split 1996, 29-77 he dedicates appropriate attention to GK, p. 58-63.

16 He published these texts in his book *Ali drugog puta nema. Uvod u misao Drugog vatikanskog koncila*, Zagreb 1969. The section on ecumenism, pp. 223-263, is significantly entitled "Ekumensko otvaranje – ecumenical opening".

17 Josip Turčinović (ed), *II Vatikanski koncil: Dokumenti - Latinski i hrvatski*, Zagreb 1970, 871 pp. In 1972 he published a second, improved edition only in Croatian. In 2008 Stjepan Kušar presented the seventh edition with improved translation, enlarged chronology and systematic index.

18 Ratko Perić-Michal Lacko, *Dekret o ekumenizmu. Dekret o istočnim katoličkim Crkvama*, Zagreb 1987, p. 15-197. In the same volume, p.199-365 is included commentary on *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* by Michal Lacko.

19 Ratko Perić, *Ekumenske nade i tjeskobe*, Mostar 1993.

from 1964 to 1992²⁰. Of particular significance was the transformation of the 1967 Commission for Ecumenism within the Bishops' Conference of Yugoslavia into a permanent Council for Ecumenism in 1970, which was entrusted with preparing the program for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January each year and making draft texts for pastoral letters of Catholic bishops concerning ecumenical relations. In June 1982 Zagreb Archbishop Franjo Kuharić as the then President of the Bishops' Conference proposed to Patriarch German of the Serbian Orthodox Church to establish a mixed commission which would deal with existing problems and contribute to the common Christian heritage. In light of delays and conditions that were stipulated by the Orthodox partner, the commission was formed only in 1992 and met in Geneva on 23 January and 23 September of that year. However, only political tensions were discussed, not theological questions.

Marko Nikolić, a Serb political scientist and Orthodox believer, in his 2011 dissertation "Ecumenical relations of the Serbian-Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church 1962-2000" evaluated the efforts of this commission positively, pointing out that it was revived in 1998 by the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church: "One can see that at the encounter of 2001 coordination of the pastoral and mission tasks and collaboration of the two Churches was generally accepted, as was in fact practiced in former Yugoslavia. Here one sees that the focal point of their relationship also in the future would be an endeavor of shared evangelization and social engagement. This work would be aggravated for them by the consequences of conflict which would present a special hindrance in comparison to the Yugoslav period"²¹.

In this same chapter R. Perić describes briefly nine ecumenical conferences organized by the Orthodox Faculty of Theology of Belgrade and by the Ljubljana and Zagreb Catholic faculties of Theology from 1974 to 1992. Academic deans of the three faculties took turns to prepare concrete themes, selecting the speakers and publishing the papers. At the conference of 1985 R. Perić presented the Catholic view of dialogue with the Orthodox Church;

20 Ratko Perić, *Op. cit.*, 25-30.

21 Marko Nikolić, *Ekumenski odnosi Srpske pravoslavne i Rimokatoličke crkve 1962-2000 godine* (in the Serbian language and Cyrillic characters), Belgrade 2011, 563. The chapter "Mixed Commission for Dialogue of the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Bishops' Conference of Yugoslavia", pp. 558-563. This dissertation embodies the author's political and sociological research, rather than the theology of Orthodox-Catholic cooperation per se. Besides quoting the documents of the Sacred Synod of the SOC the author quotes extensively the documents of State commissions in Belgrade and Zagreb on relations with religious communities.

in 1988 he spoke on the Eucharist in the two traditions; and in 1990 he had prepared the theme of baptism in the two Churches but this conference did not take place because the Zagreb Faculty had to cancel its participation in response to threatening preparations for war by Serbian political and military leaders. Marko Nikolić dedicated a chapter of his dissertation to these conferences, summarizing the themes elaborated by Serbian Orthodox theologians²². He begins with the visit by Orthodox Theology students from Belgrade to their Catholic colleagues in Zagreb in March 1964, mediated by Banja Luka Bishop Alfred Pichler, who in his speech of welcome asked the students to develop brotherly love and confront the gap that existed between Orthodox and Catholics in the country, advising them to adjust to the social and political circumstances in which they live. Nikolić recognizes that the Ljubljana Catholic Faculty of Theology took the initiative in organizing the first conference in September 1974. He concludes that such symposia of Orthodox and Catholic professors helped senior representatives of the two Churches get to know one another and advanced the vision of integration²³. He expresses regret that these encounters cannot proceed as they formerly did. This is the Yugoslav political approach.

In schools of Catholic Theology in Bosnia and Herzegovina (first in the Sarajevo Franciscan seminary, then in the Vrhbosnian or Inter-dioecesan seminary also in Sarajevo, and third in Mostar) and Croatia (Zagreb, Đakovo, Split, Zadar and Rijeka) curricula include Eastern Orthodox Theology and ecumenism regarding Churches and ecclesiastical communities that emerged from the Reformation. Professors of these subjects are scholars genuinely open to dialogue in the spirit of Vatican II, but their students and serving priests may have been significantly influenced by atrocities which took place in the distant and the recent past between Serbs and Croats and it may take decades for the ecumenical mentality to take root²⁴.

22 Marko Nikolić, *Op. cit.*, 548-558.

23 Marko Nikolić, *Op. cit.*, 557.

24 Jure Zečević, „Na koji je način koncilski ekumenizam prihvaćen i kako je zaživio u Hrvatskoj (= How was the Conciliar Ecumenism Accepted and Implemented in Croatia)?“, in: Tonči Matulić et al (ed.), *50. obljetnica svečanog otvaranja i početka Drugog vatikanskog koncila (1962.-2012.)*. Zagreb 15.-17. studenoga 2012. *Zbornik radova*, Zagreb 2015, 233-238 points out that in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina „general remarks range from extremely negative to extremely positive, and the truth is, as always, in the middle. When one discusses the realization of post-conciliar ecumenism among Croatians, one needs to keep clear of both over-critical and non-critical attitudes. We can gratefully and proudly look back at our rich post-conciliar heritage, but we could also regret that other possibilities of ecumenical communion with the ‘Christians in other way’ have been missed“. J. Zečević is professor of ecumenical theology at Zagreb Catholic Faculty of Theology.

ORTHODOX BISHOPS REQUEST REPENTANCE BY CATHOLICS FOR CRIMES AGAINST SERBS IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1941 AND 1945 AND BETWEEN 1991 AND 1995

On 5 January 1964 Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras met in Jerusalem. This meeting gave a new impulse not only to Conciliar proceedings but also to inter-Orthodox opening for dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). The main topic of the third Rodos Orthodox Conference, from 1 to 14 November 1964, was ecumenical dialogue with the RCC. Delegates of the SOC were also present: "In the long run, an agreement was reached according to which dialogue with the Catholic Church is acceptable in principle, but its beginning should be preceded by necessary preparations"²⁵. In January 1964 the SOC made the decision to become a member of the World Council of Churches and was accepted at the meeting of the Central Committee of the WCC at Enugu, Nigeria, in January 1965.

The first sign of a positive response to the attitude of Vatican II towards the Eastern Orthodox Churches was the decision of the SOC to send two observers to the final session of the Council in 1965²⁶. Consultations had to be made with the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople and the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate in Moscow, since there was no united Orthodox decision about sending observers. The Yugoslav civil authorities advised in April 1963 that the SOC should be among the last to send observers. Patriarch German expressly promised to follow the guidelines of the Belgrade Federal Commission for Relations with Religious Communities. Therefore, only in October 1965 was the decision made that Professors Dušan Kašić and Lazar Milin would be observers. Before their departure they were instructed by the Patriarch "to inquire about the atmosphere in Rome in collaboration with other Orthodox observers, especially of the Russian Orthodox Church, since she had been represented there from the beginning"²⁷. Upon returning they delivered a written report to the Synod of the SOC and wrote about their experience in Serbian Orthodox periodicals²⁸. They not-

25 Juraj Kolarić, *Ekumenska trilogija. Istočni kršćani, pravoslavci, protestnanti*, Zagreb 2005, 960. This statement is in his chapter "Razvitak ideje jedinstva u Srpskoj pravoslavnoj Crkvi" (The Development of the Idea of Unity in the Serbian Orthodox Church), p. 927-963.

26 See M. Nikolić, *Op. cit.*, 349-370.

27 M. Nikolić, *Op. cit.*, 365.

28 Lazar Milin, "Papstvo sa gledišta pravoslavne teologije", *Bogoslovlje* 1970, 1-49. He was Professor of Fundamental Theology and in his long life (1914-2001) as a priest served the historic Ružjca church in Belgrade for nearly 50 years. In most of his books and articles he discussed questions of faith and human reason. See Radomir V. Popović, "Podsećanje: protojerej dr Lazar Milin redovni profesor u penziji Bogoslovnog fakulteta Srpske pravoslavne crkve u Beogradu", *Bogoslovlje* 2002,1, 9-18.

ed that Vatican II did not abrogate the dogmas of Papal primacy and infallibility but did opt for tolerance and collaboration with other Christians. M. Nikolić concludes: "It is evident that primarily on these foundations in the period after the Council the SOC took the stand of need and necessity for collaboration with the RCC with a view to building a society based on Christian values. In this way the SOC also affirmed her own social role in conditions of extreme marginalization in an atheist social system"²⁹.

Besides the participation of Serbian Orthodox theologians in ecumenical encounters and symposia organized with Catholic partners over a period of nearly 20 years, which ended after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the SOC continues to send delegates to meetings of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the RCC and the OC. This commission was prepared by a group of authorized experts who submitted a document in 1978 to the authorities of both Churches. The beginning of the dialogue was officially announced by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Dimitrios I in Istanbul on 30 November 1979. It was to include bishops and theologians in equal numbers from participating Churches. On the Orthodox side 14 autocephalous Churches gave their consent to collaboration³⁰. The Commission has held the following plenary sessions:

- 1st Patmos & Rhodes, Greece (May 29-June 4, 1980) "The Mystery of the Church and the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity";
- 2nd Munich, Germany (June 30-July 6, 1982) "The Mystery of the Church and the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity";
- 3rd Crete, Greece (May 30-June 8, 1984) "Faith, Sacraments and Unity of the Church";
- 4th Bari, Italy (June 9-16, 1987) "Faith, Sacraments and the Unity of the Church";
- 5th Valamo, Finland (June 19-27, 1988) "The Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church, with Particular Reference to the Importance of the Apostolic Succession for the Sanctification and Unity of the People of God;
- 6th Freising, Germany (June 6-15, 1990) "Uniatism and proselytism";

29 M. Nikolić, *Op. cit.*, 369.

30 For basic data on the Commission, see Ronald G. Roberson, C. S. P., "Relations between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church", www.apostolicpilgrimage.org/theological-dialogue/-/asset_publisher/14 (November 2015), four pages; the author was in 1988-1992 a staff member of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and now serves in the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs at the USA Conference of Catholic Bishops.

- 7th Balamand, Lebanon (June 17-24, 1993) “Uniatism: Method of Union of the Past, and Present Search for Full Communion”;
- 8th Emmitsburg, Baltimore, USA (July 9-19, 2000) “Ecclesiological and Canonical Implications of Uniatism”;
- 9th Belgrade, Serbia (18-25 September 2006) “The Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church; Conciliarity and Authority in the Church at Three Levels of Ecclesial Life: Local, Regional and Universal”;
- 10th Ravenna, Italy (October 8-14, 2007) “The Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church – Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority”;
- 11th Paphos, Cyprus (16-23 October 2009) “The Role of the Bishop of Rome in the Communion of the Church in the First Millennium”;
- 12th Vienna, Austria (20-27 September 2010) “The Role of the Bishop of Rome in the Communion of the Church in the First Millennium”;
- 13th Amman, Jordan (15-23 September 2014) “Primacy and synodality in the Church”³¹.

After the 1988 Valamo plenary, the communist regimes in Eastern Europe collapsed in 1989. This caused a major crisis in Catholic-Orthodox relations because Eastern Catholics began taking by force churches that had been confiscated by the communist authorities decades earlier and given to the Orthodox in Ukraine, Romania, and Bulgaria. Orthodox delegates insisted at the Freising meeting that the question of the origin and present status of Eastern Catholic Churches be the only topic of discussion. This is why the delegates of the SOC did not attend the 1993 Balamand plenary, but in June 1998 the Joint Coordinating Committee met at Aricia, near Rome, and produced a draft text entitled “The ecclesiological and canonical implications of uniatism”. Due to the NATO bombing of Serbia, the next plenary could not take place until 2000 but an acceptable text on Eastern Catholics could not be agreed. The Belgrade 2006 plenary was crucial in order to resolve the impasse that had been reached at the 2000 Emmitsburg meeting. In the press communique from the Belgrade meeting the SOC expressed the joy of the organizers: “The meeting of the Joint Commission was marked by a spi-

31 Taken from *Wikipedia*, 14 November 2015 and Radovan Bigović, *Pravoslavna teologija ekumenizma*, Belgrade 2010, 109-199; he offers a good chronology and a summary of adopted documents for the period 1980-2009.

rit of friendship and trusted collaboration”³². M. Nikolić concludes that the Belgrade plenary “surely manifests an openness and willingness of the SOC for continuation of the dialogue with the RCC at the universal level”³³. R. Bigović points out that the theme of this plenary meeting was conciliarity and authority in the Church at local, regional and universal levels and that the draft text was prepared in Moscow in 1990, improved at the Freising meeting and presented for adoption at the 2007 Ravenna meeting. He translated the integral text of the Ravenna document for his Serbian Orthodox audience³⁴.

Besides participating in the activities of the WCC and the International Catholic-Orthodox Theological Commission, the SOC is also a member of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), which was established predominantly by Protestant Churches after World War II as an instrument of mutual assistance in reconciliation ministry³⁵. This means primarily inclusion in the external ecumenical movement, rather than within the country.

In May 1966 the Holy See published Part One of the *Decree concerning ecumenical matters*. A significant section of this document deals with recognizing the validity of baptism administered in separated Churches and Ecclesial communities and with receiving the sacraments of reconciliation, communion and the anointing of the sick in Eastern Orthodox Churches (n. 9-20 and 39-54)³⁶. This motivated Živko Kustić to publish an interview with the young Orthodox bishop, Dr. Danilo Krstić, in *Glas Koncila* in November 1969³⁷. At that time Bishop Krstić was Assistant Bishop to Serbian Patriarch German. He declined to comment on the encounter between Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI in 1964 and insisted that his own statements should not be construed as answers of the SOC but that they reflected general opinions of Orthodox theologians. The opening questions dealt with the Orthodox approach to the Bible today. Regarding the Petrine ministry in the Church Krstić stated that the Pope is

32 <http://spc.rs/old//Vesti-2006/09/25-09-06-e.html> (14 November 2015)

33 Marko Nikolić, *Op. cit.*, 566.

34 Radovan Bigović, *Op. cit.*, 183-198.

35 In February 1996 the CEC organized a three-day conference in Belgrade on reconciliation in the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant traditions. I was invited to participate as a Catholic theologian from Bosnia. Several sessions of our work took place in the newly built and newly opened building of the Theological Faculty of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The moderator of these sessions publicly thanked the CEC for the financial resources that covered all costs.

36 English translation of the document in Austin Flannery, *Vatican II*, 483-507.

37 Živko Kustić, “Mogućnosti i granice ekumenizma kod nas. Razgovor s drom Danilom Krstićem vikarnim episkopom patrijarha Germana”, *Glas Koncila* 22/1969, 6-7 (9 November 1969).

not the vicar of Christ and that every eparchy is a kind of monarchy if it safeguards the apostolic faith. To the question, could a dying Orthodox believer, in the case of absence of an Orthodox priest, receive sacramental absolution and communion from a Catholic priest, he answered that this would mean self-exclusion from the Orthodox Church. When Kustić pointed out that concrete attitudes of possible partners to the recent past in Yugoslavia limited the potential for an ecumenical approach, Krstić condemned some articles about war events and atrocities published in *Glas Koncila* and recommended silence on these difficult issues. On the question of mutual killings of Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs during the war in the name of religion he answered that historians should research this while “we should strive to reach not only tolerance but also Christian love”. He recommended mutual competition in doing good, similar to Catholic and Protestant Germans after World War II.

This interview provoked numerous reactions among Catholic readers and one by a Serbian Orthodox priest serving his community in London. Mons. Franjo Kuharić, who by that time was administrator of the Zagreb archdiocese, in his presentation of 18 January 1970 explained that ecumenical dialogue contributes to mutual acquaintance but in the case of Croats and Serbs an important element is that Croats are predominantly Catholic and Serbs are Orthodox: “The more equality in mutual respect of these two peoples and acknowledgment of historical, cultural, economic and political proprieties of each one is achieved, the more favorable will be the creation of a trusting ecumenical climate and ecumenical rapprochement which can and should be always effectuated in the light of freedom and peace”³⁸. The most competent response came from Orthodox Professor of Theology Čedomir Drašković at a conference for about 300 Orthodox priests in Niška Banja, Serbia, on 28 and 29 September 1970, when he spoke on Ecumenism and Orthodoxy. He pointed out the appreciation in the Orthodox Church of Catholic teaching on the authentic apostolic succession in the Orthodox Church and emphasized that in the ecumenical movement the partners do not wish to take anything away from one another but come nearer to preserving proper values and cherishing the common heritage more. Asked about the statements of Bishop Krstić in *Glas Koncila* he answered that they

38 “Biskup Kuharić o odnosima Katoličke i Pravoslavne Crkve. Ekumenizam ovisan također o političkoj, kulturnoj i ekonomskoj ravnopravnosti naroda”, *Glas Koncila* 2/1970, p. 7 (of 25 January 1970). He was archbishop of Zagreb from 16 June 1970 to 5 July 1997; in 1983 he was made cardinal by Pope John Paul II. He died on 11 March 2002. The diocesan cause for his beatification was opened by Cardinal Josip Bozanić in Zagreb on 11 March 2012.

were the bishop's personal opinion dissenting from common Orthodox convictions: "There are extremists everywhere, but we should stress our conviction that there is no difference in the doctrine on sacred mysteries between us and Catholics"³⁹.

Since there is not yet an official attitude of the SOC regarding relations with the RCC and the ecumenical movement in former Yugoslavia, some of its bishops and theologians have rejected any form of ecumenism as a betrayal of Eastern Orthodoxy, even as an invention of the devil. The most vociferous of these was Justin Popović (1894-1979), known for his voluminous manual on Orthodox ecclesiology⁴⁰ and essays on anti-ecumenism⁴¹. He denies valid apostolic succession in the RCC and through this also the validity of Catholic sacraments. Two Catholic doctoral candidates have analyzed his anti-ecumenical ecclesiology in their dissertations, one in Germany⁴², the other in Rome⁴³. Radovan Bigović (1956-2012) in his reflections on ecumenism supports the principle of Joannis Zizioulas "Not a single historical ecclesial community can pretend to be the Church if it ceases to strive towards unity with other Churches". He favors reconciled diversity believing that "such a dialogue guards the Church from two equally dangerous temptations of 'open relativism' and 'introverted fanaticism'"⁴⁴. In an

39 Živko Kustić, "Značajan skup pravoslavnih svećenika u Niškoj Banji: ekumenizam, Biblija, suvremeni lik svećenika, odnosi SFRJ-Vatikan", *Glas Koncila* 20/1970, p. 13-14 (of 11 October 1970).

40 Justin Popović, *Dogmatika Paravoslavne crkve III: eklisiologija*, Belgrade 1978 (in the Serbian language and Cyrillic characters).

41 Justin Popović, *Pravoslavna crkva i ekumenizam*, Manastir Hilandar 1995. His sarcastic essay "Humanistički ekumenizam (Humanistic ecumenism)" is reprinted in Aleskandar Đakovac (ed.), *Pravoslavlje i ekumenizam. Zbornik tekstova*, Belgrade 2005, 207-226. This book contains collected essays, mostly critical of ecumenism, by 20 Orthodox authors.

42 Thomas Bremer, *Ekklesiale Struktur und Ekklesiologie in der Serbischen Orthodoxen Kirche im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Würzburg 1992. In chapter V, pp. 161-252, he analyzes Popović's ecclesiology. Bremer's dissertation was presented in 1990 at Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Universität Münster. The book has been translated by Drina Gojković into Serbian and published: *Vera, kultura i politika: eklezijalna struktura i ekleziologija u Srpskoj pravoslavnoj crkvi u XIX i XX veku*, Niš 1997.

43 Antun Japundžić, *La visione ecclesiologica del teologo serbo-ortodosso padre Justin Popović (1894-1979). Excerpta ex Dissertatione ad Doctoratum, Romae* 2015. The dissertation was presented at the Facultas scientiarum ecclesiasticarum orientalium of the Pontificium institutum orientale in Rome.

44 Radovan Bigović, *The Orthodox Church in 21st Century*, Belgrade 2009, 123-126. In his article "How to cope with memories? The mission of the Church in the Balkans", in Peter De Mey-Andrew Pierce-Oliver Schuegraf (ed.), *Mission und Einheit. Gemeinsames Zeugnis getrennter Kirchen? Mission und Unity. Common Witness of Separated Churches*, Leipzig 2012, 75-104 he pleads for a Christian culture of memory in the Orthodox Church. As author of the book *Pravoslavna teologija ekumenizma*, Belgrade 210 he writes in favor of realistic ecumenism by presenting Serbian Orthodox participation in the work of the WCC and the International Catholic-Orthodox Commission for Dialogue.

interview with the Belgrade newspaper *Novosti* published on 5 December 2005 he pointed out that the RCC does recognize all the sacraments of the OC but a pan-Orthodox ecumenical council should precede serious work on full unity with the RCC and Protestant Christians.

Vjekoslav Perica, Croatian journalist and historian, born in 1955, and Professor of History at the University of Rijeka, began studying ecumenical relations between Croats and Serbs during his five-year term as secretary of the government's Commission for Relations with Religious Communities. He received his PhD in History from the University of Minnesota with the dissertation *Religious revival and ethnic mobilization in Yugoslavia, 1965-1991: A history of the Yugoslav religious question from the reform era to the civil war*. In one article he expresses regret over the lack of interfaith dialogue between Catholic and Orthodox religious leaders and argues that "With more leaders like Archbishop Franić, the churches could have utilized religion as a counterweight to ethnic tensions instead of making it a catalyst of the conflict. Franić understood the Second Vatican Council better than Cardinal Kuharić did. If rapprochement had been reached, the churches could also have improved the communist system, encouraged the regime's liberals and accelerated the country's transition to democracy. The Yugoslav disaster might have been averted"⁴⁵. This is an oversimplified view of the enforced living of Croats in one state with Serbs from 1918 to 1991 and blames religious leaders for failures and crimes of political representatives. But sources and events on which Perica bases his research do help us to understand the slow acceptance of Vatican II ecumenical teaching in former Yugoslavia. The main cause was and still is support by bishops and theologians for their respective ethnic causes in a pluralistic country ruled by a dictatorial regime.

45 Vjekoslav Perica, "Interfaith Dialogue versus Recent Hatred: Serbian Orthodoxy and Croatian Catholicism from the Second Vatican Council to the Yugoslav War 1965-1992", *Religion, State and Society*, Vol 29, No 1, 2001, 39-66; quotation from p. 59. See his book *Balkan Idols. Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*, Oxford 2002. Maria Falina, "Between 'Clerical Fascism' and Political Orthodoxy. Christianity and Nationalism in Interwar Serbia", *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 8 (2007), 2, 247-258. In the Introduction to her dissertation *Pyrrhic Victory: East Orthodox Christianity, Politics and Serbian Nationalism in the Interwar Period*, Central European University Budapest 2011, p. 8 she says: "The classic understanding of the relationship between the Serbian nation and the Serbian Orthodox Church (both in the sense of an institution and of a religious community) is that the two are intimately linked and inseparable... The central aim of the thesis is to show how the idea of fusion between Orthodox Christianity and Serbianness came about, evolved over time and was eventually coined in the way we know it today". Full text available at Google (28 November 2015).

Bishop Frane Franić was a member of the Central Theological Commission at Vatican II and one of the spokesmen for the conservative minority during the four sessions of the Council⁴⁶; he was mentioned 29 times by Yves Congar in his 2002 two-volume *Mon Journal du Concile*⁴⁷. In 1966 he started a new periodical *Crkva u svijetu* (The Church in the World) to explore and spread the spirit of Vatican II in a country with Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim and Marxist intellectuals. This periodical has been performing its mission for nearly 50 years and is now the journal of the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Split. Archbishop Franić personally wrote about the dialogue with other Christians and agnostics and seriously attempted to organize encounters and prayer meetings with Serbian Orthodox clergy in his diocese but was not supported by the regional Orthodox bishop. In 1970 Yugoslavia became the only communist country in Europe to establish full diplomatic relations with the Holy See. On the one hand the communists needed a patriotic attitude from mainline Churches and cordial relations among faith ministers in view of their strong influence on ethnic relations, but on the other hand, in the Yugoslav ideological view of recent regional history, Orthodox clergy had been guilty of supporting Serb Chetniks and Catholic clergy of supporting the Croat Ustasha regime during World War Two. Inspired by communist diplomacy, Serbian Patriarch German “while negotiating the restoration of diplomatic relations, sought negotiations with the Pope rather than with the Croatian episcopate”⁴⁸.

Cardinal Franjo Šeper, archbishop of Zagreb, met Patriarch German at Srijemski Karlovci on 25 April 1968, on the eve of his departure to Rome as newly nominated prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Due to the different views of the political and interethnic situation in Yugoslavia, they did not discuss ecumenical collaboration in the country, but their encounter did facilitate later contacts of individual priests and bishops. Some Orthodox and Catholics protested against this meeting

46 John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 154-155. 208.228.

47 See Emilio Marin, “Le idee conciliari di Frane Fanić. Testimonianze e riflessioni», in: Philippe Chenaux-Emilio Marin-Franjo Šanjek (ed), *La Chiesa croata e il Concilio Vaticano II*, Roma 2011, 165-177. In the same book, two more authors present the contribution of F. Franić to Conciliar renewal, Dušan Moro, “Frane Franić e le tre costituzioni del Concilio (SC, LG, DV). Contributo del vescovo di Split-Makarska all'ecclesiologia e alla teologia del Concilio Vaticano II”, *Ib*, 123-143. Ante Mateljan, “Frane Franić e la rivista *Crkva u svijetu*. La cultura del dialogo nella visione conciliare del rinnovamento della Chiesa e del mondo », *Ib*, 143-163. A general picture of the dialogue with Eastern Orthodox Churches is presented by Zdislaw J. Kijas, “Dialogo ecumenico con le Chiese Ortodosse”, *Ib*, 427-444.

48 Vjekoslav Perica, *Art. cit.*, 45.

of senior religious leaders⁴⁹. M. Nikolić quotes a report about Orthodox bishops in Croatia who asked a high-ranking state official to help promote ecumenical collaboration and interethnic trust in Croatia because after the death of Tito Orthodox inhabitants of Croatia might be threatened.

A good illustration of these issues is the presentation of the Serbian Orthodox Church by Juraj Kolarić and the reaction of Orthodox partners. J. Kolarić, born in 1938, was ordained a priest of the Zagreb archdiocese in 1965; in 1969 he presented his dissertation at Innsbruck Catholic Faculty of Theology *Ökumenische Fragen in der Theologie der Serbischorthodoxen Kirche. Eine historisch-dogmatische Studie*. From 1972 to 2008 he was Professor of Church History at Zagreb Faculty of Catholic Theology and in 1985 he published his book on Orthodoxy⁵⁰. Despite his wish to contribute to ecumenical rapprochement he criticized Serb bishops and clergy for their *svetosavlje* (a kind of mixing Orthodox faith and Serbian national politics in Yugoslavia in the spirit of St. Sava, the founder of the autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church⁵¹) and for claiming Serb ethnicity of the Orthodox population in Croatia and Bosnia. Belgrade Professor Atanazije Jevtić disputed this question with him, as well as addressing the difficulty of Serb Orthodox theologians praying together with Catholics.

In April 1941 German troops invaded Yugoslavia and soon after this the so-called Independent state of Croatia (*Nezavisna država Hrvatska – NDH*) was established on the territory of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, headed by the dictator Ante Pavelić and maintained with violence by his militia, the *Ustaše*. In slavish obedience to and imitation of the German “big brothers” the Pavelić authorities opened concentration camps in Jasenovac and other places, where Jews, Roma, Serbs and Croat communists were tortured and murdered as opponents of the regime. Over a period of four years roughly 100,000 innocent civilians were murdered at Jasenovac, most of them ethnic Serbs captured on the territory of Croatia and Bosnia. While Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac prophetically criticized the cruel and unjust proceedings of the government – from the pul-

49 Marko Nikolić, *Op. cit.*, 465-467. He quotes an April 1968 document of the state Commission for relations with religious communities where an employee told Patriarch German that Šeper should have visited him earlier in Belgrade. The same document mentions a protest letter to Cardinal Šeper where the anonymous sender addresses him as “Uzoriti izdajniče – Eminent betrayer!”

50 Juraj Kolarić, *Pravoslavni*, Zagreb 1985. In enlarged form this is an integral part of his *Ekumenska trilogija. Istočni kršćani, pravoslavni, protestanti*, Zagreb 2005, 249-411.

51 *Svetosavlje* is a concept used by Serbian theologians and historians to depict their national and religious dreams, needs and wounds. For Catholic evaluation, see Antun Japundžić, *Op. cit.*, 32-34.

pit of Zagreb cathedral, in direct appeals to Pavelić and in his pastoral letters – Sarajevo Archbishop Ivan Šarić did not leave any trace of written protest against the seizure and deportation of around 9,000 of his Jewish fellow citizens to death camps in Croatia or Germany. Aware that he would be, without proper legal procedure, sentenced to death by the incoming communists, he left Sarajevo in April 1945 and later lived in Madrid, where he died in 1960. At a show trial, Archbishop Stepinac was accused of criminal collaboration with the Pavelić regime and illegal support for the idea of an autonomous state of Croat people; he was sentenced to five years in prison in Lepoglava and in 1951 released and confined to his native parish of Krašić, where he died in 1960. In the years from 1945 to the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991 the communist authorities, Serb historians, and Orthodox bishops and clergy continued unequivocally to accuse Croat Catholic bishops and clergy of allegedly criminal support for the NDH, while several bishops and hundreds of priests were incarcerated. Most Orthodox bishops and clergy, while supporting general ecumenical contacts with foreign Christian institutions, insisted and still insist that Catholic Croats should publicly and sincerely repent for crimes committed against Serbs during the periods of conflict from 1941 to 1945 and from 1991 to 1995.

In 1967 some members of the Synod of the SOC “argued that official contacts with the Croatian episcopate would not be possible until Croat church leaders addressed the issue of the Ustasha massacres, the destruction of the Orthodox churches during the Second World War and the forcible conversion of the Orthodox, and released a statement of repentance with a plea for forgiveness addressed to the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian people”⁵². From 1975 to 1984 Croatian bishops and priests devoted substantial attention to organizing the nine-year jubilee in commemoration of 13 centuries of Christianity among the Croat people. Together with the beatification cause of Cardinal Stepinac (which was effected by Pope John Paul II in 1998), this Novena was interpreted by Orthodox bishops and theologians and by the communist regime as “nationalist mobilization under religious symbols”. This is why 20,000 Orthodox pilgrims gathered on 2 September 1984 at the consecration of the newly built Orthodox church in Jasenovac, conducted by Patriarch German. “The aim of the Jasenovac commemoration was to raise awareness among Serb people that they had been victims of a genocide nearly equal to the Holocaust

52 Vjekoslav Perica, *Art. cit.*, 46.

and at the same time to remind Croats and their clergy of the shame of Ustasha crimes of genocide which still remained without appropriate condemnation and public repentance... The Patriarch stressed that those who had committed the crimes at Jasenovac were Christians who killed and tortured other Christians, in the belief that thereby they had done a patriotic service to their nation. He called on the Serbs to live in peace with other nationalities in the common Yugoslav state, but in an exhortation later widely quoted added: 'Brothers, we have to forgive, because such is the Gospel's commandment – but we cannot forget. Let the great-grandsons of our great-grandsons know that this concrete flower of the field of Jasenovac is the witness of madness, which must never take place again'⁵³.

In his Christmas pastoral letter of December 1984, Split-Makarska Archbishop Frane Franić, alluding to this speech by the Serbian Orthodox patriarch, emphasized the peril of unhealthy memories which breed hatred in people's hearts so that they can only await an opportunity for revenge. In May 1989 Cardinal Kuharić as president of the Bishops' Conference wrote a letter to Patriarch German proposing the establishment of a joint commission for mutual relations. In their letter of June 1989 the Orthodox bishops spoke of preconditions for ecumenical dialogue, citing in particular the beatification cause of Cardinal Stepinac and the Catholic Church's minimizing of Ustasha crimes.

LONE PROPHETIC CALLS FOR THE SEPARATION OF ETHNIC INTEREST FROM FAITH COMMITMENT

In the turbulent history of Serbs and Croats religion has had a decisive role in preserving national and cultural identity to such a degree that faith affiliation is identified with ethnicity and vice versa. Theoretically, most Catholics and Orthodox educated in their faith do know that Christianity as a universal religion surpasses the boundaries of country or ethnic community, but in practical terms they tend to highlight or defend their ethnic values using religious arguments, or even speak of "Croat faith" or "Serb faith". Some extremists are thoroughly convinced that religion can and should be

53 Vjekoslav Perica, *Art. cit.*, 51.

an instrument of ethnic or political causes. Nevertheless, one can find among recent writings lone prophetic voices of courageous individuals who call for the separation of ethnic interest from faith commitment.

One of these in the Croatian and Catholic community is Frano Prcela, O. P., born in 1966, ordained in 1992, postgraduate studies at Phil.-Theol. Hochschule St. Georgen Frankfur/M, non-Resident Permanent Fellow of the "Institut M-Dominique Chenu". In his book of collected essays on the real challenges facing the Church in Croatia⁵⁴ he deals with Croatian ethnic identity, faith affiliation and reconciliation. His essay on Catholic elements in Croatian identity has been translated into English and published in a book on the politicization of religion in the countries that emerged from former Yugoslavia⁵⁵. He points out that most Croats are baptized Catholics but not really Christianized and he rejects the inappropriate use of the term "Croatian Church". He recommends a distance from "ultra patriots" who misuse faith affiliation while Croatian everyday reality is colored by apathy towards community and responsibility for others. Priests and bishops should maintain a creative distance from the tradition and educate the faithful to make a creative contribution to common welfare: "Thus, a healthy distance from their own ethnicity is a challenge that the Church, above all, as an institution is facing. Otherwise, misuse of religious affiliation in national identity can occur along with expectations related to national group solidarity that are unusual in the Gospel (Mt 5, 43-47). God never took and never takes sides when it comes to institutions but is on the side of individuals – He (God) shows solidarity especially with those who suffer and are persecuted. The less they speak of God in politics, the better it is – both for the religion and for the nation! Finally, more committed and authentic involvement in true Christian and Catholic identity is the best contribution the Church can give in building the Croatian identity – and I mean the Catholic Church for every man, not particularly for Croats, or even exclusively for Croats"⁵⁶. In concluding he draws attention to the danger for the Catholic Church in Croatia in overestimating community identity and neglecting its primary mission related to religious distinctiveness in respecting and protecting individuals. This is the reflection of a Croatian Catholic priest who evolved into a broad-minded theologian, probably thanks to his studies in Germany and

54 Frano Prcela, O.P., *Bogozaoborav. Razmišljanja o aktualnim izazovima Crkve*, Zagreb 2014.

55 Frano Prcela, "The Catholic Pledge in the Croatian Identity", in: Gorana Ognjenović-Jasna Jozić (ed), *Politicization of Religion, the Power of Symbolism. The Case of Former Yugoslavia and its Successor States*, New York 2014, 67-92.

56 Frano Prcela, *Art. cit.*, 85.

his pastoral engagement abroad. Similar reflections one can hear from adult Croats or Serbs who were looking for personal faith option and have accepted reformed Christianity⁵⁷.

Vladan Perišić, a Serbian Orthodox priest and professor of Theology, in a recent article asks can a nation be Christian or a Church National⁵⁸. He starts with the phenomenon that “almost every Orthodox as well as the Catholic Church in at least some countries (Poland, Croatia, Ireland...) are nowadays considering themselves as national, which means that every one of them sees itself as a religious expression and protection of a particular nation, moreover as a bearer of the ‘national’ identity. Although the idea of a ‘national church’ is not a product of the theology but of the ideology of the Church, in all these churches it is a common opinion, taken for granted almost like dogma, that the Church is part of the national identity which serves the national unity”. After summarizing different theories on ethnicity or nationhood he shows that the contribution of the Church to national unity is actually supporting the political power and the ruling elite, because there is nothing Christian in waging war or in stealing from members of other nations. Convinced Christians should refuse to participate in similar actions. After joining the Church through baptism and personal faith “nation could remain, but it should not have any substantial role in my Christian life. In other words, nation should be transformed. It could be present, but as if it were not. It could be present only as a signpost, whose only role is to point to something indefinitely superior to it”⁵⁹.

CONCLUSION

An academic commemoration of the 50th anniversary of *Unitatis Redintegratio* took place at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome on 20-21 November 2014. Professor Rade Kisić, the delegate of the Serbian Patriarc-

57 I know a Serbian young woman in Banja Luka who as a university student became hungry for religious values and turned to her grandparents for instruction in their faith. Since they knew very little about their traditional Orthodoxy she joined a group of reformed Christians in her city, was baptized, and now participates in the Protestant local worship service. She is criticized by her fellow ethnic Serbs for having “betrayed” her Serbian identity.

58 Vladan Perišić, “Is it Possible for a Nation to be Christian and for the Church to be National?”, *Philotheos* (International Journal for Philosophy and Theology edited by Bogoljub Šijaković in Belgrade) 15 (2015), 232-239.

59 Vladan Perišić, *Art. cit.*, 239.

hate, delivered a summary of UR 50 years after the Council⁶⁰. He acknowledged that the *Decree* influenced Orthodox-Catholic relations in a positive way, especially through its open ecclesiology which no longer insists on “return” of separated brethren. It “did find a good balance between profiling one’s own ecclesial identity and ushering in an ecumenical opening” (p. 66). He finds that a ‘hierarchy of truths’ can open up discussion on the constitutionality of some teachings for reaching the unity of the Church. He supports the idea of ecumenical perspective in theological studies (UR 10) and asks to what extent the results of ecumenical dialogue are part of the curricula of theological faculties. He notes the understanding for diversity in Church discipline and doctrine (UR 17). Regarding mutual participation in worship (UR 15; Canon 844 of 1983 Code) he points out that “I believe that the examination of the positions and limits of the common participation in worship would certainly have a positive impact on the future of dialogue” (p. 68). He concludes: “Despite the careful balancing between one’s own ecclesial identity and an ecumenical opening, despite the partly unfulfilled expectations on the part of Orthodox and Protestant theologians, the spirit of this document is the spirit of opening up to the other, the spirit that shows willingness for dialogue. And I think that today in ecumenical dialogue it is precisely this ‘willingness’ that we need the most. We have excellent documents (with, sadly, limited practical consequences on the life of specific ecclesial communities), but what we are missing in the end, it seems to me, is the will to surpass self-sufficiency and step out of our own tradition, thereby remaining completely loyal to it”⁶¹. This is a fresh sign that Serbian Orthodox theologians accept the teaching of Vatican II on the Eastern Orthodox Churches and are willing to cooperate in ecumenical programs at the universal level but are still reluctant to do so at the local level.

60 Rade Kisić, “*Unitatis Redintegratio* after 50 years in Orthodox Reading”, *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity - Information Service* No. 114 (2014/II), 65-68.

61 Rade Kisić, *Art. cit.*, 68. See the extended edition of this article in German: “Die Orthodoxe Kirche in *Unitatis Redintegratio*”, *Philotheos* 15 (2015), 240-250. He points out: “... es geht darum, eine grundlegende Wahrheit des katholischen Glaubens zu beachten: die Wahrheit von der Einzigkeit der Kirche Jesu Christi. Es gibt nur eine einzige Kirche, darum ist der Plural nur auf die Teilkirchen anwendbar” (p. 245). Here is his optimistic conclusion: “Die richtige Perspektive, aus der dieses Dokument angesehen werden soll, ist jedoch nicht die orthodoxe sondern die innerkatholische. Aus dieser Perspektive betrachtet sind die Orthodoxen Kirchen echte Teilkirchen, mit der grossen geistlichen und theologischen Tradition und denen eine gewisse Gottesdienst-gemeinschaft angeboten wird. Für den Anfang der ökumenischen Beziehungen zwischen den beiden Kirchen war das ganz viel. Für die erfolgreiche Fortsetzung des theologischen Dialogs heute eher wenig. Dadurch sollte jedoch nicht die Tatsache vergessen werden, dass das Dekret ein neues ekklesiologisches Verständnis von der Orthodoxen Kirchen aufbrachte und den Weg für den Dialog öffnete” (p. 250).

This is in line with the thesis of Maria Wernsmann stating that questions of identity and power impede ecumenical rapprochement if partners are not aware of them⁶². In developing her thesis, she applies to Catholic-Orthodox relations the results of sociological explorations from 1980 (P. Lensfeld, *Ökumenische Theologie*) to 2005 (H. Wilke, *Systemtheorie III*). While Croat and Serb religious leaders expect repentance for crimes committed against their respective ethnic fellows, some prophetic voices call for the separation of ethnic interests from faith commitment. Both sides should educate their own flock in forgiving and in asking forgiveness, or – in accordance with the pastoral program of Pope Francis – practice mercy as the medicine to heal the wounds of the Church. Cardinal Walter Kasper, at a conference held at Durham University on 3 November 2015 spoke of regression into the old self-satisfied denominationalism, where we are anxious for our own denominational identity, forgetting that this identity is only possible in ecumenical coexistence: “So old sensitivities that we had believed to be overcome long ago rise up from their graves like ghosts. Healing of memories, an ecumenism of love, of encounter, listening and friendship are what is needed”⁶³.

62 Maria Wernsmann, “Identität und Macht in der Ökumene. Die römisch-katholisch/orthodoxen Beziehungen in systemtheologischer Perspektive”, Thomas Bremer-Maria Wernsmann (ed), *Ökumene überdacht. Reflexionen und Realitäten im Umbau*, Frankfurt/M 2014, 180-206.

63 Cardinal Walter Kasper, “Mercy is the medicine to heal the wounds of the Church”, *The Tablet*, 14 November 2015, 10-11. His conference was entitled “Church, Mercy and the Signs of Time” (Google, 28 December 2015).

SHARED EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA REGARDING RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS¹

On April 28, 1991, after the first democratic elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, religious leaders submitted a request to the collective State Presidency asking for the re-introduction of confessional religious instruction in public schools. This had been the practice from 1882 until 1945. On July 5, 1991 the Ministry of Education gave a favorable response to this request. A consultation among religious leaders regarding faith education in public schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place in Sarajevo on September 26, 1991. The meeting was attended by Salih Čolaković, president of the Meshihat of the Islamic Community (IC) in BiH, Vinko Puljić, Catholic archbishop of Sarajevo, Vasilije Kačavenda, Orthodox bishop of the Tuzla-Zvornik eparchy, Petar Anđelović, provincial superior of the Bosnian Franciscans, Ivica Čerešnješ, president of the Jewish community in BiH, and Zvonko Petrović, director of the Pedagogical Institute in BiH.

After Bosnia and Herzegovina was recognized in 1992 by the United Nations as a new country that had emerged from former Yugoslavia, Catholic, Muslim and Orthodox religious leaders reaffirmed their resolve with the State Presidency and education authorities to re-introduce confessional religious instruction in public schools as it had existed during the Austrian-Hungarian administration (1878-1918) and during the kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941). Agreement was quickly reached that faith communities would educate teachers of religion, and prepare school

1 Presentation at the Conference on "Islam in Europe through the Balkan Prism" Sarajevo, October 24-26, 2013.

manuals for students and present these to school directors for classroom use. If a minimum of seven Muslim, Orthodox or Catholic students wished to receive religious classes, the school authorities would be required to arrange for a teacher of the relevant religion. Objections by Bosnian Serbs to the referendum decision on BiH independence, on March 1, 1992, led to war, which only ended with the Dayton Peace Agreement of December 1995. As a result of the conflict, regular religious instruction did not begin in all schools at the same time.

PROGRAMS, TEXTBOOKS, SUBJECT EVALUATION

However, since September 1996 religion in public schools has been a selective subject which parents choose for their primary school children. In high school, students decide personally if they wish to continue with confessional faith education or opt for an alternative subject, such as ethics or “culture of religions”. Once freely selected, religious-education classes must be attended regularly; students receive marks in this subject in the same way as in other subjects in the curriculum, and marks in religious education are entered into the student’s overall grade average.

In the beginning, the leaders of faith communities drew up their religious-education programs and provided textbooks without consulting each other. Later, they proposed, through their respective experts in religious pedagogy, slight changes to new editions of textbooks so that students might be informed about the religions of their fellow citizens without descending to caricature or distorting their neighbor’s basic beliefs (M. Zovkić, 2005). Primary school students receive their first information about “the other” in fifth and seventh grades. According to research by Aid Smajic, the cruelties of Turks towards Christians during the Ottoman period in Bosnia (1463-1878), as presented to Orthodox students in seventh grade (the year of studying the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church) could be easily transferred to present-day Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the author does not make a distinction between Turks as the ruling class of that time and Muslims as citizens of a different faith affiliation then and today. He noticed that in Catholic textbooks a more careful formulation has been applied, but nevertheless the terms “Turks and Muslims are often used as synonyms” (A. Smajic 2007 and 2008).

In the BiH Federation each of the ten cantons has its own education ministry which can influence the program and pedagogical proceedings in public schools. In the canton of Sarajevo, the minister of education, Dr. Emir Suljagić, tried in 2011 to change the existing system of evaluating the subject of religion in schools. On April 24, 2011 he sent a rescript to directors of elementary and high schools in the canton asking them immediately to stop evaluating the subject of religion in individual grades as subjects being counted as part of the overall grade average (in Bosnia and Herzegovina the mark of average success in the concluding grade is important for acceptance into the next level of education). His intention was to protect students who do not attend religious classes and therefore have one subject less to add to their overall grade average, keeping in mind that teachers of religion mostly give excellent or very good marks to their students. Mr. Muharem Omerdić, director of the religious education office in the Muslim Community of BiH, and Mons. Petar Jukić, director of the catechetical office of Sarajevo Archdiocese, submitted a letter of protest to Minister Suljagic on April 27 explaining that in the previous accords religious leaders and top state officials had placed religious instruction in public schools on an equal footing with other subjects and the minister should not impose such an important decision without public discussion. Muslim and Catholic participants were invited to an evening TV debate on the subject, where they insisted on honoring the existing consensus on such a sensitive matter. They did admit the problem of students who have a vacant period while a clear majority of their classmates have religious instruction. But it is up to the ministry of education and school directors to find an alternative course for them. Soon after this, Minister Suljagić resigned and his prescription was never put into effect.

Minister Suljagić in his rescript cites the “General Law on elementary and high schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina” of June 27, 2003. Article 9 of this law provides for the advancement and enlargement of religious liberty in schools, along with tolerance and a culture of dialogue. Students can attend religious instruction “in accordance with their beliefs and the beliefs of their parents”. It treats religious teaching as any other subject, evaluation included.

MUSLIM TEACHERS OF RELIGION AND THEIR STUDENTS

In 1991, Muslim leaders, in order to provide mandated teachers of religion for the children of Muslim believers in public schools, gave general permission to imams to perform this mission in the local schools of their territory. At that time, most imams had finished the *madrasa*, the four-year religious high school which also offered subjects present in secular high schools so that their students were able to continue their education at university level. During the time of Grand Mufti Dr. Mustafa Cerić, the IC prescribed new *Regulations for Imams* requesting that all students who completed their *madrasa* studies, with working experience of less than ten years, should complete their education at the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo. With a view to making this possible, the Faculty of Islamic Studies opened an additional section for these candidates (Halilović, N., 2012). Over a period of time, this faculty and two Muslim pedagogical academies (one in Zenica, other in Bihać) opened departments for teachers of Islam.

Through *The Regulations for teachers of religion*, an official network of such teachers has been created and all teachers of religion have been certified. They are accredited by the Grand Mufti and in this way enjoy equal status with imams, who are appointed by decree of the Grand Mufti. The religious education office of the IC keeps a register of all certified teachers of religion and animates their seminars. On December 3rd, 2011, the first Congress of Bosniak teachers of religion serving in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Sandžak district of Serbia took place. Participants adopted a Declaration citing *Quran* 39:9 and a *hadith* of the Prophet explaining that the real scope of his mission was the advancement of moral values. In the Declaration they see the foundation of their mission in the right of parents to educate their children in accordance with their religious conscience and promise to open up the minds and hearts of their students towards dialogue, peace and tolerance. Keeping in mind the spiritual, ethical, social and cultural dimensions of the faith, they promise to give their students a good example of faith and moral conduct, and to raise them up in the values of truth, justice and reconciliation within their societies.

According to Nezir Halilović, who works with the religious education office of the IC in Sarajevo, 717 teachers of the Muslim faith work in BiH primary schools and 156 in high schools. In the school year

2011/2012, 96.2% of Muslim students attended religious education classes in primary schools and 82% in high schools. These data are fairly constant and there is a tendency towards improved attendance, especially in high schools. Recently, religious instruction has also been introduced in kindergartens, while the primary-school curriculum has been extended from eight years to nine years. This is why in the IC the process of writing new, improved editions of textbooks is underway. In the Republika Srpska, classes in religion are organized for Muslim students if there is a minimum of seven students who wish to receive these classes.

In his research on the quality of religious teaching as a school subject for Muslim students, Nezir Halilović interviewed 213 boys and girls at a school in Sarajevo, in the school year 2011/2012. The respondents were asked to answer four questions:

- What do you like about the teaching of religion so far?
- What don't you like about the current teaching of religion?
- What do you expect regarding the new school year and the new teacher?
- What would you prefer not to anticipate regarding the new teacher of religion?

In their answers, students said that they like religious instruction because teachers make them feel relaxed and free; they make the class enjoyable by using modern technology and through interactive communication. They also like the content of religious instruction because the teachers talk not only about God, his Messenger and moral values but also about the identity of Muslim boys and girls and about the history of Islam. They like good marks from religion, because this improves their overall yearly grade. They like the fairness shown by the teachers of religion in evaluating their knowledge, and the way they communicate when they do this. They are grateful to their religion teachers for teaching authentic life values and encouraging them to live properly. Things they do not like include the bad conduct of classmates during lessons in religion, boring lessons, abstract themes, and the practice of joining two classes into one group (N. Halilović, 2013).

ORTHODOX BISHOPS MOSTLY COMMISSION CLERICS TO PROVIDE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS

The Orthodox community in Bosnia and Herzegovina is organized in five eparchies: Dabar-Bosnia with its seat in Sarajevo, Zvornik-Tuzla with its seat in Tuzla, Banja Luka, Bihać-Petrovac with its seat in Bosanski Petrovac, and Zahumlje-Herzegovina with its seat in Mostar (Vanja Jovanović, 2012). According to Orthodox (and Catholic) canon law, the regional bishop is in charge of educating teachers of religion, providing textbooks and appointing individual faith teachers to actual schools. In Republika Srpska, Orthodox religious instruction was introduced into elementary public schools in September 1991 and in the summer semester of 1992/93 it became a mandatory subject with the numerical evaluation of students. In the first two years only two textbooks were made available: one for students in first to fourth grades and the other for students in fifth to eighth grades.

In accordance with the five eparchies, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska launched an initiative to create a complete curriculum and prepare textbooks for religious instruction. This task was entrusted to the Church, represented by Bishop Hrysostom of Bihać-Petrovac, who established the Catechetical Committee (*Katihetski odbor*). The Committee consists of eleven members, two from each eparchy, plus the president, who is always a bishop. Religious instruction classes take place once a week, but there is no religious instruction in the first grade as these students have a special curriculum and program. Over a period of time, all the textbooks were prepared and published, and in 2000 the Board for Religious Instruction in Republika Srpska agreed to provide comments on the treatment of Orthodoxy in Muslim and Catholic religious textbooks, and accepted suggestions from Muslim and Catholic experts in religious pedagogy regarding Orthodox religious textbooks (Slavoljub Lukić. 2011). Candidates who wish to teach Orthodox religious classes can receive professional training at the Orthodox Faculty of Theology in Eastern Sarajevo. They can be employed through the Catechetical Committee within the Pedagogy Institute of Republika Srpska, but they are accredited by the local bishop. Bishops, religious teachers and students can communicate through the www.vjeronauka.net website. This is a site that is used especially by religious teachers who would like to make their work more efficient.

In September 2013, 311 persons worked as Orthodox teachers of religion in Republika Srpska: 226 of these are ordained priests or deacons,

66 are male lay believers and 19 are female lay believers. There is no Orthodox religious instruction in public schools in Sarajevo canton, Central Bosnia canton, West Herzegovina canton, Posavina canton or Bosnia-Drina canton. In the rest of the BiH Federation such instruction is organized in schools of the following cantons, as there are at least seven Orthodox students in the respective schools: Una-Sana canton, Livno canton, Herzegovina-Neretva canton, Tuzla canton and (only in Maglaj) in Zenica-Doboj canton. According to Slobodan Lukić's research, 100% of students attend Orthodox religious instruction.

CATHOLIC BISHOPS PREFER LAY BELIEVERS AS TEACHERS OF RELIGION

Similar to Orthodox believers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who are ethnic Serbs and whose eparchies are consequently an integral part of the Serbian Orthodox Church headed by the patriarch in Belgrade, Catholics of Bosnia and Herzegovina are 98% ethnic Croats. For this reason, while teachers of religion are trained at three theological facilities in the country (the Catechetical Institute in Mostar, the Franciscan Theological Seminary in Sarajevo and the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Sarajevo), they use textbooks prepared and published by the Croatian Bishops Conference. Left minded intellectuals in the BiH education system, strongly supported by personnel from the OHR and OSS in our country, for some time tried to introduce the subject of "culture of religions" for all students, especially those who do not attend confessional religious instruction in public schools. This was seen by Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic religious leaders as an attempt to eliminate gradually confessional religious instruction from the schools. Ante Pavlović, catechetical professor in Mostar and Sarajevo who is also secretary of the Commission for Religious Education of the BiH Bishops Conference, in articles published in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Italy developed the Catholic argument for keeping religious instruction in the public-school curriculum (A. Pavlović 2004, 2006 and 2008).

Raffi Gregorian, Supervisor for the District of Brčko, issued a Supervisory Order on August 13, 2008 on religious instruction in primary schools naming it ironically "Supervisory Order *Protecting Freedom of Religion* with Respect to the Conduct of Religious Education and the Employment

Status of Teachers of Religion in Brcko District Public Schools". He ordered that religious teaching should be always put as first or last lesson of the school day and that teachers of religion could not carry on any other responsibility in the school, such as directors, vice directors or homeroom teacher. For teachers of religion who had to cover several schools in different localities (to complete the prescribed number of lessons in a week for full salaries) it became impossible to continue. His intention was explained by the district government as suppression of any religious instruction in the high schools. Petar Jukić, coordinator of religious education in Sarajevo Archdiocese, sharply criticized this Supervisory Order, labeling it as discrimination against believing parents and their school-aged children (J. Jukić, 2008). In 2011 the Supervisor partly mitigated the Order.

According to the evidence of P. Jukić, in September 2013 Catholic faith education was attended by 48,926 students in elementary schools with 310 faith teachers and by 20,302 students in high schools with 82 teachers. A clear majority of the teachers are lay believers, because in this way the bishops would like the largest possible number to receive professional training in theology and become active as Catholic lay persons in Church and civil society. According to P. Jukić, between 95% and 97% of elementary school students frequent their religious instruction while in high schools 85% of students do it.

SEPARATE AND JOINT REFRESHMENT SEMINARS FOR TEACHERS OF RELIGION

Persons in charge of faith education in the Muslim Community, the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina provide refreshment seminars for their teachers of religion, once a year for all and several times a year for teachers of a muftiate or diocese. These seminars serve as positive opportunities for mutual encounter among teachers and for the solemn renewal or the formal confirmation of canonical mission.

So far, only one seminar for all teachers has been organized by the Interreligious Council in Sarajevo, on November 5 and 6, 2012. Teachers feel the need for more encounters and exchange of experience, but there isn't a body responsible for coordinating such seminars at the country lev-

el, and it would require a certain amount of funding. In official programs, students of confessional faith instruction receive basic information on the religion of others in their country or neighborhood, but much depends on the personal example of teachers towards minority religious members in each school. Some teachers organize class visits to places of worship of the “other” community or invite guest speakers from other faiths to speak to their students.

Some groups of local teachers of religion periodically organize extra-curricular interreligious activities. Along with a Muslim colleague, Sr. Iva Klarić, a Bosnian Franciscan nun in Jajce who teaches the Catholic faith there, has organized occasional encounters between Catholics and Muslims since the fall of 2010. Local imam Ramiz Bećirević and Catholic Parish Priest Niko Petonjić (the Guardian of the Jajce Bosnian Franciscans) assist their religious teachers in this noble endeavor. Invited speakers or the teachers of religion themselves present a theme of common interest showing that “the purpose of dialogue is not to erase difference of opinions and beliefs but to understand and accept such differences. The world of diversities is God’s will” (Report of Sr. Iva). On February 27, 2013 Sr. Iva was invited to speak to eighth-grade Muslim students and she chose the theme: “Diverse but connected”. She based her reflections on the golden rule as it is presented in the canonical gospels (Mt 7:12; Lk 6:31). More than 500 Jajce citizens attended a concert organized under the same initiative, with performances by 11 choirs. This event had a clear message: “Do not be afraid to praise God in your way and at the same time do not be afraid when others praise God in a way that is different from yours: he is the God of each one of us and he is with you. When we accept this, we will be able to make this town and this locality a warm home for all its inhabitants. When that happens, no one will want to leave, because a foreign country is a great sorrow (Report by Sr. Iva; the last phrase is a quotation from a Jajce folk song: “svaka tuđa zemlja tuga je golema”).

On October 5, 2013, Sr. Iva and another Catholic religious teacher attended a seminar in Sarajevo on “Capacity building of religious teachers in BiH, with emphasis on peace activity” organized by the NGO “Mali koraci” (Small Steps, under the mentorship of Mrs. Amra Pandžo, MA). Sr. Iva gave a ten-minute presentation on interreligious peace activities in Jajce. The participants proposed the establishment of an Interreligious Association of Religious Teachers at the canton level in order to promote cooperation among teachers. They also expressed the hope that a National Congress of

all religious teachers could be organized one day. The director of the “Mali koraci” NGO understands that any initiative to establish such a body for interreligious cooperation should come from senior religious leaders and should be implemented through the shared effort of their faith education officers. This would make it possible to realize the proposal of Muslim religion pedagogue Edina Vejo that confessional faith education place more emphasis on the universal ethic: “Ethical universalism is a referential stronghold supporting the concept of pluralism, the harmonized existence of diversities and dialogue of equal dignity among cultures” (E. Vejo, 2011).

In conclusion, about 90% of Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic students of primary and secondary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina attend confessional religious instruction and are content with their teachers. The textbooks in use provide students with basic information about the faith of their neighbors of different religious affiliation. Good teachers take their students to visit places of worship of other religions and invite teachers of other faiths to present selected themes to their students. While “small steps” are already being taken in the field of interreligious teachers’ cooperation, there is a need for organized regular encounters. This can and should be done through the initiative of senior religious leaders and their collaborators in religious education structures.

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THE FUTURE OF RELIGION IN EUROPE¹

The theme of my dissertation in 1968 was the concept of Catholic renewal in the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). One aspect of renewal was the Catholic relationship with non-Christian religions as an integral part of accepting the pluralism of cultures and social values in the modern world. Later on, I was asked to take my S. T. D. in Biblical Studies, and I then taught the New Testament for 37 years, but I continued my modest study of interreligious dialogue and stayed in touch with people and institutions of other faith communities. I am not a sociologist of religion but a Catholic theologian who does not feel threatened in his identity through contact with followers of other world views.

WHAT RELIGIONS IN WHICH EUROPEAN COUNTRIES?

Many of us will recall the heated discussion of the Draft European Constitution, prepared under the guidance of former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in 2003. Despite requests from some European churches and politicians, the drafting team refused to insert in the text an assertion that Europe's roots are historically Christian. They explained that the position of Churches and Religious Communities should be treated independently in national constitutions by individual countries, in accordance with their history and social situation. I remember that Bosniak Muslim theologian Rešid Hafizović, in an essay published in the daily newspaper *Oslobodjenje*, emphasized that Islam has been present in Europe for centuries and therefore it would not be fair to state in an official document that the roots of

1 Opening Presentation at the First IIIT European Summer School, August 25, 2013, Sarajevo.

Europe are only Christian. Heads of European states signed the Constitution as it was drafted, on October 29, 2004 though it had to be ratified by the parliaments of member countries after that.

When we speak about faith communities in European countries we primarily mean Christians of different denominations, Muslims and Jews. Members of these monotheistic communities have in different degrees contributed to the history, culture and social well-being of individual countries. Therefore, in our own time they have rightly requested full implementation of their human and religious rights. There are also hundreds of European Buddhists and Hindu believers, not only immigrants but also domestic converts. Followers of New Age and other new religious movements search for and offer individual happiness without believing in a personal God or a set doctrine and moral code. The book *Säkularisierung und die Weltreligionen* deals with Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. Individual contributors present the social presence of these faith communities in Europe, the US, East Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Near East.

Regarding the presence of Muslims in European countries, Jørgen Nielsen, editor of the 2010 *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, incorporated verified material about Muslims in 46 countries, including Russia with about 20 million Muslims and Turkey with its population of around 72 million. "In a survey carried out in 2006 by two prominent political scientists from the University of the Bosphorus, respondents were asked to reply, on a scale of 1 to 10, to the question: 'Where do you locate yourself in the continuum from 'Islamist' to 'secular'? In reply, 20.3% of respondents identified themselves as 'secular', 48.5% as 'Islamist' and 24,4% as somewhere in between. One should not forget, however, that the meanings ascribed to the terms 'Islamist' and 'secular' are vague, so the results are open to interpretation" (*Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, 522).

When we speak about Muslims in individual European countries, we should keep in mind the sons and daughters of immigrant Muslim workers in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Nordic countries and Austria who intend to stay there permanently and preserve their Muslim identity. They are religious minorities treated according to European standards for minorities, but the concrete situation differs from country to country. The best situation seems to be in Austria, where Islam is publicly recognized by the civil authorities and Muslims are internally organized in a federation that is accepted by Muslims and can deal with the civil authorities as other

faith communities in Austria do. Muslim students in primary and high schools in Germany are in an interesting situation regarding their own religious instruction in public schools. According to the German education program, school manuals on religious education may be prepared in accordance with superiors of the concrete faith community at the level of the region (*Land*) and should be in German. However, most Muslim communities are organized according to country of origin and do not accept any superior apart from their local imams. In France, the political and education authorities have sought to organize courses on French culture and society for foreign imams who come to serve their communities of origin.

In the Balkans large numbers of the indigenous population converted to Islam during Ottoman rule in South-East Europe. In this way a majority of the population in Albania and Kosovo are Muslims; in Bosnia and Herzegovina Muslims have (until now) been in a comparative majority since Catholic and Orthodox Christian faith communities constitute two substantially different denominations, due to our turbulent distant and more recent history, and especially to the war for ethnic territory after the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

RELIGIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SECULAR STATES AND CULTURAL PLURALISM IN EUROPE

Whether or not they form a majority or a minority in any given European country or have made significant contributions to a particular nation's heritage and identity or are marginal groups of limited significance – all religions have to come to terms with secular states and European cultural pluralism. The Enlightenment and the French revolution have gradually produced a new mentality in Europeans according to which human reason and scientific development can “save” individuals and communities. I am using the Christian theological concept of “salvation” for a prosperous, safe and just society on earth. The separation of state and religion brought a secular order to European nations, where religions had to find a new way of serving the spiritual needs of their own members and contributing in a constructive way to better human life on earth. Agnostic and atheist exponents of secular society expected organized religions to fade away either as a result of force or in a natural way, but this did not happen.

Theologians of all denominations and sociologists of religion recognize that the secular mentality has reduced the numbers of people who attend religious services and wonder why in census returns and social surveys a large percentage of respondents still declare a religious affiliation. British Anglican sociologist Grace Davie speaks of people who are “believing and not belonging”. She also sees those who regularly participate in religious services and visit different shrines on pilgrimage as being role models: churches, mosques and shrines are places where human beings can experience a transcendental dimension, where we become aware of our thirst for spiritual values.

Belgian sociologist Patrick Pasture, in his essay “Religion in Contemporary Europe”, explores the place of religion in the history and future of Europe and sees in the de-Christianization of large parts of Europe fertile soil for the emergence of new religious and spiritual movements. In present day Europe, he points out, the boundaries between the secular and the spiritual are increasingly blurred. In his estimation, despite extensive de-Christianization, religion has remained or has become again a major factor in European collective identities. Diversity and pluralism are often identified as features of Europe, but “this diversity is mostly associated with the predominance of the nation-states... In a long term perspective, then, Europe is perceived as a continent ravaged by religious and nationalistic wars, but strangely enough also the civilization that has overcome this fragmentation, at least with regard to religion, by developing the principles of religious freedom and toleration. These therefore became considered quintessential elements of European, increasingly *Western* identity and self-perception, which should distinguish it from, especially, the East and, today in particular, the Islamic world” (Pasture, 322-23). He goes on to point out that since World War II Europe has upheld human rights, including religious liberty. As a cornerstone of democracy and civilization, the EU largely reiterated the importance of religious freedom when some European states considered restricting the rights of religious minorities in the 1990s. On the former Yugoslavia he writes: “. . . religion would only become a strong dimension of national and political identities after the death of Tito in 1980, and particularly after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989. The ‘awakening’ of religious and ethnic identities had catastrophic consequences. These are often seen as an illustration of the destructive power of both religion and ethnicity, but one cannot help but wonder whether the fact that these were suppressed and

somehow cut off from the main developments of the mainline churches explains their violent character” (p. 331).

In the activities of *Diyamet*, the official Turkish agency for religious affairs, and of Saudi Arabian representatives in Europe Pasture sees an impediment to “Europeanized Islam that can accommodate itself with semi-secularist state systems as they actually exist in Europe” (p. 336). Following the migration to Europe of millions of non-Christians, traditional Christian churches have not sought to convert these people to Christianity and have respected their religious and cultural identity. This means that major Churches in Europe are seeking communities in which dialogue and openness prevail. In a time of secularization, traditional Churches and faith communities are nurturing a form of individualization, stimulating their members to take responsibility for their own religious belief and their own conduct as active exponents and not mere followers. This enables them to adjust to the secular environment while remaining believers. Believers living in secular societies need individual spirituality. Globalization has to large extent generated a transformation of the religious landscape, changing it but at the same time helping it to become more stable.

In Pasture’s view, “Christian Democrats played a major role in the European integration process and strived towards (their vision of) a ‘Christian Europe’. They accepted the separation of church and state, but that did not prevent the Catholic hierarchy from asserting its full support to European integration and, moreover, from raising its voice for or against certain political movements (mostly against socialists and communists in the 1950s, occasionally nationalists) or in moral issues in the following decades. The result was of course a continuing close association of Europe with Christendom and in particular even Roman Catholicism” (p. 346). Churches have influenced the European communities and established channels of influence. European enlargement from 1970s onwards and the fall of communist regimes increased interest in religion in Europe and led to further cooperation between churches and religions. “More in general, religion is advanced as one way of creating a common bond between Europeans, as a means to ‘give Europe a soul’ as was former European Commission President Jacques Delors’s explicit motivation to start a systematic dialogue with faith communities as well as secularists in 1992” (p. 347). Believing political leaders and theologians point out that religions can help bridge the cultural gap in European countries and provide a com-

mon bond for a true European citizenship. When it comes to the important question of Muslims in Europe, civil and religious authorities should not search for homogenization but opt for an inclusive approach.

In his contribution to the book of essays *Säkularisierung und Weltreligionen* American sociologist José Casanova describes the religious situation in Europe. He analyzes individual religiosity, the participation of believers in the life of their respective faith communities and full membership or identification with faith communities. In traditionally Christian European countries, he notes the difference between the high percentage of people who believe in God and the relatively low percentage who participate in formal worship. While 40% of European Muslims attend services in mosques, 29% never go to mosques. Churches in secularized European countries have had to pass from territorially organized national Christian communities, to which everybody was supposed to belong, to a membership based on free choice and personal conviction. After the fall of the communist regimes, the populations of the former German Democratic Republic and the Czech Republic have the largest percentage of atheists. Secularization did not influence in equal measure the religiosity of the population in individual countries. In West European countries secularization has inspired the internal transformation and institutionalization of the Churches and produced dynamic tension between religion and the world, between immanence and transcendence. In Casanova's evaluation, the fall of the communist regimes has resulted in a return of religion to the European public space. The terror attack in New York on September 11, 2001 has produced in Europe an increased fear of Muslim fundamentalism but has also invigorated the process of European unification and self-protection. In Casanova's view, the common European values of human dignity, equality, freedom and solidarity must be socially institutionalized and individually internalized, and the religions can do much to contribute to this.

In his 2004 essay "Religion, European secular identities, and European integration" Casanova analyzes the results of sociological research on Catholic religiosity in Poland, the delay by European governments in opening the official process for Turkey's membership of the European Union, the integration of immigrants in national societies of European countries and the task of writing a new European constitution that reflects the values of Europeans and at the same time allows citizens to become a self-constituting demos. These are complex and challenging ques-

tions, but Casanova tries “to show that unreflexive secular identities and secularist self-understandings turn those problematic issues into even more perplexing and seemingly intractable ‘religious’ problems”.

It is well known that Muslims in Europe are engaged in intensive debate on whether a European Islam can be said to exist or whether there is simply one, authentic Islam everywhere. I would like to approach this question with reference to an encounter I had in early May this year. At a meeting in East London from May 1st to May 3rd Catholic delegates of European Bishops’ Conferences (CCEE) discussed the theme: “Religious identity of young Muslims and young Christians in Europe”. I was the delegate of the Bishops Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Presentations included a survey of the faith education of young Muslims and young Christians in different European countries and two research reflections, one by an Italian theologian and the other by a Belgian sociologist. The high point of the meeting was the speech by Baroness Sajeeda Warsi, who is minister for Faith and Community in the present UK government. She explained that she comes from a family of Pakistani immigrants and that the Pakistani community in Britain had sharply condemned her father for sending his female child to university. She decided to take an active part in British politics because she is convinced that by doing this she can help her fellow Muslims. She noted that there is a British touch to her Muslim identity because she feels Muslim and British at the same time and does not see any contradiction in these aspects of her identity. She believes that she can help members of non-Christian faith communities in the UK to live in safety and to be accepted into British social life and structures while preserving their Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist identities.

“OUR COMMON FUTURE IS AT STAKE”

German physicist and philosopher Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker (1912-2007) confronted the disastrous consequences of one-sided development and progress. In his public lectures at gatherings of Protestant Christians in Germany and the US he sought to show what religions can do to heal and prevent the negative consequences of the misuse of progress. In his 1991 book *Bewusstseinswandel* (Changing Awareness) he gave a challenging title to a chapter on the role of religion in the world’s future: “Die unvollendete

Religion – Unfinished Religion”. In it he points out that religion can be the bearer of human culture, the foundation of a radical ethic, the provider of internal otherworldly experience and the sustainer of a theological world view. In the midst of world economic, political, social and scientific crises, modern technology has made an encounter among world cultures possible, and now is the time for an encounter among world religions. In the past, religion was a bearer of culture and theology that helped to make human experience palpable (*fassbar*), Weizsäcker argues. As a Christian scientist he believes that Islam, with its belief in one God, is capable of inspiring its followers to resolve urgent problems of the world that have been caused by the West (p. 240-241). He takes from the great religions the concept of repentance and conversion as necessary instruments for individual and common change for the better. Today’s world needs a radical change for the better, and states and civil societies cannot produce this change by themselves. Therefore, religions are a hope for humankind because they help individuals and communities to live in a decent and dignified way. Religious dogmas differ, but religions can collaborate in the field of ethics for the good of all. When followers of different religions try to encounter they should not compare their theologies but collaborate in doing good together (*gemeinsam Gutes zu tun*). They will be astonished by the things they learn about themselves.

German Catholic theologian Hansjörg Schmidt (born in 1972), in his book *Islam im europäischen Haus. Wege zu einer interreligiösen Sozialethik – Islam in the European House. Paths to an Interreligious Social Ethic* uses the metaphor of the common European home, popularized by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1984, to present the research of five Muslim scholars into the peaceful life and cooperation of Muslims and Christians in Europe. One of the five scholars is Fikret Karčić, Professor of the History of Law at the State University and the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo. Schmidt compares the teaching of the Muslim scholars on relations between religion, state, and society and on the historic changes that have taken place in the Christian social ethic. Schmidt believes that Islam, Christianity and other religions can contribute to the social ethic of Europe. He translates the concept of *maslaha* in *shari’a* tradition as common interest, common benefit (algemeines Interesse, Gemeinwohl) and quotes Tariq Ramadan, who defines *maslaha*, along with *idschtihad* and *fatwa*, as principles “that provide a way of making a connection between universal principles and social relations that change with the passage of time and culture” (Schmidt, 490-492).

This principle of Muslim openness to change while staying faithful to one's roots is quite close to the Catholic concept of *bonum commune*, the common good. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* points out that "the common good comprises the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily" (no. 1924). By taking a responsibly active part in public life, citizens and believers of different religious affiliation contribute to the common good. "As with any ethical obligation, the participation of all in realizing the common good calls for a continually renewed *conversion* of the social partners. Frauds and other subterfuges, by which some people evade the constraints of the law and prescriptions of societal obligation, must be firmly condemned because they are incompatible with the requirement of justice. Much care should be taken to promote institutions that improve the conditions of human life" (no. 1916). This is part of the Catechism's chapter on Human Society. *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* points out that the demands of the common good are dependent on the social condition of each historical period and are strictly connected to respect for and the integral promotion of the person and his or her fundamental rights (no. 166). Living in and supporting democracy requires commitment to the common good (nos. 407-412). Faith communities educate their members to live in peace and observe justice and enable them to contribute to the common good.

When I was asked in December 2008 to speak to a gathering of students of the Faculty of Arts and Social sciences at the International University of Sarajevo I chose as my theme "The New Impulse to Muslim-Christian cooperation in the *Open Letter of 138 Muslim Leaders*". I spoke on this topic because I felt that the October 13, 2007 *Open Letter of 138 Muslim leaders to Christian leaders* had not attracted enough attention in the religious or secular media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The copyright holder of the *Letter* is The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Amman, Jordan and it is available at www.acommonword.com. In the meantime, several hundred more Muslim scholars have joined the signatories, and their names were published with the English original text in the form of a book in 2009 (Bosnian translation in Sarajevo in 2010). The *Letter* was occasioned by a collective reflection by Muslim leaders and scholars regarding the quotation of Pope Benedict XVI in his speech at Regensburg on September 12, 2006 on enforced conversions to Islam. In the letter the signatories propose dialogue and cooperation be-

tween Muslims and Christians based on love of God and love of neighbor as presented in the Qur'an and in the Bible.

The *Letter* notes that a new era of dialogue is essential since Muslims and Christians together make up more than 55% of the world's population, "making the relationship between these two religious communities the most important factor in contributing to meaningful peace around the world. If Muslims and Christians are not at peace, the world cannot be at peace. With the terrible weaponry of the modern world; with Muslims and Christians intertwined everywhere as never before, no side can unilaterally win a conflict between more than half of the world's inhabitants. Thus our common future is at stake. The very survival of the world itself is perhaps at stake". This formulation reflects the conviction of believing monotheistic individuals and groups in the modern world that we can and should *together* contribute toward building a just and stable peace. We depend on each other and none of us can enjoy his or her peace and prosperity without being influenced by scarcity or injustice suffered by a neighbor.

In conclusion, I would like to stress my personal belief that religion is an integral part of secular and pluralistic Europe and that it will remain so in the decades and centuries ahead. We believing individuals and communities must adjust to the historical and social situation of the countries where we live and where we wish to have full human, civil and religious rights. We can achieve this if we contribute in a dynamic way to the common good.

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MUSLIMS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN 2009¹

I should remind the participants of this meeting that Muslims of BH are ethnic Slavs, not immigrants, who have accepted Islam during 415 years of Turkish rule in Bosnia (1463-1878). At 1878 Berlin Congress European powers have entrusted Austria-Hungary with administration of BH. Since then, Muslims of that former Ottoman province had to go on living in a country under a non-Muslim ruler. Austrian government made an agreement in 1882 with Sultan's imperial court regarding religious autonomy of Bosnian Muslims who got the right to propose their top leader named reisu-l-ulema and he would be nominated by Vienna and by Istanbul at the same time. In 2002 Bosnian Muslims celebrated 120th anniversary of this agreement which enabled them to get adjusted to living in a non-Muslim state with full freedom of their religion.

Muslims are relative majority with about 45% of BH population. They are organized in 8 geographical muftiluks (Mostar, Sarajevo, Goražde, Zenica, Travnik, Tuzla, Banja Luka and Bihać) and about 90 medžlises in BH and abroad. Recently, a Military muftiluk for Muslim members of Armed forces in BH was established. Their supreme religious authority is Riyaset of Islamic Community, presided by an elected grand mufti whose term in office takes seven years and he can be re-elected to a second term. They are organized as Bošnjak cultural and Muslim communities in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Turkey, Benelux countries, France, Finland, Canada, USA and Australia.

The Faculty of Islamic Studies was founded by the Riyaset in 1977. When in 1994 democratically elected government gave permission for confessional religious education in public schools, Muslim authorities

1 A Report at the Meeting of CCEE delegates, Bordeaux, April 27-28, 2009

opened two Pedagogic Academies (in Zenica and Bihać) for education of teachers of Islam. A mixed commission of Christian and Muslim experts was entrusted in 2002 with revising the school manuals for teaching Islam, Catholicism and Orthodoxy in public schools regarding correct presentation of "others" to one's own students. Its recommendations were implemented in new editions of respective manuals.

Thanks to professional and financial support of World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP), in June 1997 four religious leaders who have their seats in Sarajevo (Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic and Jewish) established Interreligious Council of BH (IRC). For nine years WCRP director was heading the office of WCRP and IRC with four employees selected by religious leaders from their respective communities, New York central office was covering the expenses of Sarajevo office and salaries of employees. I was involved in the work of IRC from its beginning and still am. There were and still are many misconceptions and wrong expectations regarding our activity. IRC is a NGO of believing persons ready to cooperate for the sake of common good, not a kind of religious government. While Muslim and Jewish leaders are in charge of their believers in the whole country of BH, Orthodox and Catholic archbishops have jurisdiction only within their dioceses. IRC cannot impose its projects and programs but only propose and protest. One of its projects is yearly list of violation of human rights or rights to practice of religious freedom. After WCRP withdraw its person and funds from Sarajevo by the end of 2005, IRC faced the danger of closing down because of financial scarcity. We were able to go on modestly thanks to financial help of the Council of Ministers and some other state institutions, but we would not like to be blackmailed by them or transformed into governmental institution. We are not intellectually strong enough to organize high level dialogue and for the time being we struggle for return of properties confiscated by communist regime from faith communities and for religious assistance to persons in public hospitals and penitentiaries.

Sarajevo auxiliary bishop Mons. Petar Sudar is president of the Committee of BH Bishops Conference for ecumenical and interreligious relations. At the beginning of his term he visited grand mufti dr. Mustafa Cerić offering a possibility for cooperation. He got the answer that any meeting of two parties in BH without the third one might turn into a conspiracy against the absent one. Therefore, no cooperation during his term in the office. Since this is an internal report, I dare to point out that general

Christian remark on dr. Cerić is: he accepts with pleasure to speak at interreligious conferences abroad and proclaims his and Bosnian Muslims' readiness for tolerant living of Muslims in European home, but in his own country he does not practice what he keeps proclaiming abroad. I guess this comes from being majority, because where we believing individuals and communities are majority we tend to be self-sufficient and ignore the presence and needs of minorities, while as minorities we insist on our individual and communal rights.

Having origins from Turkish presence in the country, Bosnian Muslims are Sunni Muslims and therefore not extremists. I have heard their theologians and "lay" persons many times repeating: "We are Muslims and Europeans, and both is important for us!" They invited several times Tariq Ramadan to give his lectures in Sarajevo and translated his book *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford University Press 2004). Dr. Enes Karić, professor of the Faculty of Islamic Studies and two terms academic dean, together with his colleague dr. Rešid Hafizović, has translated the book *America, Religions and Religion* by Catherine L. Albanese (Wardsworth Publishing Company 1999). These two Muslim professors have translated also *The Two Faces of Islam* by Stephen Schwartz and the author wrote a special Forward for Bosnian edition of his work from Washington, DC, in February 2005. In January 2007 E. Karić wrote his Introduction for Bosnian translation of *The Battle for God. Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* by Karen Armstrong. Islamic Faculty publishes its yearbook entitled *Zbornik radova* with non-thematic articles by different authors and summaries in English and Arabic. In its 2007 volume Aid Smajić published his research on the image of Muslims as religiously "others" in Catholic and Orthodox school manuals for religious education. Professor Adnan Silajdžić has published in 2004 a selection of articles about Christianity written by Christian authors as reading material for students of their Faculty (*Kršćanstvo: objava, vjera, teologija*, F. I. N., Sarajevo 2004, pp. 531). He is the author of *Muslims in Search of an Identity*, published in English by El-Kalem, publishing House of Muslim Community in BH.

Main problem in relations between Muslims and Christians in BH is not religion but political organization of the country. After 1991-1995 war for ethnic territories, caused by disintegration of Yugoslavia, Dayton Accords have produced the state of three ethnic communities (Bošnjaks, Croats, Serbs) with two so called entities and a temporary constitution which was

never adopted by the Parliament. Bošnjaks would like a reform which would produce a more viable state with strong central government, while most Croats and Serbs would vote to join Croatia or Serbia, if they would be permitted to express their desires through a legally organized referendum. Religious leaders and ministers side with needs and interests of their ethnic communities. Foreign military and diplomatic presence (UN high representative) did not produce so far internal reconciliation and mutual trust of BH communities and citizens. Because of ethnic fear our citizens keep re-electing political leaders from ethnic parties who are not interested in the common good of all citizens but only in promoting the interests of their own fellow nationals. Most of religious ministers and their flock believe that we would be more able to cherish our diversities and shared values if BH would be soon admitted into EU. Dr. Cerić in his recent speech to members of the Association of BH Imams (Ilmiyya) expressed his regret that Bošnjak-Muslim ancestors did provide religious autonomy but neglected establishing their national state: "I reproach present Bošnjak intellectuals for having not worked hard enough in developing national component in Bošnjaks which would produce a need for national state. One of very important questions to which Bošnjaks have not yet given their answer since disintegration of Ottoman empire is, what are their objectives in the Balkans: only their religious survival or to have their state on the Balkans which would protect them from genocides like one which happened in the recent war?" Although this statement may have targeted three candidates for the president of SDA party who should be elected in May (SDA is ethnic party of Bošnjaks), it produced a new wave of ethnic fear in non-Muslim citizens of our country. Only left wing political party SPD issued a protest and the journalist Zija Dizdarević, in his column of April 24 in *Oslobođenje*, bitterly criticized grand mufti who in this way has given new material to political representatives of other ethnic communities to mistrust religious and political leaders of Bosnian Muslims. In front of such inflammatory statements it is hard to motivate one's own fellow ethnics and fellow believers for trust building and reconciliation on long run.

In conclusion, I see more a chance for healthy religious input into our civil society, regardless of political structures in our country. We do have a centuries long experience of peaceful neighborly living and sometimes of mutual cruelties. As believing citizens of a secular and pluralistic state we can and should offer moral values to our society which would enable us to share our common needs and interests and to respect our diversities.

THE CATHOLIC APPROACH TO RELIGION IN THE COUNTRIES OF TRANSITION¹

The organizer of this international conference on religions in a secular state has entrusted me with a title formulated somewhat differently: "Return of Religions into the Public Sphere in Post-Communist Countries – the Catholic Experience".² We know from experience that even in the time of Communist dictatorship it had been impossible to completely wipe out Churches and Religions from the public space. Since the present „return to the public domain“ greatly depends on historical, social, and political situation in a certain country, I have selected a slightly more cautious title. Namely, the problem at hand is what kind of „return“ is possible in a certain country and what do we mean by secular state.

As an introduction, I would like to share with you an experience of mine from 1955 when I was a student of the Minor Seminary in Zagreb as a candidate for priesthood in Vrhbosna-Sarajevo archdiocese. We, the candidates of various dioceses, resided in the building of the Seminary and had to obey the prescribed rules of the house. A significant part of these house rules consisted of attending classes in the morning and studying in our classrooms in the afternoon, with a time for breaks at the nearby playground. A part of the seminary buildings were nationalized by the

1 Published in St. Schreiner (ed), *Religions and Secular State. Role and Meaning of Religion in the Secular Society from Jewish, Christian and Muslim Perspectives. International Consultation in Sarajevo (BH), 21-24 October 2007*, European Abraham Forum, Zürich and Sarajevo 2008, 25-33.

2 This paper was prepared as one of contributions at the International Conference *Religions and Secular State*, held in Sarajevo from the 21st to the 24th of 2007 and organized by Europäisches Abrahamisches Forum of Tübingen and by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Sarajevo branch.

authorities of that period and military hospital was opened in them. During our breaks, the patients of that hospital who were able to move and we, the students, took walks along the same alley, between the same trees. The superiors advised us not to talk to them, for we all knew that these patients should be communists who considered religion to be out of date and prophesied an upcoming dying-away of any faith in communism that was claimed to be the most perfect and therefore the permanent form of state. One of these patients, in his communist zeal, nevertheless thought it to be necessary to engage in a conversation with us. He told us he pitied us for wasting our youth in vain, preparing for priestly vocation, because people would soon stop going to church. Not because the state government would forbid them, but because, due to the progress which was increasingly advancing, people would realize that God does not exist and will cease to attend worship services. After that conversation I often wondered whether that officer had been right and what my future would be like in a country where Catholic believers did spy on priests under the pressure of secret service and where the ruling party kept instituting artificial legal proceedings against believing citizens, sentencing them as the „enemies of the people“. After I finished my high school I was sent by military authorities to serve my military term as draftee in Belgrade. There, I became more deeply convinced that I can be happy and useful as a priest. Therefore, I continued my theological studies, and was ordained priest in 1963. At this age, I am grateful to God for having persevered in my vocation and for the fact that the military patient from my high school time was a false prophet.

THE SECULAR STATE AND A PLURAL SOCIETY

We believers and our religious institutions need a democratic state that guarantees human rights to all its citizens and practicing of religious freedoms to all those who do not endanger the common good. That is why we first ask ourselves what is a secular state for us religious citizens and our communities, as well as institutions through which we perform our religious mission within our respective states? The secularity of the state is differently lived and legally patterned in USA, United Kingdom, France, Germany, or countries in transition where the majority of citizens belong to a certain faith

community, as are Croatia, Slovenia, Poland, Serbia, Macedonia, Russia. Secularization may be observed philosophically, theologically, sociologically, politically, and in other ways. In her study on religion in Western European countries (Davie, 2005), Grace Davie coined an interesting term “believing, not belonging”. Many Europeans do not go to places of worship, but do believe. In her manual of religious sociology published in 2007, secularization is viewed as a *process* and as a *concept*. She notes that in the past, in Poland, the resistance to secularization has been linked to the resistance to the illegal government, and after the fall of communism, the Church in Poland is looking for its place in the modern democracy, because monolithic and semi-political presence of the Church in society is no longer sustainable. This Anglican woman, who once told me in conversation that she sees no conflict between her faith and sociological research, does not accept the opinion of those sociologists who claim that democratization and pluralism undermine the position of religious communities in the society. Pluralism and secularization affect the way in which people believe in democratic societies, but do not eradicate faith. More recent research brings into question the past beliefs of liberal politicians and sociologists that modernization leads necessarily to a decline of religion (Davie 2007, 46-66). „Religion continues to influence almost every aspect of human society – economic, political, social, and cultural. No longer can it be relegated to the past or to the edge of social scientific analysis. Hence the challenge for the economic and social sciences: to rediscover the place of religion in *both* the empirical realities of the twenty-first century *and* the paradigms that are deployed to understand this. The implications for policy are immense” (Davie, 2007, 253).

Regardless of what do we mean by the process of secularization or by a secular state, we all agree that the times of theocratic governments are over and that, in plural societies, a state religion should no longer be cherished. Christians and members of other religions in Europe and United States have their experience of separation of Church and state; they consider this to be normal and do not look for the good old times. Ethicists and sociologists of religion find the American type of secular state particularly interesting, where, from the very beginning, the immigrants from Europe have, in principle, been guaranteed religious freedom and democratic equality, but with a genuine separation of Church and State: „Therefore, when the Americans separated the church and state through a new federal constitution, although still considering themselves Christians and predominantly Protestants, they created a radically new state of affairs for religion“ (Albanese, 2004, 459).

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in its *Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in the Political Life* of 2002 reminds Catholics and other people of good will that the civil and political spheres are independent from the religious and church one (no. 6). In doing so, it refers to the Constitution *Gaudium et spes* of the Vatican II, no. 76 and to the message of John Paul II for the World Day of Peace in 1991 entitled: „If You Want Peace, Respect the Conscience of Every Person.“ In that Note, the Congregation warns the government representatives that they would „fall into a type of peculiar intolerant secularism“ if they would deny to Catholics the right to „act in politics on the basis of their own convictions about the matters concerning the common good.“ This is also true for the followers of other religions, but in practice tensions do arise, particularly in countries in transition where atheism is no longer a state ideology, but former atheists hold high government positions. The 1992 *Catechism of Catholic Church* reminds that human person is the principle, the subject and the object of all social institutions, that charity is the great social commandment which urges just reforms, and that in a state of law the supremacy belongs to the law and not to human self-will (no. 1886-1905). According to Catechism, the common good of all citizens of a state and of the entire human community involves: respect for and promotion of the fundamental rights of the person, prosperity or the development of spiritual and temporal goods, the peace and safety of the group and of its members. Therefore, „the role of the state is to defend and promote the common good of civil society“ (no. 1925-26). The fourth command of God literally states „Honor you father and your mother!“ In accordance with Catholic tradition, from it we deduce an orderly relationship between the youth and the elderly in the family and the society, as well as a responsible relationship of citizens towards the state government. Here, the Catechism underlines that the Church, in its mission and competence, does not identify with a particular political community, but respects and promotes political freedom and responsibility of citizens (no. 2245).

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church also differentiates the political and religious spheres. In that context, it mentions the concept of laicity. It underlines that “the principle of laicity involves respect for every religious confession on the part of the State, which assures to religious communities the freedom to perform worship, as well as to undertake spiritual, cultural and charitable activities. In a pluralistic soci-

ety, laicity is a place for communication between different spiritual traditions and nations” (no. 572). In this way, secularity and laicity of a state do coincide to a certain extent.

A secular state is primarily just and democratic. It promotes the good of all of its citizens. Have the countries in transition already reached the degree of a just democracy? Another of my experiences. In 1997 I attended a conference on religious freedom in countries in transition in Dresden, which has been organized and financed by a university from the United States of America. In their contributions, the organizers explained how things should be, while we, the invited participants, reported on how things actually were in our countries. A professor from the Faculty of Theological Studies in Slovenia attending the seminar complained that the „democratic“government does not allow the Church to open a secondary school and a home for old persons. A sociologist from the State University in Ljubljana present at the same seminar argued against this stating that the reason for this was: their “people” do not want these things. Asked by the Americans when have they asked their people, he answered there was no need for asking the people, because they (the ruling party) know it. The Americans and all other participants present laughed at such an answer.

SECULAR STATE – A CHALLENGE TO RELIGIONS TO STRIVE FOR MUTUAL RESPECT, DIALOGUE, AND COOPERATION IN PROVIDING THE COMMON GOOD

It is not enough that we believers merely tolerate the secular state. As individuals and as communities we should search for a way of believers’ presence in such a state! Members of a majority church or religion in individual countries of transition expect from the state to appreciate the contribution of their community to identity, culture, and history of their own people. It is fairly natural that the Polish, Croat, and Slovenian Catholics expect a special position in their state. The same is expected by the Orthodox Russians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Macedonians, and Montenegrins in their own countries. I am aware that the constitutions of Greece, Russia, and Serbia guarantee a special position to the Orthodox Church due to its historical merit that is not denied by other citizens of these countries. True, Catholicism or Ort-

hodoxy are not a state religion in the above mentioned countries, but it is a well known fact that the majority Church in those countries easier gets assistance from civil authorities for its buildings and institutions, for support and retirement of its pastoral personnel, etc. That is precisely why the state needs to be secular, which does not mean that it should be hostile towards religions, but equitable and positively distanced to all.

In the Romanian city of Sibiu, a large ecumenical gathering of Christians of Europe has been organized from the 4th to the 9th of September, in which, along with strictly Christian topics, issues regarding the contribution of believers to European integrations have been considered. Along with seven other Catholics, I was a delegate of the Bishops' Conference of Bosnia and Herzegovina at that gathering. We were addressed by Manuel Barroso, as president of the European Commission, who was given the opportunity to give the „keynote speech“and René van den Linden, as president of the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe, and his address had been announced as a „short presentation“. Both of them underlined that the legal separation of the church and state remains in effect, but that United Europe needs the contribution of its religious communities in fostering the values and spiritual goods we all need. True, Barroso, as a left-oriented politician, considers religions as some type of non-governmental organizations, while Linden finds that Europe cannot be what it is and what it increasingly desires to become without the spiritual values offered by the religious communities.

In his opening speech, the Hungarian cardinal, Peter Erdő, as president of the Catholic Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) warned that the process of globalization has not been favorable to encounter of religions and cultures, and that religious Europeans should not succumb to triumphalism or enthusiasm. He wished for united Europe to present a challenge for cooperation to Christians of various confessions. Metropolitan Kiril, as head of the Commission for external relations of the Russian Orthodox Church, underlined that “the believers cannot simultaneously recognize the value of life and the right to death, the value of family and the validity of same-sex unions, the protection of the right of the child and the intentional destruction of human fetuses for medical purposes.” According to him, without joint action, Christians and other believers cannot preserve public morale and spiritual values in present Europe. Metropolitan Kiril brought Rabbi Zinovi Kogan to this gathering of Christians who commended the present government in Russia for allowing the

restoration of not only fifteen synagogues that survived during the time of Communism, but also the building of more than hundred new ones.

At the forum of this gathering called „Peace in Europe“, a documentary on Northern Ireland was shown to us, and then a Catholic and an Anglican speaker presented their experiences. I have been particularly moved by an anecdote concerning a father whose son had been killed by Christian terrorists. At the funeral he told those who wanted revenge: “Bury your pride with my boy“, and asked that nobody commits any new act of violence on the account of the murder of this innocent boy. Item „Reconciliation Process in Bosnia and Herzegovina“ was also inserted within the framework of this forum for which the organizers (KEK and CCEE) invited one Muslim, one Orthodox, and one Catholic representative from Sarajevo. They talked about the Interreligious Council in BH and the slow process of reconciliation, because the war criminals have not yet been arrested, and because reconciliation presumes conversion in a religious sense of the word.

As one of members of the European Society for Catholic Theology, I have attended a conference of the Society in Leuven, Belgium from 13th to the 16th of September this year, where the topic was „Religion in Europe“. Ursula King, a theologian from Germany who acquired her PhD in Great Britain and spent active years of her academic work there, covered the topic: “Responding to the Multifaith Realities of Contemporary Europe: A Venture of Risk and Promise for Christian Theologians“. Plurality of religious and philosophical views, as well as the existence of interreligious dialogue in Europe, in her view are a challenge to theologians to reflect the future identity of Europe as a project that needs to be pursued gradually. Different identities of Europeans should not be ghettoized nor held separate from the rest of the world. She supports a new interconnectivity and critical reflectivity. Under pluralism, she sees diverse cultures, religions, and conceptions if they stimulate theologians of all religions to think, while in political and social realm, pluralism is a synonym for secularity: „Such a pluralistic society is secular in a positive sense, and not in the other in which, the secular’ involves, antireligious“ (King, 2007, 5). She underlines that large religions are transnational spiritual corporations and that an encounter with “the Other” can enrich one’s own identity: “We truly do *need the other, many others*. I would argue that this includes today *the need for each other’s faiths and worldviews*” (King, 2007, 6 – *underlined by the author*). She believes that full equality and mutuality of all partners in dialogue can only be practiced

„in a fully democratic and secular, that is to say, pluralistic society“. Under secularity, she does not mean a militant ideology, but „the necessary space for religious and political freedom where religious and spiritual values can be explored without threat to anyone’s integrity, one’s job, or one’s life“. (King, 2007, 8). In her opinion, the diversity of religions and worldviews can be a magnificent opportunity “to take the spiritual otherness of others seriously”, because through interreligious dialogue we discover the plurality of spirituality and humbly admit that there are shortcomings in the traditions of each one of us, and thus, we allow a space in each one of these for complementation and growth. Through dialogue we strive towards a transformative social practice.

At that same conference, Hans-Joachim Sander, a German theologian who teaches in Salzburg, gave his lecture entitled “Europas Heterotopien. Die Zumutung von Gottes Orten in den Zeichen der Zeit”. As far as I understood, for him, “heterotopy” is the other as one who inspires us to critically reexamine our own mentality and practice. Assessing some of the past conflicts and present tensions as a consequence of the power of religions, he finds that secularity provides for an extraordinary „habitat“ making possible authentic freedom of religion in a pluralistic society where none of the religions should have a general power of attorney. His thesis is the following: “Religion und Macht sind in eine elementare Relativität verstrickt, die dazu führt, dass beide sich jeweils gesellschaftlich wechselseitig zu relativieren versuchen oder sich wechselseitig bestärken, was den Gebrauch oder das Erleiden von Gewalt einschließen kann“. Under the conditions of a secular state, the freedom of religion may be fundamentally clarified, for the plurality of society and of religion in it contributes to the differentiation of religion and politics. In such situation religions do not control the democratic state, and possibly unjust state structures cannot attain the support of religious individuals and institutions by force. That is why secularity and religiosity are not rivals. The freedom of religion cannot be privatized, and that is what happens in faith-motivated violent acts. Indeed, the one who helps persons outside of the circumference of his or her own religious community makes use of the freedom religion in proper way. That is why secularity of a pluralistic society presents a challenge to faith communities to use their own freedom of religion in a responsible manner and to respect the faith of others. “The primary place for theological squaring of accounts with religion is one’s own faith community. A theology that does not take heed of how its own community

makes use of power makes itself untrustworthy if it turns against the power of religion” (Sander 2007, 9)³. Admittedly, “world peace does not depend on peace among religions, but religious conflicts do have the capacity to light up wide-spread fires in the political arena”⁴. He finds that religious individuals and communities who admit their own sins committed in the past and repent for present weaknesses, contribute to constructive politics and to establishing humane relations with the others. By admitting our own weaknesses, we take care not compare our own advantages to the weaknesses of others. Among the signs of the time, Sander also incorporates Auschwitz, Srebrenica, attempts of individuals and groups to illegally move into European countries, the riots of immigrants’ descendants in the suburbs of France, the building of mosques and synagogues in Europe. Those who strive to build such houses of worship know very well: whoever erects the places of worship, he or she is about to stay permanently in the respective country.

Beside the possibility of abusing their mission and trust of their own members and of other fellow citizens, religions can also contribute to social cohesion, as well as to promotion of social changes for the better (Mc Guire, 1997, 185-272). In the case of Churches and religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, they have been carefully researched by Stephen Goodwin in his doctoral dissertation in 2006. He indicated that all the efforts invested by foreign diplomats and troops so far have not effected the renewal of trust and social cohesion among ethnic communities of this country, because this cannot be achieved by diplomatic skills or military force from outside. He sees a possibility for this in the work of charismatic believers who start with their own faith community, but cannot proceed without the support of their own religious institutions: „Ultimately the success of the state rests in the hands and goodwill of its citizens. The religious faith sodalities have already demonstrated results of individual and communal movement from fragmentation towards wholeness, and continue to make significant contributions to sustainable peace and social restoration. Empowering them assists in the creation of a stable nation committed to the sacredness and dignity of all human life, and promotes much needed healing in this fractured land“ (Goodwin, 2006, 269).

3 Der primäre Ort für die theologische Auseinandersetzung mit Religion ist die jeweils eigene Religionsgemeinschaft. Eine Theologie, die derer Machtgebrauch nicht in den Blick nimmt, macht sich unglaubwürdig, wenn sie sich gegen die religiöse Macht wendet.

4 Der Weltfrieden hängt zwar nicht am Religionsfrieden, aber Religionskonflikte haben alle Mal die Potenz, Flächenbrände im politischen Raum auszulösen.

Let us conclude by drawing attention to theological reflection in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 27th of November 2004, Vrhbosnian Catholic School of Theology organized a colloquium with the topic „Religious Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Secular Society“. We have published the papers from that colloquium in *Vrhbosnensia* IX (2005), 1, 15-113. Dr. Enes Karić gave a contribution entitled „The Secular State, Civil Society, and Faith Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina“ from the aspect of the new Law on Freedom of Religions and the Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities in our country. On the basis of experiences of theologians and sociologists in Europe, he finds that a constructive cooperation of religious communities and secular society is possible, and, indeed, that secular society can be our chance: „The secular society (at least during these last fifty and something years in Europe) is not conceived or achieved as an antireligious nor as purposely and expressly non-religious society; it is not anti-divine nor targeted against believers! On the contrary, after the World War Two, the secular society or secular societies of Europe turned out as a positive achievement, as an open, cooperative, and inclusive reality towards a multitude of religious segments and entities, but also towards religious challenges and requirements that appeared at the modern European pluralistic scene“ (Karić, 2005, 101). This is in line with the thinking of Catholic theologians U. King and H.-J. Sander, who evaluate positively the experience of religious activity in secular countries of Europe. It remains for us to act in this sense, each within his or her own faith community and state.

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FAITH AND NATIONAL IDENTITY OF CATHOLICS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA¹

I would like to draw our attention to delicate problems of religious identity and national loyalty from the point of view of religious and ethnic communities in my country. Religious identity does surpass the boundaries of an ethnic group or country, but in this region where Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Islam and Judaism have been meeting for centuries ethnic and religious identity mostly coincide.

WHAT NATIONALITY, WHAT KIND OF LOYALTY?

On March 1st, 1992 democratically elected government of BH organized the referendum in which citizens were asked to decide do they want to remain within truncated Yugoslavia or become a new independent country. Catholic bishops in their pastoral letter encouraged their flock to participate in the referendum and give their voices for independence. Majority of citizens did take part in voting and voted for independence. After nearly four years of war, which we Croats-Catholics and Bosniaks-Muslims consider as aggression while our fellow citizens Serbs-Orthodox call it a civil war, through Dayton Agreements was created the present day BH with its two entities.

1 A short Paper at the Seminar *Muslims, Christians and the Common Good* in Sarajevo, May 15-18, 2005. Published in the book, M. Ipgrave (ed): *Building a Better Bridge. Muslims, Christians, and the Common Good. A record of the fourth Building Bridges seminar held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, May 15/18, 2008*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC 2008, 35-39.

Webster's *Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* defines a nation as "body of people, associated with a particular territory, that is sufficiently conscious of its unity to seek or to possess a government peculiarly its own". In western democracies nation is a state where all citizens share a national identity despite many individual and group identities within the same nation. After-Dayton BH is hardly a nation with such a meaning, because we still disagree what kind of state do we want. BH is an internationally recognized country where citizens of three ethnic communities do share common needs for jobs and tolerant neighborly relations but they do not share the same dream of statehood or nationhood.

An illustration. Three Parliament members of Socialist party made recently a Draft of the Law on Public Holidays. Their draft was taken into consideration by the respective Commission of the Parliament and on May 11, a public discussion of the Draft was offered in the Parliament building. Representatives of Churches and Religious communities were invited to take part in that discussion. I was sent to attend the meeting by Catholic archbishop of Sarajevo. In the interventions one could see the ethnicity of the speakers. Bosniak-Muslim representatives were content with the Draft text, included the delegate of the Muslim community. Croat delegates fundamentally advocated the Draft text but proposed some changes. There was a vague proposal on religious feasts of Muslims and Christians which would be recognized by the new Law as public holidays. I intervened in this section. Six speakers, ethnic Serbs, strongly rejected the whole draft. They insisted that Serbs of Bosnia will never celebrate July eleventh as Srebrenica Victims Memorial Day, nor March first as the Day of Independence, nor November twenty fifth as the Day of Statehood. Practically there was an agreement on January the first as New Year's Day, on May the first as Labor Day and on May ninth as the Day of Victory over Nazism, but these are holidays taken from European countries. Serbian ethnic speakers insisted that Dayton Agreements Day which produced peace in BH should be celebrated as national day of statehood. Since the High Representative is not going to impose this law, we will not get it for a long time. This discussion revealed our conflicting views on what kind of a nation BH is and what kind of state do we all need.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND ASPECTS OF THE COMMON GOOD IN BH

Priests and religious ministers are looked as friends of simple people, because in our regions empires did emerge, stayed for couple of centuries or decades and fell down. States and governments rise and disappear, but population of different religious and ethnic identities remain. This is why we who preside the weekly worship services can educate our respective congregations for a peaceful living and constructive building of civil society, fully aware that we cannot and should not take place of political representatives and civil authorities.

In my experience of forty years priestly serving to Catholic communities in Travnik, Zenica and Sarajevo, I feel that my fellow Catholics expect from their priests a support in their ethnicity as well in their religious beliefs. I know that some good willing foreign Catholics point at such religiosity as ethnic or nationalistic, but this is the only way to serve concrete individuals and congregations in their life situations. In view of any believer, religion is important element of people's identity, but not only one.

It is well known that the Holy See did defend the right of small nations to self-determination in the process of disintegration of Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. In case of BH, Pope John Paul II, in his numerous statements during the recent war, expressed his conviction that BH is possible as one state of its three ethnic communities, but it should be assisted by international community and respected by neighboring countries. This was the gist of his speeches and homilies during his pastoral visit to Sarajevo in April 1997 and to Banja Luka on June 22, 2003. Therefore, Catholic leaders would like all Catholics to remain in this country, to share with citizens of other religious and ethnic identities common needs, rights, duties and tasks. It is possible to reconcile one's Catholic belief, Croat ethnicity and Bosnian citizenship. We can do it by building the bridges of forgiveness and mutual trust. Pope John Paul II in his address to our collective Presidency on April 13, 1997 said: "Building a true and lasting peace is a great task entrusted to everyone. Certainly, much depends on those who have public responsibilities. But the future of peace, while largely entrusted to institutional formulations, which have to be effectively drawn up by means of sincere dialogue and respect for justice, depend no less decisively on a renewed solidarity of minds and hearts. It is this interior attitude which must be fostered, both within the frontiers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and also in relations with neighboring States and the community of nations. But an attitude

of this kind can only be established on foundation of forgiveness. For the edifice of peace to be solid, against the background of so much blood and hatred, it will have to be built on the courage of forgiveness. People must know how to ask for forgiveness and to forgive!”

Our Catholic faith enables us to cherish Catholic identity living among fellow citizens of other religious and ethnic identities. The same faith asks us to go on living as individuals and community in the country where we have been born and raised because we see it as God’s will for us. Aware of conflicting evaluation of far and recent history in this country, we know that it is not simple to identify the elements of the common good where we can contribute together with fellow citizens of other religious, ethnic and cultural identities. Right now, we all agree that integration into European Union would enable us to respect each other’s rights and needs and build up a pluralistic civil society.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (adopted by Church magisterium in 1992 as practical application of Vatican two for adult Catholics) deals with common good in its chapter on “Participation in social life” within the section on moral life of baptized believers. It draws the task of contributing towards the common good from the social nature of human person, because the permanent good of each person is “necessarily related to the common good... By the common good it is to be understood the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily” (n. 1905-06). Accordingly, the Catechism calls for prudence from simple citizens and civil authorities at three levels: respect for the person as such; the social well-being and development of the group, and peace as “the stability and security of a just order”. It is in the political community that most complete realization of the common good can be achieved (n. 1907-1912).

In my involvement in inter-religious dialogue in BH for the sake of common good I am using some books written by American Catholic scholars because they keep reflecting along the guidelines of Catholic magisterium and their Christian experience within their pluralistic society. Such are *Cosnscience across Borders. An Ethics of Global Rights and Religious Pluralism* by Vernon Ruland (University of San Francisco Press 2002), *The Common Good and Christian Ethics* by David Hollebnoch (Cambdridge University Press 2002) and *The Global Face of Public Faith. Politics, Human Rights and Christan Ethics* by David Hollenbach (Georgetown University Press 2003). D. Hollenbach point out that civil society is constituted by a

host of diverse social, economic, political and cultural interactions: “Each of these relationships is capable of realizing some aspect of the human good. The historical, earthly common good, therefore, is an ensemble of diverse goods. These include goods achieved in family relationships, in voluntary associations, in political activity, in economic life, in the church, etc. It is important to note that this ensemble of goods is not cleanly divisible into the political good on the one hand and a large set of ‘private goods’ on the other (Hollnebach 2002, 133). I find very helpful his concept of “intellectual solidarity” as shared vision and building up of pluralistic civil society. This is what we believers and other citizens of Bosnia need.

In conclusion, I would like to draw our attention on complicated approach to nationhood and loyalty to one’s homeland in Bosnia because it depends on our ethnic and religious identities. Christianity and Islam are universal religions, existing in many nations and diverse cultures. Therefore, we believing citizens of this country should rely on our faith in contributing toward the common good in our pluralistic society.

HUMAN SOLIDARITY IN A MULTI-RELIGIOUS SOCIETY: A CATHOLIC APPROACH¹

First of all, I wish to express my utmost thanks to the organizers of this Conference for having invited me to take an active part in this conference. In accordance with the general theme of the conference, I would like to bring out the general outline of the Catholic approach to human solidarity in a multi-religious society, having in mind my experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In recent documents of Catholic teaching authority, the need for solidarity is based on Jesus' saying: "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Lk 6:31; Mt 7:12). This is the principle of positive reciprocity, which exists also in Judaism, Islam and other great religions. It extends the command of the love of neighbor to creative actions, regardless of one's religious or national identity. Catholic teaching and the practicing of solidarity is also based on the acceptance of international legal guidelines on the interdependence of groups, communities, countries and continents in our globalised world.

SOLIDARITY IN THE GESTURES AND WRITINGS OF JOHN PAUL II

Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was an experienced professor of philosophical ethics when he was elected pope on the 22nd of October 1978 and he performed this ministry for more than 26 years. He brought into his office

1 A Presentation at the International Conference "The Future of Faith in the Age of Globalisation", the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Sarajevo, September 19-20, 2010.

his philosophical and theological preference for ethical questions and his experience of living in a communist country where believing individuals and groups were marginalized. He continued the efforts of his predecessor in implementing the program adopted by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), and an essential aspect of this program is inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. In his pastoral journeys to many countries all over the world he asked Catholics to stay open for dialogue and cooperation with fellow citizens of other religious affiliations and looked for encounters with representatives of other faith communities in their respective countries. In August 1985 he visited six countries in central Africa and upon the invitation of King Hassan II of Morocco he met at the stadium in Casablanca 80,000 Muslim young people. He spoke of God's existence, of obedience to God's will, of respect for all human beings and of reciprocity in all fields: "We are convinced that we cannot truly pray to God the Father of all mankind, if we treat any people in other than a brotherly fashion, for all mankind is created in God's image. Therefore, we must also respect, love and help every human being, because he is a creature of God. In a certain sense, every person is God's image and representative, because he is the road leading to God, and he does not fully fulfill himself unless he knows God, unless he accepts him with all his heart, and unless he obeys him to the extent of the ways of perfection... Respect and dialogue require reciprocity in all spheres".

On the 26th of February 1986 he received in Rome a group of Christian, Jewish and Muslim participants of the Colloquium organized by the *Jerusalem Hope Center for Interfaith Understanding and Reconciliation*. He told them: "Both the Bible and Qur'an teach that mercy and justice are two attributes most characteristic of God. He, 'the Just one, the Merciful, the Compassionate' can bring about these same qualities in mankind, if only we open our hearts to allow him to do so. He wants us to be merciful toward each other. Along this path there are new solutions to be found to the political, racial, and confessional conflicts which have plagued the human family throughout history".

In 1989, the Message of John Paul II for Catholic World Day of Peace, on the first of January, was entitled: "To build peace, respect minorities". Since minority groups exist almost in all societies today, fundamental unity of the human race requires that the whole of humanity, beyond its ethnic, national, cultural and religious differences should strive for reciprocal solidarity. The theme of his Message for the 1999 World Day of Peace was: "Respect of human rights: the secret of true peace". In it he encouraged world governments and institutions to cherish a global progress in soli-

darity “which will include an overall and sustainable development of society, so as to enable all people to realize their potential”. In concluding this section of my presentation I would like to mention the Pope’s visit to Sarajevo in April 1997. In his address to our collegial Presidency he pointed out: “Equality of rights must be granted to the ethnic-religious communities. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a mosaic of cultures, religions and ethnic groups, which if recognized and safeguarded in their diversity, can contribute their respective gifts to the enrichment of the one patrimony of civil society... It is this interior attitude, which must be fostered, both within the frontiers of BH and also in relations with neighboring States and the community of nations. But an attitude of this kind can only be established on the foundation of forgiveness. For the edifice of peace to be solid, against the background of so much blood and hatred, it will have to be built on the courage of forgiveness. People must know how to ask for forgiveness and to forgive!” He received representatives of four humanitarian organizations which particularly distinguished themselves by their active relief work during the 1991-1995 war for ethnic territories: the Muslim Merhamet, the Serbian Orthodox Dobrotvor, the Jewish Benevolencija and the Catholic Caritas. He awarded them with the “John XXIII Peace Award” and told them: “The work of assistance and human promotion which you undertake, especially on behalf of the weakest and most vulnerable is inspired by the universal principle of the dignity of every person and of solidarity among human beings... On this significant occasion, I invite you to join me in raising mind and heart to heaven, that indispensable support may be granted from on high to all those who, often in difficult and extremely dangerous conditions, daily stand side-by-side with those who suffer, and thus seek to make an effective contribution to the building of a society in which justice and peace will reign”.

ROOTS OF SOLIDARITY IN HUMAN NATURE AND IN THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

We Christians believe that a just society can become a reality only when it is based on the respect of the transcendent dignity of the human person. Together with Jews and Muslims as monotheistic believers, we share the faith that we humans have been created by God and summoned to make our

world a place worthy of living for all fellow humans. We also believe that in the exercise of their freedom, men and women perform morally good acts when they are obedient to the truth that is when they do not presume to be the creators or absolute masters of truth or ethical norms. In its Part III, the 1992 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* depicts the general moral evaluation of human conduct as individuals and members of the social community. In presenting the person and society, it delineates the communal character of the human vocation, the right to participate in social life and social goods. The Catechism states that “the principle of solidarity, also articulated in terms of ‘friendship’ or ‘social charity’ is a direct demand of human and Christian brotherhood” (n. 1939). Human solidarity is dictated and imposed by our common origin and by the equality in the rational nature of all humans. It is manifested primarily by the distribution of goods and remuneration for work. Different forms of solidarity are: solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor, of workers among themselves, between employers and employees in a business, and solidarity among nations and peoples. “International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends in part upon this” (n. 1941). Solidarity involves sharing of spiritual goods even more than material ones.

The fourth commandment of the Decalogue, beside the obedience of young children to their parents and teachers, involves also care by adult children for their old parents who are sick and unable to support themselves: “Honor your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you” (Ex 20:12). The New Testament recalls the force of this commandment of God (Mk 7:8-13; Eph 6:1-3). In Catholic tradition, this commandment coordinates not only relations within the family but also the relation of families and groups to authorities in civil society and to the political community. The exercise of civil authority is meant “to give out expression to a just hierarchy of values in order to facilitate the exercise of freedom by all. Those in authority should practice distributive justice wisely, taking account of the needs and contribution of each, with a view of harmony and peace” (2236). Loyal collaboration of citizens with civil authorities as servants of the common good includes the right and duty of citizens to raise their just criticism of that which seems harmful to the dignity of persons and to the good of the community (n. 2239). The duty of citizens is to contribute, along with civil authorities, for the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity and freedom. This also requires citizens to fulfill civil roles in the life of the political community. “The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the ex-

tend they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin. Public authorities should see to it that the natural right is respected that places a guest under the protection of those who receive him... Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying out civic burdens" (n. 2241). Believing that it is the sign and the safeguard of the transcendent character of the human person, "the Church respects and encourages the political freedom and responsibility of the citizen" (n. 2245).

Pope Pius XII established in 1952 the Superior Council for emigration, which was to organize pastoral care for millions of emigrants after World War II. Pope Paul VI transformed it into the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrant People in 1970 and entrusted it with organizing the pastoral service of workers, students, scholars and exiles that live in a foreign country. This Council promulgated on the 3rd of May 2004 its Instruction "*Erga migrantes caritas Christi –The love of Christ towards migrants*". It treats migrant persons and groups as the sign of the times and proposes the pastoral care of welcome for migrants, not only Catholics moving to another country with native Catholic dioceses and parishes, but also of non-Christian new settlers into regions where Catholics have their institutions and organizations. This document accepts the phenomenon of religious pluralism as a normal mark of modern states where "peoples of different roots, other values and models of life are knocking at our doors" (n. 36). Catholic migrants should be offered a sense of belonging to the universal Church, but the needs of others should also be taken seriously. The purpose of "first welcome" and further assistance is not assimilation but "progressive integration and self-sufficiency of the immigrant. Let us remember in particular the commitment undertaken for family unification, education of children, housing, work associations, promotion of civil rights and the migrants' various ways of participation in their society" (n. 43).

A section of this document deals with assisting non-Christian migrants by Catholic bishops, priests and institutions (n. 59-69). Christians are encouraged to help such immigrants in finding their place in the social and cultural context of their host country. They are also "called upon to witness of their lives to denounce certain negative aspects present in the rich industrial countries (materialism and consumerism, moral relativism

and religious indifferentism), which might shake the religious conviction of immigrants” (n. 59). In this section the Document brings out the importance of the principle of reciprocity: “It is to be understood not merely as an attitude for making claims but as a relationship based on mutual respect and on justice in juridical and religious matters. Reciprocity is also an attitude of heart and spirit that enables us to live together everywhere with equal rights and duties. Healthy reciprocity will urge each one to become an ‘advocate’ for the rights of minorities when his or her own religious community is in majority. In this respect we should also recall the numerous Christian migrants in the lands where the majority of the population is not Christian and where the right to religious freedom is severely restricted or repressed” (n. 64). In view of Muslim immigrants in countries with majority Christian population, the Document calls for a purification of memory regarding past misunderstandings, to cultivate common values and to clarify and respect diversities, without renouncing Christian principles (n. 65). Religiously pluralistic societies require of Catholics a convinced willingness for true inter-religious dialogue which involves information on other religions, overcoming prejudices, rejection of religious relativism and “avoiding unjustified suspicions and fears that hamper dialogue and erect barriers, even provoking violence or misunderstanding. Local Churches will take care to include such formation in the educational programs of their seminaries, schools and parishes” (n. 69).

SOLIDARITY AS A RELIGIOUS AND HUMANE VIRTUE

In his dissertation on solidarity in the thought of John Paul II, Irish theologian Kevin P. Doran defines solidarity as “a virtue of persons and communities who, in each human situation, are actively committed to the good of each person and of all. It is the attitude which leads persons and communities to seek together the common good, that is peace, along with the material, cultural and spiritual conditions necessary to live as persons, through engaging in dialogue in a spirit of truth and trust, through seeking justice and respecting rights, through promoting the appropriate participation of all, and through the gradual achievement of authentic human development. Solidarity is a moral duty based on the fact of human interdependence and fundamental human equality. For believers it finds an additional foundation

in communion with God. Solidarity comes into being when that interdependence together with its implications, and that communion, are recognized in a spirit of truth, and translated into action through a free and loving commitment which endures over time” (DORAN, 1996, 235-236). Such a concept of solidarity has been adopted by the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, prepared by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and published with the Pope’s approval in 2004.

In presenting the principles of Catholic social doctrine, this document depicts solidarity as a principle and moral virtue, which should accept and shape the relations of individuals and peoples in our pluralistic world. As moral virtue, solidarity is “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. That is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all. Solidarity rises to the rank of fundamental social virtue since it places itself in the sphere of justice” (n. 193). While we with pleasure admit that persons and groups of other religious affiliation are able to practice justice and solidarity, we Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth makes the connection between solidarity and charity shine brightly before us, illuminating the entire meaning of this connection. Jesus teaches by his example and words that our neighbors are persons in need whom we meet in concrete circumstances of our life and can help them. Listing truth, freedom, justice and love into fundamental social values, this document points out that to love on the social level means “depending on the situations, to make use of the social mediations to improve other people’s life or to remove social factors that cause their indigence” (n. 208).

In conclusion, solidarity as religious and social virtue involves persons and groups of different beliefs and convictions that collaborate contributing to the common good. We become ever more religious and humane if we practice solidarity admitting that we need others and they need us.

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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA¹

Cardinal Puljic as Catholic archbishop of Sarajevo and President of the Bishops' Conference of BiH extends his greetings to the students of the Vienna Diplomatic Academy on their study trip to Sarajevo and expresses his thanks for this opportunity to present the Catholic Church in our country, together with delegates of the Muslim, Orthodox and Jewish faith communities here.

The present structure of the Catholic community in this ethnically and religiously mixed country was established during the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia. In that officially Catholic monarchy which subsidized its recognized faith communities, the Holy See and the government in Vienna decided in 1881 to transform the Bosnia and Herzegovina vicariates into four dioceses: Trebinje-Mrkan, which would be administered by the Bishop of Mostar, Mostar-Duvno, Vrhbosna-Sarajevo and Banja Luka. Since the Holy See considered in 1992 that after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, BiH as a single country of its three ethnic communities and other citizens is a possible and just solution, it recognized very early this new UN member state and established in 1993 the Bishops' Conference, which would coordinate the pastoral care of Catholics within the country and keep regular contacts with central Catholic institutions in Rome.

Our Muslim fellow citizens take early April 1992 as the beginning of the war for an independent BiH because during that time Serb forces tried to partition our capital into Serb and Muslim sections and soon laid siege to our capital, which ended in mid-December 1995 thanks to the Dayton

1 A presentation to M. A. Candidates of the Vienna Diplomatic Academy during their study trip to Sarajevo, 11 May 2018.

Peace Accords. For Croats of this country the war began in October 1991 when Serb local militia invaded Eastern Herzegovina and destroyed seven Catholic parishes (M. Zovkić 1998, 208-209). According to church statistics, the Catholic population in the four dioceses of BiH in 1991 was about 832,000 distributed as follows: the Trebinje-Mrkan diocese in Eastern Herzegovina about 16,000 in 15 parishes, the diocese of Mostar-Duvno 178,000 in 60 parishes, the archdiocese of Vrhbosna-Sarajevo in Central and Northern Bosnia 528,000 in 144 parishes, and the diocese of Banja Luka in Western Bosnia about 110,000 in 47 parishes. Eastern Herzegovina is inhabited by a predominantly Serb-Orthodox population, Western Herzegovina by predominantly Croatian-Catholics, while the territory of Sarajevo and Banja Luka dioceses has been populated for centuries by a mixed population of the three respective ethnic and religious communities. After the war, refugees and exiles were not enabled to return and live safely in their native places, now partitioned into the Federation of Bosniaks and Croats and the Republika Srpska. The number of Catholics living within the country in 1996 was reduced to 424,915 and in 2017 only 376,134. Since the war, peaceful moving out has been caused by a shortage of jobs with decent wages and this problem concerns all the ethnic communities (T. Vukšić 2018).

In first decade after the war, the Sarajevo and Banja Luka dioceses rebuilt their destroyed parish churches and parish houses with the hope that parishioners would gradually return when they saw that their parish priest was living in the parish. But this did not happen, especially not in localities in the Republika Srpska. As an illustration, I can point to the deanery of Derventa, where the Sarajevo Archdiocese had 48,000 believers in 14 parishes and where it now has just 800 in the same number of parishes.

In November 1994, while our capital was still besieged and citizens had to live with fear and scarcity, Cardinal Puljić established the first Catholic School Center, which would serve to educate broadly children of the remaining Catholics but also other pupils whose parents wished their children to study there. This initiative was well accepted so that new school centers were gradually opened in Zenica, Travnik, Tuzla, Žepče, Banja Luka and Bihać. Auxiliary Bishop of Sarajevo Pero Sudar was entrusted with creating academic and formation programs in these primary and secondary schools. He was so successful that the cantonal governments assumed responsibility for paying the salaries of teaching staff,

while Bishop Sudar asked international donors for their assistance to adapt existing buildings or put up new ones to accommodate these schools.

“The overall *raison d’être* for the existence of Catholic School Centers in BiH is twofold. Primarily these schools were established to contribute towards the survival of the Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and secondarily they were intended to contribute to peacebuilding and reconciliation by providing an education for peaceful coexistence in a country torn by national and religious conflict, in a world increasingly fractured by structural injustices concealed behind ethnic, cultural, and religious diversities.” (I. Lovrić, 2017, 196).

The Catholic School Centers turned into educational institutions that motivate their pupils to respect the religious, cultural and ethnic identity of their classmates and of adult citizens. In September 2017, 14 such schools were operating, with 577 faculty members and 4,683 enrolled pupils. The number of pupils has fallen in recent years because families with school-age children are moving out of the country. Public schools of all three ethnic communities face this problem.

Here I would like to add that we operate three Schools of Theology for the education of candidates for the priesthood and candidates to provide religious instruction in public schools. In 1993, senior religious leaders secured the assent of the State Presidency to introduce confessional religious teaching in public schools for pupils whose parents choose this option for their children. Respective religious leaders are in charge of preparing textbooks and proposing their own educated faith teachers to the directors of local schools. We have a Catechetical institute in Mostar, the Franciscan Theological Seminary in Sarajevo and the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Sarajevo, which is part of the State University. Thanks to the dynamic initiative and coordination of the CRS (*The Catholic Relief Service*, based in the USA) in October last year an M A. program in Religion and Peace was launched, where courses are taught by professors of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, professors of the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Foča near Sarajevo, and professors of the Catholic Faculty of Theology. I hope that Muslim and Orthodox representatives at this encounter will also mention our cooperation in the Interreligious Council in Sarajevo and in about a dozen towns in both entities outside our capital.

In contrast to the socialist regime from 1945 to 1990, when faith communities were deprived of their property and forbidden to organize

any public social activity, we are now permitted to engage in serving pre-school children in kindergartens, in running homes for elderly and disabled persons and in offering other kinds of health care. Unfortunately, our democratically elected government continues to delay passage of legislation on offering restitution or returning the material possessions of faith communities and other citizens whose property was confiscated by the communist regime after World War Two. We need this property in order to finance our social activities. We Catholics are grateful to Caritas of Austria, Germany and Italy for assisting us with our social programs.

Since our visitors have come from Vienna, I would like to mention a fraternal visit and plenary session of the Austrian Bishops' Conference in Sarajevo from March 4 to March 8 this year. Cardinal Christoph Schönborn presided at Mass and preached in our cathedral, which was built during the Austrian administration of Bosnia and through a gift of Emperor Francis Joseph. The Austrian bishops dedicated a full day of their work to hearing from our bishops how they see the situation of our society and faith communities. They visited our Presidency and the senior leader of Muslims in our country. In their *Presseerklärung*, they state: "Der christliche Glaube lehrt uns, in anderen nicht den Fremden oder gar den Feind zu sehen, sondern den Menschen – genauso als Abbild und Ebenbild Gottes wie wir selbst. So bringt der interreligiöse Dialog die Chance in sich, im anderen auch sich selbst wieder zu entdecken und ein tieferes Verstehen zu entwickeln."

Pope John Paul II visited Sarajevo in April 1997 and Banja Luka in June 2003. Pope Francis visited Sarajevo in June 2015. Thanks to media coverage, BiH was in these days a kind of center of world attention. Without the active collaboration of the civil authorities and of other faith leaders these events could not have taken place.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that we Catholics share with other faith communities the goodwill to educate our own congregations for peaceful living in a pluralistic society. We also share with them the problem of a falling birth rate and of emigration by families with school-age children.

Thank you for your interest and for your attention!

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DER INTERRELIGIÖSE DIALOG IN BOSNIEN UND HERZEGOWINA UND SEINE POLITISCHE DIMENSION¹

Ich bedanke mich bei dem Organisator für diese Möglichkeit, über die aktuelle Lage der Beziehungen von Religionsgemeinschaften zu einander und zum Staat Bosnien und Herzegowina (BH) sprechen zu dürfen. Als einer von Mitglieder des Interreligiösen Rates in Sarajevo ich wurde zwar von meinen Kollegen delegiert, aber das verehrte Publikum sollte wissen, dass wir alle in unserer Denkweise stark von unserer ethnisch-religiöser Identität geprägt sind. Ich bin ein Katholik und ein Kroat in unserem multireligiösen und multi-ethnischen Land. Es wäre deshalb gut wenn ein Bosnischer Muslim und ein Bosnischer Serbe unter hier Anwesenden später in der Diskussion meine Reflexionen ergänzen oder korrigieren würde.

Nachdem ich das Land BH kurz vorstelle, ich werde unsere jetzige politische Lage beschreiben und dann hervorbringen was Muslimische, Orthodoxe, Katholische und Jüdische Religionsgemeinschaften im Gebiet des interreligiösen Dialogs schon tun and was sie besser tun sollten.

WARUM IST BH KLEINES ABER KOMPLIZIERTES EUROPÄISCHES LAND?

Von 1918 bis 1990 war BH in Jugoslawien als einen Staat von sechs Völker und zwei grosse nationale Minderheiten eingeschlossen. Durch das Referendum vom 1. 3. 1992, das wurde von demokratisch erwählten Regierung

¹ Ein Vortrag an der Tagung der Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung in München, 9. 7. 2007.

organisiert, die Mehrheit der Bürger hat sich für Trennung von Jugoslawien entschieden. Der neue Staat wurde von UNO schon im April anerkannt, aber im September 1991 Jugoslawische Armee hat in Ost Herzegowina den Anfang des Krieges der bosnischen Serben für ihr ethisches Territorium unterstützt. Der Krieg wurde am 6. April 1992 mit Belagerung von Sarajevo öffentlich erklärt und durch den Dayton Friedensvertrag in November 1995 wurde er zu Ende gebracht. Jetzt ist BH ein international anerkannter Staat in Europa mit Oberfläche von einundfünfzigtausend Quadratkilometer. Bei der letzten Volkszählung im Jahre 1991 hatte BH vier Komma drei Millionen (4,3) Einwohner; dreiundfünfzig Komma fünf Prozent (43,5) davon erklärten sich als Muslime, einunddreissig Komma zwei Prozent als Orthodoxe (31,2) und siebzehn Komma vier Prozent (17,4) als Katholiken. Im Lande leben etwa 2,500 Christen reformatorischer Orientierung (Adventisten, Baptisten, Evangelischer und andere) und circa 1000 Juden die als Gemeinde in Mostar, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Doboj und Banja Luka organisiert sind. Die neue Volkszählung kann noch nicht stattfinden, weil – wegen sehr geringen Rückkehr der Vertriebenen und Umgesiedelten – so würden die Folgen der ethnischen Säuberung offiziell bestätigt.

In BH als einem der ex-sozialistischen Länder die Privatisierung ist noch nicht zu Ende gebracht worden, aber die grossen sozialistischen Firmen sind schon während des Krieges unrentabel geworden und deshalb mussten von ihnen sind auf dem Weg zu Erlöschung. Zwölf Jahre nach dem Kriegsende sind noch immer etwa 40% Arbeitsfähige und Arbeitsuchende Personen offiziell arbeitslos, aber viele arbeiten schwarz in neuen kleinen Unternehmen. Der Durchschnittslohn beträgt circa 500,00 KM (= 250,000 Euro) und die Durchschnittsrente beträgt ungefähr 200,00 KM (= 100 Euro). Viele von Arbeitenden kriegen ihre Löhne nicht regelmässig oder überhaupt nicht. Nach der sozialistisch gesteuerten Wirtschaft ist die Phase eines wilden Kapitalismus eingetreten.

In Sarajevo als Hauptstadt circa dreissig residierender Botschaften haben ihren Sitz und meisten von circa 5000 Nichtregierungsorganisationen (NRO) im Lande haben ihr Büro da. Unter anderem, diese Botschaften und NRO-en geben Arbeit an die Bürger die English kennen. Ende Juni ist die Amerikanische Militärbasis in Tuzla, in der 7000 bosnische Personen während 12 Jahren eine Arbeitmöglichkeit hatten, geschlossen worden.

In bezug auf die Geschichte von BH, ich übernehme einige Gedanken aus dem Vortrag von dr. Thomas Bremen an der Tagung *Zur Rolle der Religionen in Südosteuropa* in Tutzing am 18. 6. 2007. Er ist Professor der ökumenischen Theologie in Münster und kennt gut die Lage der Religionen im

Balkan. Der Islam in Südosteuropa ist Erbe der fünfhundertjährigen osmanischen Herrschaft. In religiöser Hinsicht, während dieser Zeit Christen und Muslime lebten fast ohne Kontakte zueinander. Islam ist zwar nach eigener Theorie eine tolerante Religion gegenüber Christen und Juden als „Buchbesitzer“, aber man sollte diese Situation nicht romantisch verklären. Doch „kan jedenfalls von einer Jahrhunderte langen Verfolgung während des Osmanischen Reichs nicht die Rede sein. Wenn es Repression gab, dann war das in der Regel Folge von illoyalem Verhalten der Christen dem osmanischen Staat gegenüber. Wichtig ist jedoch, dass in christlichen Kirchen und beim grössten Teil der christlich geprägten Bevölkerung diese Zeit heute als massive Unterdrückung wahrgenommen wird“ (Bremen, 2007, 12). Während der türkischen Regierung dienten die Religionsgemeinschaften als Träger für eine kollektive Identität. „Im Zusammenhang mit der nationalen und politischen Emanzipation trug die jeweilige religiöse Identität auch zur Einstellung einer nationalen Identität bei.... Es liegt auf der Hand, dass sich bei einer solchen Nähe von Religion und Nation nach der Entstehung von Nationalstaaten die Situation von Mehrheit und Minderheit stark auf die Lage der Religionsgemeinschaften auswirken. Es ist also ein Unterschied ob man im Staat oder in der Region zur Mehrheit oder zur Minderheit gehört. Wichtig ist auch die wahrgenommene historische Erfahrung: ob man sich von der anderen Gruppe historisch unterdrückt fühlt oder nicht“ (Bremen, 2007, 17). Aus dieser historischen Perspektive sollte man verstehen - wenn nicht billigen - die Stellungnahme gegenüber den jetzigen Staat BH unter Bosniaken die alle Muslime sind, Serben die alle Orthodoxe sind und Kroaten die alle Katholiken sind. Die Bosniaken wollen einen normalen Staat mit starker Zentralregierung, aber die Kroaten und Serben wollen einen Staat von drei wirklich gleichberechtigten Volksgruppen wo ihre Sprache, Kultur und Geschichte in den staatlichen Schulen, an den Universitäten und in den Medien nicht vernachlässigt würden.

EIN ZWEIFELIGER STAAT MIT DREI VOLKS - UND RELIGIONSGEMEINSCHAFTEN

Im Unterschied zu Albanien wo die absolute Mehrheit der Einwohner ethnische Albaner sind, die bekennen Islam, Orthodoxie oder Katholizismus, in BH die relative Mehrheit sind ethnische Bosniaken die Muslime sind, zweitgrösste

Gruppe sind ethnische Serben die Orthodoxe sind und drittgrößte Gruppe sind ethnische Kroaten die Katholiken sind. In Dayton Friedensvertrag das Land BH wurde in zwei so genannte Entitäten geteilt: die Föderation von Bosnien und Herzegowina mit Hauptstadt Sarajevo und Republika Srpska mit Hauptstadt Banja Luka. Nach der ethnischen Säuberung während des Krieges, in der West Herzegowina die Mehrheitseinwohner sind Kroaten, in Sarajevo und Zentralbosnien die Mehrheit sind Bosnjaken-Muslime und in West und Nord Bosnien die Mehrheit sind Serben. Eigenes möglichst autonomes Territorium zu haben, war die wichtigste Bedingung der Serben, um innerhalb des Staates BH zu bleiben. Aber solcher Staat ist jetzt schwer regierbar und wirtschaftlich gelähmt. Zwei sogenannte Entitäten machen es fast unmöglich gewisse Gesetze auf der Staatsebene zu verabschieden und durchzuführen.

Ich nehme als Illustration den Gesetzesentwurf der Nationalfeiertage an. Im April 2005 hatte eine Gruppe der Abgeordneten den Entwurf dieses Gesetzes gemacht und am 11. Mai fand die öffentliche Diskussion über diesen Entwurf im Parlament statt. Die Delegierten der Religionsgemeinschaften wurden eingeladen, um ihren Beitrag beizubringen. Der katholische Erzbischof von Sarajevo hat mich beauftragt, in der Diskussion teilzunehmen. In der Stellungnahmen der offiziellen Sprecher konnte man die Vermischung der Religions- und Volksangehörigkeit der Sprechenden sehr stark spüren. Bosnjakisch-muselmanische Redner, eingeschlossen der Delegierte der Muslimischen Gemeinde, waren mit dem Entwurf zufrieden, weil er von den Bosnjaken verfasst wurde. Die kroatischen Delegierten stimmten dem Entwurf grundsätzlich zu, aber sie verlangten einige zusätzliche Feiertage als gemeinsame Erinnerung an historische Ereignisse, die für die Kroaten im Lande wichtig waren. Sechs serbischen Redner betonten, dass bosnischen Serben nie den 11. Juli als Gedenktag der Srebrenica Opfer feiern werden, noch weniger den 1. März als den Tag des Referendums, wo die meisten Bürger von BH für die Selbstständigkeit von BH stimmten. Die serbischen Redner insistierten, dass der Tag der Unterschreibung des Friedensvertrages von Dayton ein gemeinsamer Staatsfeiertag sein sollte. Praktisch, die Diskutierenden stimmten nur für drei Feiertage auf der ganzen Staatsebene: 1. Januar als Zivilneujahr, 1. Mai als internationaler Arbeitstag und 9. Mai als der Tag des Sieges über Nazional-sozialismus. So konnte das Gesetz noch nicht verabschiedet werden und der hohe Repräsentant hat keine Absicht dieses Gesetz aufzuzwingen.

Seit April voriges Jahres die Merheitsparteien in unserem Parlament diskutieren sehr scharf die Reform der Polizei auf der Staatsebene und die

Veränderung der Daytonkonstitution, um den Staat mehr regierbar und überhaupt annehmbar für die Europäische Union zu machen. Die serbischen Delegierten und Funktionäre haben Angst, dass irgendwelche Veränderungen der Daytonkonstitution würden schrittweise zur Erlöschung der Republika Srpska leiten. Im Falle dass der Hohe Repräsentant die Veränderungen aufzwingt, die demokratisch gewählte Regierung des serbischen Entitäts droht mit Organisation eines Referendums über den Anschluss ihres Teils von BH an den Staat Serbien. BH ist geschichtlich, kulturell und politisch kompliziert, „ein Raum von Begegnung und Bekämpfung, von Toleranz und Turbulenz, von Koexistenz und Konflikt, von Kooperation und Konfrontation“ (Ikić, 2005, 107). Ich mag nicht mythisieren die tolerante Vergangenheit unserer Volks- und Religionsgemeinschaften, aber auch nicht verteufeln unsere gespannte jetzige Beziehungen. Obwohl die Zahl der UNO und Europäischer Truppen sehr reduziert worden ist, wir werden eine starke militärische und diplomatische Begleitung von EU noch lange brauchen.

Nach einer Mitteilung an der schon erwähnten Tagung in Tutzing am 18. und 19. Juni es wurde in der Diskussion festgestellt, dass im Falle eines neuen Referendums die Kroaten und die Serben in BH würden für die Trennung von Bosnjaken stimmen. Und einige Teilnehmer haben solche Trennung befürwortet, mit der Hoffnung dass so ein stabiler Frieden und kohäsive Zivilgesellschaft schneller erreicht würden. Solche neue Trennung würde aber nicht ohne bewaffneten Konflikten zu Ende gebracht werden und sie enthielte eine permanente Gefahr von neuen Terroranschlägen. Das würde einschließen neue Gewalt, neue Vertriebene und Umgesiedelte, neue Ungerechtigkeit, neue Verletzungen der Menschenrechte. Wir Katholiken und unsere muslimische Mitbürger halten den Daytonfriedensvertrag und Daytonverfassung für ungerecht und für eine strukturelle Quelle der Unruhe. Es gäbe aber nicht diesen Frieden und diese Verfassung ohne die Weltgemeinschaft und deshalb kann die strukturelle Verbesserung nur von UNO und von EU ermöglicht oder aufgezwungen werden.

INSTITUTIONELLE INITIATIVEN DES INTERRELIGIÖSEN DIALOGS IN BH

1. *Interreligiöser Rat* (IRR) wurde am 9. Juni 1997 dank der Initiative von Dr. William Vendley, Generalsekretär von *World Conference of Religions for Peace* (WCRP) gestiftet. Im Sommer 1996 hat er die Religionsoberen der Muslime, Orthodoxe, Katholiken und Juden in unserem Lande besucht und angekündigt die Eröffnung eines Büro von WCRP in Sarajevo mit einem ausländischen Direktor und vier einheimischen Angestellten, die würden helfen die Religionsoberen und ihren Mitarbeitern in interreligiöser Zusammenwirkung. In ihrem *Statement of shared moral commitment* (offizielle Version auf Englisch wegen unserer Sprachverschiedenheiten!) haben sich der Muslimische, Orthodoxe, Katholische und Jüdische Religionsoberen, die ihren Sitz in Sarajevo haben, auf Respekt von Menschen- und Religionsrechten verpflichtet und die eigene Glaubensangehörigen ermutigt: „Let us treat others as we would wish them to treat us!“ IRR ist keine Superregierung die würde angreifen die soziale und politische Fragen, welche die demokratisch erwählten Politiker können oder wollen nicht lösen, sondern eine schwache Nichtregierungsorganisation die nur jene Themen behandelt über welche die vier Religionsoberen einen Konsensus erreichen können. Das sind meistens die Beziehungen zwischen den Staat und die Religionsgemeinschaften, wie Anschaffung des neuen Gesetzes über Religionsgemeinschaften und Rückkehr der Eigentümer von Religionsgemeinschaften die während des kommunistischen Regimes entnommen worden sind. Trotzdem, ich bin ein katolischer Mitglied des Rates von Anfang an und ich unterstütze ihn von Herzen als notwendiges Mittel der institutionellen Mitarbeit der Religionsoberen und Religionsdiener.

Als Illustration unserer Wirkung erwähne ich eine (bislang) gescheiterte und eine gelungene Initiative. In letzten Monaten hat der Rat versucht, eine Liste der Menschenrechtsverletzungen herzustellen, besonders fokussiert auf die Behinderungen vom Praktizieren der Religionsfreiheit. Die religiös gemischte Gruppe, die mit diesem Projekt beauftragt wurde, konnte nicht selbst forschen, deswegen hängte sie total von den Berichten der lokalen Religionsdienern aller Religionsgemeinschaften ab. Der Prozess der Datenversammlung dauerte zwei Monate und das Material wurde auf folgende fünf Teile verteilt: 1. Angriffe an Religionsdiener, Gebetshäuser und andere Verletzungen der Religionsfreiheit; 2. Die Lage der Zurückgekehrten; 3. Religionsunterricht; 4. Beziehungen zwischen den Religions-

gemeinschaften und dem Staat; 5. Vorschläge. Der Bericht von 13 Seiten wurde am 11. Juni 2007 diskutiert und die Verabschiebung wurde verschoben weil ein Mitglied die Richtigkeit der Daten über seine Glaubensmitbrüder bestritten hat. Die andere Initiative war Ferienlager für 35 Kinder von 18. bis 24. Juni wo die konfessionelle Religionslehrer erklärten den Muslimischen, Orthodoxen, Katholischen und Jüdischen Kindern die Feste und die Sitten ihrer Gemeinden. Die Kinder und die Lehrer hatten Spass dabei und schlugen vor, im nächsten Sommer was ähnliches zu organisieren.

2. *Muslimische Gemeinde* feierte Ende Juni dreissigjähriges Jubiläum der Fakultät der islamischen Wissenschaften (Fakultet islamskih nauka). Die Redner haben hervorgehoben die Verdienste des verstorbenen Professor Husein Džozo, der einer der Stifter im Jahre 1977 war und sah die Aufgabe der Fakultät als Ausbildung der Theologen und muslimischen Intellektuellen die ihre Mitschwester und Mitbrüder helfen würden, als freie Muslime in Europa zu leben. Die bosnischen Muslime sind Sunniten und sie träumen nicht von BH als einem islamischen Staat in Europa. Die Professoren dieser Fakultät mitmachen gerne als wir Katholische Kollegen in Sarajevo oder Zagreb inter-religiöse Tagungen veranstalten. Letzte solche Tagung wurde organisiert in der Osterwoche im April und ich wurde beauftragt mit Thema „Reziprozität in Christlich-muslimischen Beziehungen“. In heutiger katholischer Theologie unter Reziprozität ist nicht die alttestamentliche Regel von gemässigen Vergeltung gemeint („Auge für Auge, Zahn für Zahn, Hand für Hand, Fuss für Fuss“ – Ex 21,24) sondern gegenseitige Ergänzung und Nähe im Geist der sogenannten goldenen Regel: „Was ihr von anderen erwartet, das tut ebenso auch ihnen“ (Lk 6,31). Ein muslimischer Kollege hat dabei ihre Sicht der gegenseitigen Reziprozität dargestellt.

Der Grossmufti dr. Mustafa Cerić ist durch seine *Declaration of European Muslims*, die er erstes mal in London Muslim Centre in 2005 dargestellt hat, bekannt geworden. In dieser Deklaration verurteilt er die Terroranschläge an unschuldige Zivilisten in New York, Madrid und London und ermuntert die Muslime in Europa, in die europäische pluralistische Gesellschaft sich zu integrieren. Von den Westeuropäern erwartet er gleiche Rechte und gleiche Gelegenheiten für ihre muslimische Mitbürger. Er hat drei Professoren der Islamischen Theologischen Fakultät in Sarajevo beauftragt, den *Entwurf Plattform der islamischen Gemeinde in BH* für Dialog anzufertigen und dieser Text wird jetzt unter den Imams diskutiert,

bevor er promulgiert wird. Dem Entwurf gemäss, jede Religionsgemeinschaft sollte die eigene Einzelnen und Gruppen verurteilen, die eine Hasssprache benutzen oder die Andersglaubenden beleidigen. Die Verfasser glauben, dass nur eine gerechte Strafe das Verbrechen stoppen kann, weil „circulus vitiosus“ des Verbrechens in BH sich öfters wiederholt. Sie aber sagen auch:

„Es gibt keine Alternative zu Versöhnung und Vergebung in multikulturellem Bosnien, und die Rolle der Glaubensgemeinschaften in diesem Bezug ist enorm. Dialog und Koexistenz sind nicht unsere Taktik oder intellektuelles Genießen, sondern unsere strategische Option, weil in ihnen sehen wir unseren einzigen Weg zum Überleben“ (Platforma 2006, III,c).

In diesem Jahr hat die Islamische Gemeinde in BH ihre Kommission für inter-religiösen Dialog gegründet, in der als Mitglieder die Professoren ihrer Theologischen Fakultät teilnehmen. Ich kenne persönlich diese Herren als fromme und ausgebildete Muslime, die den Dialog nicht nur theoretisch proklamieren, sondern auch durch ihre freundliche Kontakte mit Andersglaubenden praktizieren. Der Grossmufti ist von manchen Professoren der Islamischen Fakultät kritisiert worden, weil er nicht scharf genug die Wahabis in Bosnien angegriffen hat. Diese muslimische Sektierer sind während des Krieges in unseres Land importiert worden, haben mit Hilfe von Saudi Arabien riesige Moscheen in der Nahkriegszeit gebaut und versuchen jetzt, die bosnischen Sunni Muslime an ihre Art von Islam zu bekehren. Seit Terror Anschlag in New York am 11. 9. 2001. manche von solchen sind verhaftet und an die USA ausgeliefert worden. Seit dem gibt es keine Bombenanschläge an die zurückgekehrten Christen im Gebiet mit muslimischer Mehrheit der Einwohner. Letzter solcher Anschlag geschah am 24. Dezember 2002 in einem Dorf von Konjic Gemeinde wo ein junger Muslime, der seinen Noviziat bei den Wahabis beendet hatte, drei Mitglieder einer katholischen Familie der Zurückgekehrten getötet hat. Glücklicherweise die Polizei hat ihm schnell verhaftet und das hat die Spannung vermindert.

3. *Serbisch-Orthodoxe Kirche in BH* umfasst fünf Eparchien: Trebinje, Sarajevo-Dabar, Zvornik-Tuzla, Bihac-Petrovac und Banja Luka. Alle orthodoxe Bischöfe machen einen Ausschuss der Bischöfe, der in Verbindung mit dem Patriarch in Belgrad ihre Gläubigen leitet. Ich habe gemerkt, dass die Bischöfe deren Eparchien im grossen Teil in der Föderation erstreckt sind (wo die Orthodoxen keine Mehrheit sind) mehr bereit für das

ökumenische und interreligiöse Dialog sind. Jedenfalls, die Orthodoxe Mitglieder des IRR sind sehr bereit zur Mitwirkung. Katholische und Orthodoxe Bischöfe sind bisher sieben mal zusammengetroffen. In ihrer gemeinsamen Erklärung vom 17. März 1998 sagten sie, unter anderem: „Wir verzeihen allen, die uns das Böse getan haben und im Namen des Evangeliums bitten wir für die gegenseitige Vergebung. Wir bezeugen unsere Bereitschaft für Zusammenleben“. Der Grossmufti und die muslimische Familien, die ihre Angehörigen in Srebrenica und anderswo verloren haben, sagen dass solche Schuld- bekenntnis zu generell ist und reicht nicht für Wiederaufbau des Vertrauens.

In ihrem gemeinsamen Hirtenbrief zu Weihnachten 2004 haben die vier Katholische und sieben Orthodoxe Bischöfe alle Christen in BH zu friedliches Leben gerufen, das sollte durch ihren Glauben an Christus motiviert werden. Sie haben ihre Gläubigen ermutigt zur Vergebung und Versöhnung, wie auch zu gemeimeinsames Bauen einer gerechten Gesellschaft. Orthodoxe Mitropolit von Sarajevo Nikolaj hat den integralen Text dieses gemeinsamen Hirtenbriefes zusammen mit dem Sendschreiben des Patriarch Pavle in einem Sonderbuchlein veröffentlicht und an seine Gläubigen austeilten lassen. Der Brief wurde von Christen zwar gepriesen aber kaum ernst genommen, und fand kein Echo unter muslimischen Mitbürgern.

4. *Katholische Bischofskonferenz* wurde im Dezember 1994 von dem Heiligen Stuhl gegründet und unter ihre Kommissionen eine ist zuständig für die gute Beziehungen zu anders Glaubenden. Unter Leitung von Weihbischof Sudar, diese Kommission veranstaltet Rundtischgespräche über aktuelle Themen. Letzes solches Gespräch wurde am 26. Juni veranstaltet und das Thema war: „Erziehung für interreligiösen Dialog durch Religionsunterricht in den Schulen“. Der Vortrag wurde gehalten von einer katholischen Religionslehrerin, die uns informierte in welchen Klassen der achtjährigen Volksschulen und der vierjährigen Mittelschulen die Katholische Schülerinnen und Schüler über andere Religionen, die in BH anwesend und tätig sind, lernen. Aus ihrer Erfahrung mit konkreten Schulkindern sie hat betont, dass die Kinder mitnehmen die Haltung ihrer Eltern und dass die Fragen über Gott und Lebensbedeutung stellen auch jene Schülerinnen und Schüler die aus agnostischer oder atheistischen Familien stammen und an Stelle des Religionsunterrichts das Fach „Ethik“ nehmen. Sie hat auch gesagt, dass die Religionslehrbücher von einer gemischter Kommission der Religionspädagogen überprüft wurden, um zu

beseitigen alles was den Glauben des „Anderen“ karikiert oder an die „Eigene“ beleidigend vorstellt. Alle Veränderungsvorschläge wurden von zuständigen Verlegern angenommen. Bei diesem Rundtischgespräch haben einige Vertreter der Medien, der Islamischen Gemeinde, Orthodoxen Kirche, eine Doktorandin der Religionsologie und andere teilgenommen.

Nach einer umfangreichen Beratung mit seinen Freunden hier in Deutschland hat Bischof Komarica in Banja Luka am 16. November 2005 Europäische Akademie gestiftet. Ihre Aufgabe ist durch Vorträge von prominenten Professoren und anderer Personen des öffentlichen Lebens die Fragen der Ökologie, Wirtschaftsethik, Ausbildung, Erziehung und aktuelle gesellschaftliche Themen zu erörtern. Seit November 2005 wurden 34 Vorträge mit Diskussion veranstaltet mit Teilnahme von 15 bis 140 Personen per Vortrag. Die meisten Zuhörer waren bei dem Vortrag von Frau Doris Pack am 5. 5. 2006, die über die Gerechtigkeit als Fundament von Europa sprach. Ausser Banja Luka, manche Vorlesungen haben auch in Bihac, Jajce und Livno stattgefunden.

Parallel mit dem Dialog der offiziellen Strukturen in BH läuft der Dialog der gewöhnlichen Leuten über das nachbarliche Leben. Solcher Dialog hat auch während des letzten Krieges nicht aufgehört. Dr. Christof Ziemer, ein evangelischer Theologe und Pfarrer der nach dem Krieg sechs Jahre in Sarajevo lebte und steuerte die NRO „Abraham“ die er mit Freunden der guten nachbarlichen Beziehungen gestiftet hatte, bedauert, dass im Krieg die Multikulturalität des Landes beschädigt wurde und dass Orthodoxe, Katholiken und Muslime sich selbst als Opfer des Krieges sehen, völlig oder weitgehend ausgeblendet die eigenen Täteranteile. Doch bemerkt er:

„Als Schlüsselkategorie für ein neues Miteinander von Menschen, Volksgruppen und Religionen erweist sich der Begriff Zusammenleben. Damit kann einerseits ein noch immer lebendiges Erbe von Nachbarschaft und Gastfreundschaft, die beide auch religiöse Konnotation haben, angeknüpft werden, andererseits kommt ihm die ausgesprochene Hochschätzung von Geselligkeit (*druženje*) entgegen. Zusammenleben mit dem Respekt für die anderen bei gleichzeitiger, weitgehender Tabuisierung der religiösen Inhalte. Hier liegt für die Zukunft die Aufgabe, den Respekt für Anderen mit dem Wissen von der Religion des Anderen zu verbinden. Zusammenleben erweist sich als ein Zielbegriff mit stark motivierender Kraft, der seinen Sitz im Leben der Menschen hat, und zwar gerade auch unabhängig und jenseits von religiösen Zugehörigkeit“ (Ziemer, in M. Bauschke-P. Stegmann, Hrsg, 2001, 163).

Ich finde die Diagnose von Dr. Zimmer richtig: es gibt nicht genug Interesse bei den Christlichen Priestern und Laien den Inhalt des muslimischen Glaubens zu kennen, und umgekehrt: was die Imame und ihre Gläubigen über Christentum wissen, ist sehr winzig. Der unbekannte Nachbar kann mit Manipulationen sehr schnell in eine Gefahr und sogar einen Feind umgewandelt werden. Seitdem ich ein Mitglied des IRR in Sarajevo bin, ich bemühe mich, den Glauben meiner Muslimischen, Orthodoxen und Jüdischen Partner zu studieren.

INTEGRIERENDE ROLLE DER GLAUBENSGEMEINSCHAFT IN BH SOLLTE DIE GRENZEN DER EIGENEN VOLKSGEMEINDE ÜBERSCHREITEN

Britische Religionssoziologin Grace Davie spricht von *believing not belonging* in säkularen Staaten von Europa. Viele Europäer leben ohne integriert zu sein in eine Konfession aber nicht ohne Glauben. In BH, wo seit Jahrhunderten sich treffen aber nicht verschmelzen Gruppen von verschiedener ethnischen und religiösen Identität, man könnte sprechen von *belonging not believing*. Da jeweilige Glaube wesentlich zur Identität der Individuellen und der Gruppen darbringt, viele unter uns gehören, ohne tief zu glauben innerhalb ihrer Glaubensgemeinschaft. In unserer Geschichte der Glaube hatte, und noch immer hat, eine wichtige integrative Rolle. Diese Integration ist erfolgreicher innerhalb eingenger Volks- und Glaubensgemeinschaft als auf der Ebene der Region oder des Staates. Aber, unser Glaube sollte uns integrieren in plurale Zivilgesellschaft ohne Rücksicht auf den konkreten Staat: ob wir ihn nur dulden oder aktiv unterstützen. Das nenne ich mit Ethiker, Religiologen und Politikern die integrative Rolle des Glaubens und der Religion. *The global face of public faith*, wie die Überschrift der Studie des amerikanischen Ethiker David Hollenbach lautet, oder die von Vernon Ruland: *Conscience across borders – An Ethics of global rights and religious pluralism*.

Hans Küng als Vertreter des Weltehos wiederholt in seinen Schriften, dass es ohne Frieden der Religionen kein Friede unter den Völkern und Staaten gibt. Er schreibt: „Eine friedentiftende Kraft von Religionen ist zu erkennen einerseits in den Protest-bewegungen, die radikale politische Reformen anstreben und zugleich ihre Anhänger auf strikte Gewaltlosig-

keit verpflichten.... andererseits in den Vermittlungsaktionen von Religionsgemeinschaften und interreligiösen Organisationen in politischen Konflikten“ (Küng-Senghaas 2003, 32). Sein Mitarbeiter Andreas Hasenclever hervorhebt die zivilisierende Kraft von Religionen und Glaubensgemeinschaften. Er bemerkt, dass „Religionen und Glaubensgemeinschaften zeigen gerade in Krisenzeiten ein hohes Mass an Vitalität und Attraktivität, wodurch sie in den betroffenen Gesellschaften zu politische Faktoren werden“ (Op. cit., 293). Es ist aber wichtig „in den grossen religiösen Traditionen nach den Kräften zu fahnden, die sich für eine friedliche Bearbeitung von Konflikten einsetzen und die Liberalisierung ihrer Gesellschaften unterstützen“ (295). Man soll ihm glauben als er behauptet, dass „es gibt keine Weltreligion gibt, die von ihrem Wesen her besonders gewalttätig oder besonders friedensförderlich ist“ (303). Seiner Meinung nach, es ist notwendig „sowohl die politische Unabhängigkeit von Glaubensgemeinschaften zu steigern als auch ihr Bewusstsein um die eigene Friedenstradition zu erhöhen. Bei dieser Aufgabe können und sollen moderne Demokratien helfen“ (312).

In BH wir brauchen prophetische Religionsoberen und Religionsdiener, die eigene Mitgläubenden motivieren würden zu kritischer Bewertung ihrer Gewalttaten in ferner und nahen Vergangenheit und zum Vertauen an die Andersgläubende. In dem Sinne Ziel des interreligiösen Dialogs ist nicht nur, die Vorurteile gegeneinander wegzuschaffen und ehrlich die Andersgläubenden kennenzulernen, sondern theologische Begründung des Zusammenlebens zu erstärken. Dialog unter Orthodoxe und Katholische Christen einerseits und zwischen Christen und Muslime andererseits in BH ist keine Politik sondern Glaubensverpflichtung, wie mein Kollege Topic sagt:

„Ungeachtet vieler Barrieren und Hindernisse glauben wir, dass es zum christlich-muslimischen Dialog keine Alternative gibt – weder auf globaler Ebene noch in BH -, nicht nur weil wir miteinander leben und auskommen müssen, sondern weil das vor allem eine Glaubensverpflichtung ist. Sowohl Muslime als auch Christen glauben erstens, dass Gott alle Menschen und jeden einzelnen erschaffen hat, und zweitens, dass Gott will, dass jeder einzelne und alle Menschen gerettet werden. Wie sich diese Rettung verwirklichen wird, ist letztendlich Gottes Sache. Natürlich muss man dafür sorgen und sich darum bemühen, dass der Dialog nicht zu einer bloß humanistischen Angelegenheit wird oder gar zu einem intellektuellen oder pseudo-religiösen Mode-Gag. Andererseits ist es doch die Pflicht eines jeden Gläubigen, für den Frieden, die

Bewahrung der Schöpfung, die Menschenrechte und andere menschliche Werte zu kämpfen“ (Topic, 2006, 505-506).

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung ist in Sarajevo schon zehn Jahre anwesend und tätig. Deutsche Direktorin und ihre bosnische Mitarbeiter haben bisher manche Projekte des IRR ermöglicht und begleitet. Im Juni haben sie die Resultate ihrer Forschung über das Vorstellen der Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften in öffentlichen Medien veröffentlicht. Eine Vorstellung der Resultate wurde am 4. Juli in Sarajevo TV Zentrum diskutiert. Aus der Berichten der Journalisten es folgt, dass die Medien bemühen sich nicht den inter-religiösen Dialog zu promovieren sondern den Eigentümer der Medien oder ihrer ethnischen Eliten sich einzuschmeicheln. Unsere Medien sind noch immer sehr ethnisch geprägt und es fehlt besonders am Forschungsjournalismus.

Stephen Goodwin hat im vergangenen Jahr seine Dissertation hier in Deutschland veröffentlicht, wo er seine Forschung in BH über die Rolle der glaubenden Individuellen und Religionsgemeinschaften in der Erneuerung der Zivilgesellschaft vorgestellt hat. Sein Hauptkonzept ist soziale Erneuerung (restoration) durch gegenseitige Versöhnung und Vergebung. Er sagt:

„The international community acting as an external force has not resolved the conflicts in BH, and military success in ending the war did not translate into established peace... The act of reconciliation is most naturally situated in the locus of personal and relational, not the structural and institutional. Peace-building and restoration are pre-eminently human endeavours involving the moral and ethical will of individuals and communities alike. It is for this reason that religion – with all its known difficulties in the Balkans – can only play an integrally positive role“ (S. Goodwin, 2006, 79-80).

Goodwin beschliesst seine Forschung, gegründet auf Fachliteratur und auf 28 Interviews mit Gläubigen aus verschiedenen Gemeinschaften in BH :

“Ultimately the success of the state rests in the hands and goodwill of its citizens. The religious faith sodalities have already demonstrated results of individual and communal movement from fragmentation towards wholeness, and continue to make significant contributions to sustainable peace and social restoration. Empowering them assists in the creation of a stable nation committed to the sacredness and dignity of all human life, and promotes much needed healing in this fractured land” (269).

Zum Schluss übernehme ich skizzhafte Thesen von Kardinal Vinko Puljic, der als Erzbischof von Sarajevo einer von vier Stifter des IRR in BH ist. In seinem Vortrag am 19. 5. 2007 in Münster hat er am Schluss seine Gedanken zusammengefasst:

- Man muss sich bemühen, nicht eine Atmosphäre der Angst und des Hasses zu verbreiten;
- Nationaler „Dekalog“ darf nicht wichtiger werden als der des Glaubens und der Moral;
- Man darf nicht immer die kollektive Identität auf Kosten der Identität der Einzelnen stellen;
- Man sollte die würdige Liebe zu seiner Nation, Religion und Staat pflegen und nicht die Idolatrie;
- Man darf die Kritik nicht nur über die anderen üben – die anderen sind nicht immer schuldig;
- Man muss bereit sein, bei dem anderen das Humane zu suchen und nicht das Satanische;
- Man darf nicht immer unsere böse Taten mit der Reziprozität der bösen Taten der Anderen rechtfertigen;
- Die Liebe gegenüber dem Eigenen darf nicht durch den Hass zu Anderen gemessen werden.

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DIALOGISCHE UND POLEMISCHE WAHRNEHMUNGEN DES CHRISTENTUMS DURCH MUSLIME IN BOSNIEN UND HERZEGOWINA¹

Ich habe dieses Thema vorgeschlagen, weil ich als Christ in Bosnien lebe und es für wichtig halte, dialogische und polemische Aspekte des Islams in unserem Land untereinander und vor unseren Freunden in Deutschland zu analysieren. Wir Christen sind froh, dass die offiziellen Vertreter der Islamischen Gemeinschaft in Bosnien und Herzegowina (IG BiH) den Dialog pflegen. Wir haben aber auch Angst vor unkontrollierbaren Broschüren und Büchern, die unsere Heilige Schrift und unseren Glauben karikieren.

DIALOGISCHE GESTEN UND TEXTE DES RIJASET UND DER FAKULTÄT IN SARAJEVO

Seit 1878 leben die BiH Muslime in einem Land ohne muslimischen Landesherrn. Der Rijaset ist ihre oberste Religionsinstitution und wird geleitet vom Rais ul-Ulama (Großmufti), der seit 1993 Professor Dr. Mustafa Cerić ist. Er hat am 27. August 2005 an einer internationalen Konferenz teilgenommen, bei der es um das Verhältnis von Gewalt und Religion nach den Terroranschlägen in New York, Madrid und London ging. Er hat bei dieser Gelegenheit seine *Declaration of European Muslims* vorgestellt. Er ermutigt darin die Muslime, ihren Glauben dialogisch zu praktizieren, die Gesetze

¹ Ein Beitrag auf der Tagung *Brückenschläge – 'Bosnischer Islam' für Europa*, Akademie der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart, 20.-22. 11. 2009.

der europäischen Länder einzuhalten, und er verlangt manche Sonderstrukturen für die muslimischen Bürger europäischer Staaten und der EU. Diesen 23 Seiten langen Text kann man auf der Internetseite des Rijaset auf Bosnisch, Arabisch, Deutsch, Englisch und Französisch finden.

Im Jahre 2007 haben die drei Dozenten der Fakultät für Islamische Studien in Sarajevo (*Fakultet islamskih nauka – FIN*) Ahmet Alibašić, Nedžad Grabus und Fikret Karčić im Auftrag des Rijaset das Dokument „Paradigma der Islamischen Gemeinschaft für Dialog“ verfasst. Den Text mit einer Einladung zu Beiträgen kann man ebenfalls auf der Internetseite des Rijaset finden. Der Text ist sieben Seiten lang und umfasst drei Teile: 1. Islamische Gemeinschaft in BiH und interreligiöser Dialog; 2. Internationale Beziehungen, Menschenrechte und Gewalt; 3. BiH: Vergangenheit und Zukunft. In diesem Dokument befürwortet die IG die Trennung von Staat und Religionsgemeinschaften, verurteilt den „säkularistischen“ Fundamentalismus gewisser Politiker und Medien im Lande und sieht den Dialog als Frage des Überlebens.

Dank der Hilfe des Büros der „Weltkonferenz der Religionen für Frieden“ (WCRP) in New York wurde in Sarajevo im Juni 1997 der Interreligiöse Rat (IRR) gegründet. Die Mitglieder sind die Religionsführer der Islamischen Gemeinschaft, der Serbisch-Orthodoxen Erzdiözese Dabar-Bosna, der katholische Erzbischof von Sarajevo und der Präsident der Jüdischen Gemeinden in BiH. Ohne aktive Mitarbeit der größten Religionsgemeinschaft – die Muslime sind relative Mehrheit in BiH – könnte eine solche NGO nicht registriert werden und wäre sinnlos. Unsere Oberhäupter treffen sich ungefähr alle zwei Monate, wir aus der „Zweiten Mannschaft“ monatlich und unsere fünf Angestellten arbeiten jeden Tag im Büro oder unterwegs an verschiedenen Projekten. Ihr letztes Projekt war eine Tagung für muslimische, orthodoxe und katholische Theologiestudenten in Sarajevo am 11. und 12. November, auf der der Brief der 138 muslimischen Gelehrten vom 13. Oktober 2007 *A Common word between us and you* an Papst Benedikt und andere christliche Oberhäupter analysiert wurde. Der Brief wurde von Studenten der FIN auf Bosnisch übersetzt. Die Intention der Unterzeichner wurde von Professor Alibašić erklärt und die Reaktion der Orthodoxen, Katholiken und Juden von den jeweiligen Konfessionsangehörigen dargestellt. Am dritten Tag haben die Teilnehmer gemeinsam einen Ausflug nach Mostar gemacht. Leider war es bislang nicht möglich, das Modell des IRR auf lokaler Ebene ausserhalb von Sarajevo zu verbreiten.

Als einer der Unterzeichner aus Europa des offenen Briefes *A Common Word* war Dr. Cerić Mitglied der muslimischen Delegation für Gespräche in Rom mit einer katholischen Delegation vom 4. bis 6. November 2008 und hielt in der Audienz vor Papst Benedikt eine Rede. Er hat das Projekt von El-Kalem, einem muslimischen Verlagshaus in Sarajevo, unterstützt, das Buch *A Common Word Between Us and You* (Amman, Januar 2009) zu übersetzen und zu veröffentlichen. Das elektronische Manuskript wurde Anfang November in den Druck gegeben.

Ich selbst war Mitglied der katholischen Delegation bei der Feier der Eröffnung der Islamischen Fakultät in Sarajevo am 9. November 1977. Während die Delegierten aus den Arabischen Ländern in ihrer Sprache über die Treue der neuen Ausbildungsstätte der IG BiH gegenüber den Glaubensquellen sprachen, betonte Professor Husein Džozo die Zeichen der Zeit und die Ausbildung der muslimischen Theologen, die befähigt werden sollten, die Fragen der heutigen in BiH lebenden Menschen zu beantworten. Das bekräftigte auch Dr. Ahmed Smajlović, damaliger Professor und Oberhaupt der Muslimischen Gemeinde in der Republik BiH innerhalb von Jugoslawien in seinem Interview in *Mladi teolog*, der Zeitschrift der katholischen Theologiestudenten, im Jahre 1983. Das ist die Mission der Fakultät und die heutige Generation der Professoren und Studenten gibt sich alle Mühe, diese Mission sorgfältig zu erfüllen. Unter den Dialogveranstaltungen in jüngster Zeit kann ich das Programm am 14. und 15. Mai dieses Jahres anlässlich des Besuchs von Professor Hans Küng in Sarajevo anführen. Im Teil des Programms an der Islamischen Fakultät sprach Küng über Weltethos in Politik und Wirtschaft, Professor Nedžad Grabus über interreligiösen Dialog aus islamischer Sicht und ich über den Brief *A common word between us and you*.

Die Leitung und die Studenten von FIN veranstalten gerne Begegnungen mit christlichen Theologen im Lande und mit ausländischen Gästen, die Sarajevo besuchen und manchmal einen oder mehrere Vorträge anbieten. So haben zwei Professoren aus Schweden die Fakultät am 13. Oktober besucht. Dr. Edgar Almén hat über Dialog als Aufgabe und Herausforderung für Christen und Muslime gesprochen, Dr. Hakad Ulfgard über das Studium der Religion an der Universität Linköping in Schweden. Die FIN ist auch eine Einrichtung für den innerislamischen Dialog in BiH heute. Am 27. Februar dieses Jahres hat ein Student in der kleinen und sympathischen Moschee der FIN das Gebet geleitet und eine Ansprache (*hutba*) gehalten, in der er über innermuslimische Islamophobie sprach. Seine

Predigt wurde in *Preporod* von 15. März 2009 veröffentlicht, aber der junge Assistent Dr. Samir Beglerović hat in *Preporod* vom 1. April einen Artikel publiziert, in dem er diese Predigt kritisierte und seine zwei mit Namen erwähnten Professoren verteidigte.

Der historische Roman „Das Singen der wilden Vögel“ (*Pjesme divljih ptica*, 2009) von Professor Enes Karić wurde in kurzer Zeit zweimal aufgelegt. Hauptperson des Romans ist der muslimische Theologe Skender Humo, der zehn Jahre in Istanbul und fünf Jahre in Italien studierte und von 1584 bis 1604 an der Medresse von Sarajevo Professor war. Er diskutiert höflich aber gründlich mit Kollegen und Mitbürgern, warum die Osmanische Armee die Seeschlacht von Lepanto im Jahre 1571 verloren hat und befürwortet einen vernünftigen, gemässigten Islam. Er wird am Ende von seinem Dienst entlassen und zieht sich mit seiner Frau in seine Heimatstadt Mostar zurück. Der Roman wurde bei mehreren Veranstaltungen und in Tageszeitungen vorgestellt.

Neben den drei schon erwähnten Förderern des Dialogs an der FIN (Alibašić, Grabus, Karić) schreiben die Professoren Rešid Hafizović und Adnan Silajdžić über Islamische Identität in unserer pluralen Welt, Professor Fikret Karčić analysiert die Erfahrung der BiH Muslime, die schon 130 Jahre in einem nichtmuslimischen Staat leben und dennoch ihren Glauben frei praktizieren können. Karić und Hafizović haben das Buch *The Two Faces of Islam* von Stephen Schwartz auf Bosnisch übersetzt. Karić und Alibašić haben das Buch *The West and Islam towards a Dialogue* von Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu übersetzt. Professor Dževad Hodžić hat mit einer Arbeit über die ethische Verantwortung der Wissenschaft promoviert; er ist Mitglied der Bioethischen Gesellschaft in BiH und schreibt über ethischen Aspekte der Ökologie.

DIE VON SAUDI-ARABIEN FINANZIERTEN MOSCHEEN UND SAFF

Nach dem Zerfall von Jugoslawien kamen während des Krieges zahlreiche Kämpfer aus islamischen Ländern nach BiH, um ihren Glaubensgeschwistern im Kampf auf Leben und Tod zu helfen. Der aus Vareš in Bosnien stammende kroatische Journalist Ivica Mlivončić schätzt, dass ihre Zahl zwischen 5000 und 6000 betragen haben mag. Nach dem Krieg haben viele dieser *Mudzahedins* bosnische Frauen geheiratet und sind in BiH geblieben.

Nicht wenige von ihnen sind Anhänger der Wahabi-Bewegung und versuchen, die bosnischen Muslime vom traditionellen sunnitischen Islam zu ihrer Art des Islams zu bekehren. Sie haben versucht, eigene Siedlungen mit Selbstverwaltung und eigenen Schulen zu schaffen. Nach dem Terroranschlag in New York vom 11. September 2001 wurden manche als „schlafende Terroristen“ entdeckt und vertrieben oder verhaftet. In der Umgebung von Travnik, wo während des Kriegs zwischen Kroaten und Bosniaken vom März 1993 bis April 1994 die Bosniaken die militärische und zivile Kontrolle übernommen hatten, sind in den Jahren 1996 und 1997 elf zurückgekehrte kroatische Kriegsflüchtlinge in ihren Häuser durch Terroranschläge ums Leben gekommen. Die Polizei hat die Täter nie entdeckt. In der Gemeinde Konjic, Dorf Kostajnica, erschoss Muamer Topalović am 24. Dezember 2002 drei Mitglieder der zurückgekehrten Familie Andjelić in ihrem Haus. Diesmal hat die Polizei schnell den Täter verhaftet und während des Prozesses sagte sein Vater: „Mein Sohn ist nicht psychisch gestört, sondern er wurde von Wahabis missbraucht.“

Unter den neuen Moscheen, die nach dem Friedensvertrag von Dayton gebaut werden konnten, sind einige, die von Saudi Arabien finanziert wurden. Ich habe zwei solche Moscheen mit einer Gruppe von christlichen Touristen besucht. In der offiziellen Führung wurde uns nicht nur der Gebetsraum gezeigt, sondern auch die Räume des angeschlossenen muslimischen Zentrums mit humanitären Programmen und Lernprojekten. Ich habe absichtlich gefragt, wer den Hauptimam und den Direktor des Zentrums ernannt hat. Es wurde geantwortet, dass der Hauptimam von Dr. Cerić ernannt worden sei, aber die Bedingung sei gewesen, daß der Kandidat sein Theologiestudium in Saudi Arabien beendet haben solle. Der Direktor des Zentrums war ein Araber, der von saudiarabischen Behörden ernannt wurde. Er koordiniert und finanziert die humanitäre Programme und Lernangebote.

Der Verlagsverein „Saff“ in Zenica gibt seit 1996 die illustrierte Zeitschrift „Saff“ mit der Absicht heraus, aktuelle sozialpolitische und religiöse Themen für die Bosniaken islamischen Glaubens zu behandeln. Die Zeitschrift wird jeden zweiten Freitag mit 68 Seiten veröffentlicht. In den ersten Jahren war *Saff* sehr kritisch gegenüber Christen im Land und im Ausland und versuchte, die wahabitische Art des Islams zu unterstützen. In der Ausgabe vom 22. Oktober 2008 veröffentlichte *Saff* ein Gespräch mit Vernes Hodžić. Er ist ein junger Muslim, der seit 1993 mit Franziskanerpatres im Kloster Guča Gora Kontakt hatte und im Jahre 1994 darum

bat, getauft zu werden. Die Franziskaner verweigerten es erst, aber da er insistierte, unterwies ihn ein Pater im katholischen Glauben und taufte ihn am 11. Mai 2006. Da der Neugetaufte auch Franziskaner werden wollte, wurde er im Schuljahr 2006/2007 für das Franziskanische Knabenseminar in Visoko zugelassen, um seine Mittelschule zu ergänzen. Im Schuljahr 2007/2008 wurde er zum Noviziat in Livno zugelassen, aber der Novizenmeister erkannte, dass er die Aufgaben der Franziskaner nicht erfolgreich erfüllen würde und schlug dem Provinzial P. Mijo Džolan vor, ihn zu entlassen. Das wurde am 6. Oktober 2008 getan. Danach ist Vernes zurück zum Islam übergetreten. Der Journalist Ezher Beganović von *Saff* hat mit ihm ein langes Gespräch geführt, in dem sich Vernes mit schlimmen Worten über Kardinal Puljić, den Provinzial Džolan und manche Franziskaner äußert. Er beschuldigt 80% der bosnischen Franziskaner als kroatische Nationalisten. Pater Provinzial Džolan hat in einem öffentlichen Brief an Grossmufti Dr. Cerić erklärt, warum seine Mitbrüder den Kandidat getauft haben. Da die Geschichte zahlreicher Bekehrungen in BiH schon Jahrhunderte vorbei ist, haben die IG BiH, die orthodoxe und die katholische Kirche keine Programme oder Missionare für die mögliche Bekehrung erwachsener Andersglaubender. Proselytismus ist zwar ausgeschlossen, aber wir respektieren das Gewissen der freien Personen. Wir nehmen die an, die als Erwachsene wünschen, sich unserer jeweiligen Glaubensgemeinschaft anzuschließen.

Professor Karić hat in Fernsehgesprächen und Interviews mehrere Male seine Meinung geäußert, der Grossmufti müsse energischer und klarer betonen, dass der Wahabismus keine bosnische Art des Islams ist, um eigene Religionsmitglieder vor dem Einfluss der Extremisten zu schützen.

ÜBERSETZTE BROSCHÜREN UND BÜCHER, IN WELCHEN DIE HEILIGE SCHRIFT UND DAS CHRISTENTUM KARIKIERT WERDEN (1993-2009)

1. In Zenica wurde im Jahre 1993 von Halil Mehtić und Hasan Makić die Broschüre „Weisungen für Muslimische Kämpfer“ (*Upute za muslimanske borce*) veröffentlicht. Im Kapitel über die „Kriegsgefangenen“ (S. 25-26) wird das Verbot des Umbringens der Frauen, Kinder oder Priester, „die nicht am Krieg teilnehmen oder dem Feind nicht indirekt helfen“,

unterstrichen, aber der Vorgesetzte kann zu der Einschätzung gelangen, dass das gemeinsame Interesse ein anderes Verfahren verlangt, und in diesem Falle müssen die Soldaten gehorchen.

2. Der Jahreskalender 1994 (*Takvim*) wurde von Ilmijja, einem Verein von Imamen in BiH, veröffentlicht. Im ersten Teil ist das Kapitel „Der Jihad – der Kampf auf dem Weg Allahs“ von Hasan al-Banna abgedruckt (S. 6-32). Es wird der Fall einer Mutter dargestellt, die zum Propheten kam, um Trost zu suchen, nachdem ihr Sohn auf dem Weg Allahs ums Leben gekommen war. Der Prophet sagte ihr: „Dein Sohn wird die Belohnung von zwei Märtyrern (*shahid*) bekommen, weil er von einem Schriftgläubigen umgebracht worden ist.“ Und der Autor kommentiert, dass der Jihad nicht nur gegen Götzenverehrer vorgeschrieben sei, sondern gegen alle Nichtmuslime (S. 17). Etwas weiter sagt er: „Der Jihad ist der Kampf gegen die Ungläubigen und alles, was diesen Kampf umfasst: sie schlagen, ihres Eigentums berauben, ihre Gebetshäuser zerstören, ihre Statuen zerbrechen mit der Absicht, den islamischen Glauben zu stärken ... Muslime sind verpflichtet, die Ungläubigen zu angreifen, nachdem sie von ihnen zum Islam eingeladen worden sind, auch im Falle, dass die Ungläubigen selbst keinen Angriff durchgeführt haben. Der Landesherr ist verpflichtet, jedes Jahr eine Kriegstruppe ins nichtmuslimische Gebiet zu schicken und die Untertanen sind verpflichtet, ihm zu helfen“ (S. 22-23).

3. Im Jahre 1996 wurde die bosnische Übersetzung der Broschüre *The Truth about Jesus* von Dr. Maneh Hammad Al-Johani in Sarajevo veröffentlicht. Das Original wurde in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1992 von der Assembly of Muslim Youth herausgegeben, aber in der bosnischen Ausgabe wurden Ort, Verlag und Jahr der Erscheinung nicht genannt. Im Vorwort behauptet der Verfasser, Jesus habe nie einen Anspruch erhoben, er sei der Sohn Gottes. Jesus sei nicht gekreuzigt worden, weil Gott es so eingerichtet habe, dass jemand anderer an seiner Stelle gekreuzigt wurde (S. 17). Das griechische Wort *pais* ist in dieser bosnischen Ausgabe falsch transkribiert worden (S. 24). Es steht auch darin, dass ein gewisser Papst im Jahre 1960 in einer Enzyklika die Theorie über den Tod Jesu zurückgewiesen habe, indem er behauptete, die Juden seien nicht schuld am Tod Jesu. Der Autor behauptet, die Kirche habe viele Elemente ins Christentum eingeschoben, die sich dem frühen Christentum widersetzen. Er behauptet, Jesus habe nicht vorgehabt, eine Kirche zu stiften, sondern eine Gesellschaft der Menschen, die der Glaube an einzigen Gott einander nahe bringt. Er ärgert sich über die Christen, da sie den Koran und den Islam

ignorierten, und ermutigt sie, mindestens den Wunsch zu haben, den Islam kennenzulernen.

4. Im Jahre 1997 begann das Iranische Kulturzentrum in der Hauptstrasse von Sarajevo, seinen Besuchern das übersetzte Buch „Christentum – die Wahrheit über das Christentum hinsichtlich Geschichte, Glauben, Bücher, Richtungen und Lehre“ von Dr. Mustafa Shahin zu schenken. Auf Seite 2 steht, das Buch sei in BiH von El-Mudzahid mit 100.000 Exemplare verlegt worden. Während des Krieges von 1991 bis 1995 wurde El-Mudzahid bekannt als eine muslimische Militäreinheit, die sich aus ausländischen Kämpfern zusammensetzte. In BiH werden nichtschulische Bücher gewöhnlich mit 2000 Exemplaren verlegt. Der Übersetzer Hasan Popara behauptet in seinem Vorwort, es sei unwiderruflich bewiesen, dass das Christentum mehr eine Mischung von alten heidnischen Lehren als die Lehre von Jesus darstelle (S. 5). Das Buch enthält 293 Seiten und neun Kapitel. Unter der Überschrift „Text des Evangeliums verneint die Kreuzigung“ zitiert der Autor das Johannesevangelium 7,33-35; 16,10.16 (S. 114-115) und ignoriert Joh 18-19, wo der Prozess und der Tod Jesu am Kreuz dargestellt sind. Er zitiert auch die Meinungen mancher abgefallenen Christen, die den Glauben der Kirche ablehnen, als „wissenschaftliche“ Beweise. Aus der Niederlage der Kreuzfahrer im Heiligen Land zieht er die Folgerung, dass das Christentum nicht der wahre Glaube sein könne.

5. Auf der Titelseite des Buches „Triumph der Wahrheit (verkürzte Version)“ – *Skraćena verzija knjige Trijumf istine* von Rahmetullah bin Halil El Hindi (1818-1891), zusammengefasst von Abdul Kadir Melkavi, heißt es, das Buch sei vom „Ministerium für Islam und Mission“ verlegt worden. Welches Ministerium welchen Staates steht nirgendwo im Buch. Der Name des Übersetzers wird nicht genannt, aber in seinem Vorwort stellt er den Autor als einen grossen Missionar des Islams in Indien vor, der gegen den Einfluss der christlichen Missionare unter der kolonialen Verwaltung gekämpft hat. Melkavi hat sein Vorwort in Riyadh am 10. Juni 1994 geschrieben, aber der bosnische Verleger gibt weder Jahr noch Ort der Veröffentlichung an. Das Buch umfasst 220 Seiten. Zuerst werden das Alte und Neue Testament für muslimische Leser vorgestellt, dann folgen „die Beweise, dass diese Bibel vollen Widersprüche, Fehler und Verfälschungen ist“ (S. 36-92). Ein unvermeidliches Kapitel ist „die Anfechtung der Trinitätslehre“ (S. 108-130). Der restliche Teil des Buches spricht vom übernatürlichen Ursprung und Inhalt des Korans. Der Autor ruft am Ende zum Abfall vom Christentum auf: „Mensch mit Vernunft begabt, verlasse

den Fanatismus und die Voreingenommenheit! Erwähle dir den Glauben, mit welchem der Erhabene Allah zufrieden ist; er will, dass dieser Glaube zum Glauben aller Menschen wird. Der einzige wahre Glaube ist der Islam' (K 3,9)" (S. 211).

6. Maurice Bucaille, ein Arzt, der in Frankreich 1918 geboren und katholisch erzogen wurde, wurde im Jahre 1973 zum Arzt von König Faisal ernannt und zum Islam bekehrt. In 1976 veröffentlichte er in Paris sein Buch *La Bible, le Coran et la science*. Das Buch wurde auf Englisch und andere Sprachen übersetzt und ist in Millionen Exemplaren verkauft worden. Es wurde in 1978 auch in Sarajevo veröffentlicht und hat die kritische Reaktion von zwei katholischen Exegeten angeregt. Im Jahre 2001 erschien eine neue Auflage dieses Buchs in Sarajevo, und zwar bei El-Kalem, dem offiziellen Verlagshaus der IG BiH. Diesmal mit der Einführung von Orhan Bajraktarević, der Professor an FIN ist, und sechs Beiträgen, deren zwei von Christen verfasst sind, einer von einem christlichen Dissidenten und zwei von Muslimen. Professor Bajraktarević kritisiert Kardinal Puljić, weil er als Erzbischof von Sarajevo „erlaubt“ habe, dass die Franziskaner in Mostar die neue Pfarrkirche mit einem ungeheuer hohen Turm bauen und weil er nicht befohlen hat, die Kreuze an muslimischen Häusern und Denkmälern in Počitelj, einem historischen Städtchen in der Herzegowina, das kroatische Kräfte im Jahre 1994 erobert und mit Zeichen ihrer dauerhaften Kontrolle „geschmückt“ haben, zu entfernen. Der Professor sollte allerdings wissen, dass der katholische Bischof von Sarajevo keine kirchliche und zivile Kontrollmöglichkeit in der Nachbardiözese hat.

Saleh S. A. Razaq hat in seiner Dissertation über konvertierte abendländische Intellektuelle den Beitrag von M. Bucaille zur Gestaltung des abendländischen Islam als wichtig gezeichnet (Razaq, 2008, 140; 473-483). Obwohl viele Muslime in BiH das Buch von Bucaille noch immer für eine wissenschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit der christlichen Bibel und einen guten Beitrag zur rationalen Rechtfertigung des Islams halten, haben zwei Ausgaben des Buchs innerhalb von 23 Jahren das Vertrauen zwischen Christen und Muslime schwer beschädigt. Der Autor geht nicht tiefer auf die hermeneutischen Fragen ein, wie die biblischen Bücher zwischen 550 vor Christus und 120 nach Christus von verschiedenen Autoren und in verschiedenen Literaturgattungen geschrieben wurden. Aber die Veröffentlichung stellt Christen und Muslimen vor die Frage, wie wir rational unseren Glauben verteidigen, ohne den Glauben und die Kultur des „Anderen“ zu beleidigen.

7. Der bosnische Muslim Hajrudin Pekarić Dino ist Autor des Buches „Jesus/Isa im Christentum und Islam“ (*Isus/Isa a. s. u kršćanstvu i islamu*, Tuzla, PrintCom 2005). Laut dem Rezensenten Amir Karić hat der Autor kein Theologiestudium beendet. Dennoch benutzte er 206 Bücher oder Artikel, meistens aus dem Gebiet der allgemeinen Religionswissenschaft, um die Gestalt Jesu darzustellen. Er benutzt jedoch nicht in Bosnien veröffentlichte Kommentare des Korans und des Neuen Testaments. Er bemüht sich, das Predigen Jesu über das Reich Gottes und seine Lehre über das Weltende zu erforschen. In seinem fünften Kapitel stellt er „das Mysterium der Kreuzigung und Auferstehung“ (S. 157-193) dar und kommt zu folgendem Schluss: „Christus ist nicht am Kreuz gestorben, sondern er lebt weiter in Seelen von Millionen der Gläubigen, die an einen Gott glauben.“ Als Beweis zitiert er E. v. Däniken und den Koran. Im „Post scriptum“ (S. 385) ermutigt er seine Leser, sich den kleinen und großen Interessen der Religionsoberen zu verweigern, damit Christen und Muslime in Frieden als Geschwister leben können. Er vergleicht den Text des Vaterunsers in der Matthäusversion und die al-Fatiha (K 1,1-7) als typisch christliches und typisch muslimisches Gebet.

8. Das Buch „Islam oder Christentum – eine Herausforderung der Zeit“ (*Islam ili kršćanstvo izazov vremena*) von Muhammed Gazali wurde von Enis Kozlić übersetzt und im Jahre 2005 in Kakanj veröffentlicht. Der Autor sagt in seiner Einleitung, er habe für sein Werk im 900 Seiten dicken Buch des Kongresses der christlichen Missionare in Amerika Aussagen „über Taufen der Muslime und Vernichtung ihres Glaubens“ (S. 21) gefunden. Er betont, die heutige Zivilisation habe nichts mit Moses und Jesus zu tun; sie werde vielmehr von Priestern mit ihren diesseitigen Interessen verführt (S. 28). Er ärgert sich über Muslime aus Marokko und Ägypten, die er besucht hat und die fast nichts über ihren Glauben wissen. Sein Buch ist eine Polemik gegen christliche Missionare, die versuchten, die Muslime von ihrem Glauben loszureißen, besonders in Indien und südlichem Sudan. Er sieht die Missionare als neue Kolonisatoren. Er vergleicht die Lage der Frauen im Islam und Christentum. Er befürwortet die Teilnahme der muslimischen Frauen an gesellschaftlichen und politischen Ereignissen, damit die christlichen Missionare keinen Grund für ihre Tätigkeit hätten.

Ich kenne keine derartigen christlichen Missionare in BiH. Der Übersetzer legt seinen Lesern nahe, uns Christen in BiH verantwortlich zu machen für die Sünden der nordamerikanischen Missionare in Afrika und Asien.

9. Zakir Naik ist ein indischer Arzt, 1965 in Mumbai geboren und aufgewachsen in einer muslimischen Familie. Seit 1997 betreibt er *Da'wah* in Vollzeit. Er hat die *Islamic Research Foundation* gestiftet, welche aus Mumbai *Peace TV* sendet. Unter seinen Werken ist auch *Non-Muslim Common Questions About Islam*. Senad Redžepović hat eine Auswahl aus seinen Schriften aus dem Arabischen übersetzt: „Antworten auf Irrtümer den Islam betreffend. Das Konzept Gottes in den Weltreligionen. Antwort auf die 20 am häufigsten gestellten Fragen über den Islam“ (*Odgovori na zaoblude o islamu. Koncept Boga u svjetskim religijama. Odgovor na 20 najčešće postavljenih pitanja o Islamu*, Sarajevo, Bookline 2007). Im vierten Kapitel antwortet er auf die Frage, „ob der Islam mit dem Schwert verbreitet wurde“ (S. 69-73), im fünften, ob die Muslime Terroristen seien (S. 74-78). Hier sagt er: „Ein echter Muslim sollte nur gegenüber einer gewissen Gruppe Menschen Terrorist sein –antisozialen Elementen der Gesellschaft, und überhaupt nicht gegenüber gewöhnlichen, unschuldigen Leuten. Vielmehr sollte er eine Quelle der Sicherheit für gewöhnliche, unschuldige Leute sein“ (S. 77). Die Nichtmuslime sollten sich nicht über die Bezeichnung „Kafir“ ärgern, weil deren Intention sei, die Andersgläubigen zu bezeichnen, nicht zu beleidigen (S. 142). In seinem Schluss betont der Verfasser, der Koran sei keine wissenschaftliche Enzyklopädie, sondern ein Buch der Zeichen und unterstreicht, dass „die koranische Art des Lebens gegenüber all dem überlegen ist, was die Menschen den anderen aufzudrängen versucht haben. Wer kann eine bessere Verhaltensregel geben als der Schöpfer allein?“ (S. 189-190). Der Verfasser des Beitrags in Wikipedia über Naik zitiert seine Aussage, dass „his goal is to concentrate on the educated Muslim youth who have become apologetic about their own religion and have started to feel the religion outdated“. In diesem Buch karikiert er nicht den Glauben der Anderen. Einfach und klar bespricht er die Fragen, die die Nichtmuslime oft den Muslimen stellen. Ähnlich machen es die christlichen Gruppen, die unter Muslimen leben, wenn es um die Fragen der Muslime an die Christen geht.

10. Ahmed Deedat (1918-2005) wurde in Indien geboren, zog aber 1927 nach Südafrika, wo sein Vater lebte. Als Junge arbeitete er in der Buchhandlung eines Muslims, 1936 ist er selbst Muslim geworden und war 40 Jahre lang als *Da'wah*-Aktivist tätig. Er hat viele öffentliche Diskussionen mit christlichen Predigern geführt und dieses Material in Dokumentarfilmen oder Büchern verwertet. Er benutzte Englisch für seine Botschaft an die Muslime und Nichtmuslime in verschiedenen Ländern.

Sein Buch *Is the Bible God's Word?* wurde von Eniz Kozlić aus dem Arabischen ins Bosnische übersetzt und 2009 in Sarajevo veröffentlicht (*Kur'an ili Biblija – koja je od ovih knjiga autentična Božija riječ*, Sarajevo, Bookline). Es handelt sich um ein Streitgespräch mit einem christlichen Prediger, der Araber ist. Jeder Gesprächspartner soll seine Einschätzung der Bibel bzw. des Korans vorstellen und dann auf fünf Fragen antworten. Der christliche Sprecher ist ein fundamentalistisch orientierter Evangelikaler und beide Partner zitieren den heiligen Text ohne Rücksicht auf Kontext, Umwelt und Zweck.

11. Das Buch von A. Deedat *The Choice – Islam and Christianity* wurde von Amir Mehić übersetzt (*Islam ili kršćanstvo?*, Bužim, Illum 2009, 379 Seiten). Um die Bibel anzufechten, isoliert er Zitate aus ihrem Kontext ohne Rücksicht auf die Entstehungszeit der biblischen Texte. Gleichzeitig ist er davon überzeugt, dass die Bibel die Ankunft von Muhammad prophezeit. Das Buch beginnt mit dem Kapitel „Was sagt die Bibel über Muhammad?“ (S. 5-25), aber der polemischste Teil trägt den Titel „Die Rüstung“ (S. 195-230), wo er 54 kleinere Einheiten aus verschiedenen Bibelbüchern zitiert und einen lächerlichen oder sündigen Sinn darin findet.

GESAMTEINSCHÄTZUNG UND SCHLUSS

Nur das Buch von M. Bucaille wurde 1978 und 2001 von El-Kalem, dem Verlagshaus der IG in BiH veröffentlicht. Alle anderen sind von Privatpersonen und privaten Verlegern herausgegeben worden. Der Rijaset kann natürlich nicht alles kontrollieren, was mit Vorzeichen des Islams in BiH geschrieben oder übersetzt wird. Diese Broschüren und Bücher verursachen jedoch Angst unter den Christen und bieten den muslimischen Lesern eine Vorlage, ihre christlichen Mitbürger für lächerlich und dumm zu halten oder sogar zu hassen.

Zum Schluss möchte ich wiederholen, dass die meisten Leute des Rijaset und die meisten Professoren von der FIN in Sarajevo den Dialog mit uns Christen in BiH ehrlich und langfristig fördern. Die polemischen Broschüren und Bücher, herausgegeben meistens von Privatverlegern, können eine Aufmunterung sein, den eigenen Glauben rational zu rechtfertigen, aber ohne den Glauben der anderen zu karikieren.

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RELIGIONSGEMEINSCHAFTEN ZWISCHEN DEM INDIVIDUELLEN RECHT UND DER ETHNISCH- RELIGIÖSER IDENTITÄT IN BOSNIEN UND HERZEGOWINA¹

Ich nehme als allgemein bekannt an, dass sich im heutigen Staat Bosnien und Herzegowina (BH) fast alle Muslime als ethnische Boschnjaken, alle Orthodoxe als Serben und alle Katholiken als Kroaten fühlen. Wie ist es dazu gekommen? Das sollte aus dem Vortrag an dieser Tagung von Prof. Dr. Ludwig Steindorf klar sein. Mit der Frage verbunden halte ich das Buch von Srecko Džaja *Konfessionalität und Nationalität Bosniens und der Herzegowina* für sehr interessant und wichtig. Da ich nur ein Theologe bin, der unter Muslimen in Sarajevo lebt, das seit 1995 mehrheitlich muselmanisch bewohnt ist, möchte ich aus eigener Erfahrung zeigen, wie wichtig und kompliziert eine ausgeglichene Beziehung von Staatsangehörigkeit und ethnisch-religiöser Identität in unserer Gesellschaft ist.

FRIEDENSVERTRAG VON DAYTON HAT NICHT DIE KRIEGSWUNDEN GEHEILT

Heutiger Staat BH ist aus dem Dayton Friedensvertrag in November 1995 entstanden und ist sehr schwer regierbar. Zwei sogenannte Entitäten machen es fast unmöglich gewisse Gesetze auf der Staatsebene zu

¹ Eine Mitteilung an der Tagung *Zur Rolle der Religionen in Südosteuropa*, Evangelische Akademie Tuzting, 18. bis 19. Juni 2007.

verabschieden und durchzuführen. Ich nehme als Beispiel den Gesetzesentwurf der Nationalfeiertage an. Im April 2005 hatte eine Gruppe der Abgeordneten den Entwurf dieses Gesetzes gemacht und am 11. Mai fand die öffentliche Diskussion über diesen Entwurf im Parlament statt. Die Delegierten der Religionsgemeinschaften wurden eingeladen, um ihren Beitrag beizubringen. Der katholische Erzbischof von Sarajevo hat mich beauftragt, in der Diskussion teilzunehmen. In der Stellungnahmen der offiziellen Sprecher konnte man die Vermischung der Religions- und Volksangehörigkeit der Sprechenden sehr stark spüren. Boschnjakisch-muselmanischer Redner, eingeschlossen der Delegierte der muslimischen Gemeinde, waren mit dem Entwurf zufrieden, weil er von den Boschnjaken verfasst wurde. Die kroatischen Delegierten stimmten dem Entwurf grundsätzlich zu, aber sie verlangten einige zusätzliche Feiertage als gemeinsame Erinnerung an historische Ereignisse, die für die Kroaten im Lande wichtig waren. Sechs serbischen Redner betonten, dass bosnischen Serben nie den 11. Juli als Gedenktag der Srebrenica Opfer feiern werden, noch weniger den 1. März als den Tag des Referendums, wo die meisten Bürger von BH für die Selbstständigkeit von BH stimmten. Die serbischen Redner insistierten, dass der Tag der Unterschreibung des Friedensvertrages von Dayton ein gemeinsamer Staatsfeiertag sein sollte. Praktisch, die Diskutierenden stimmten nur für drei Feiertage auf der ganzen Staatsebene: 1. Januar als Zivilneujahr, 1. Mai als internationaler Arbeitstag und 9. Mai als der Tag des Sieges über Nationalsozialismus. So konnte das Gesetz noch nicht verabschiedet werden und der hohe Repräsentant (zur Zeit der Deutsche Diplomat Dr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling) hat keine Absicht dieses Gesetz aufzuzwingen.

Darf ich noch einen anderen Beispiel erwähnen, der viel mehr über die faktische Stellung der Minderheiten besagt. Die nicht-Muslime in Sarajevo sollten sich sicher fühlen, weil es nicht mehr physische oder so viele verbale Angriffe in öffentlichen Verkehrsmitteln oder auf den Strassen auf sie gibt. Aber, eine Universitätsprofessorin im Ruhestand, die ein Mitglied des Pastoralrates in ihrer Pfarrei in Sarajevo ist, hat sich neulich bei einer Sitzung des Rates beklagt, dass sie jeden Morgen auf dem Weg von ihrer Wohnung zur Kirche an einer Mauer den Slogan „Smrt Vlasima – Tod den Walachen“ lesen muss. „Walachen“ ist ein Spottname der Muslime für die Christen in BH. Die Dame fragte, wie sicher ist ihr Leben und was ist ihre Zukunft in dieser Stadt bei solchen und ähnlichen Drohungszeichen. Natürlich, die Muslime finden ähnliche Inschriften in den Ortschaften mit

katholischen oder orthodoxen Mehrheit, genauso die Orthodoxen werden in Ortschaften beschimpft, wo Muslime oder Katholiken eine Bevölkerungsmehrheit haben.

Zwölf Jahre nach dem Friedensvertrag von Dayton ausländische Truppen und Diplomaten geben zu, dass sie zwar die groben ethnischen Konflikte eingestellt haben, aber geben zu, dass sie einen langfristigen Frieden, tiefe Versöhnung und gesundes Vertrauen unter der Bevölkerung nicht schaffen können. Es wird von den BH Bürgern, Religionsoberen und von ihren pastoralen Mitarbeitern erwartet, dass sie sich nicht so viel um die ethnische und religiöse Identität bemühen, sondern eine tolerante und plurale Zivilgesellschaft ausbilden. In dem Sinne manche Äußerungen und Initiativen von Bischöfen, Priestern, Muftis und Imams werden als engherzig oder nationalistisch kritisiert. Unsere wahre Schwäche liegt darin, dass die meisten Religionsdiener und einfache Gläubigen laufende Äußerungen oder die Taten der „Anderen“ als eine Gefahr für sich selbst und die eigene Gruppe sehen und dabei haben keinen prophetischen Mut, die eigene Glaubens- und Volksgemeindemitglieder kritisch zu bewerten. In unserer Geschichte folgten einander die Kaiserreiche, Staaten und Regierungen meistens gewaltig. Sie dauerten ein paar Jahrhunderte oder Jahrzehnte und verschwanden. Deshalb haben einerseits unsere ethnische und religiöse Gemeinschaften nicht viel Vertrauen an den Staat und Staatsbeamten, und andererseits die Religionsdiener, die aus dem Volk kommen und mit dem Volk bleiben, genießen bei der Bevölkerung mehr Vertrauen. Das ist unsere Herausforderung und Chance.

WIE INTEGRIEREN WIR VERSCHIEDENE ETHNISCH-RELIGIÖSE IDENTITÄTEN UND GEMEINSAME STAATSANGEHÖRIGKEIT?

Von 1918 bis 1990 existierte Jugoslawien als ein Staat der sechs Völker und zwei große nationale Minderheiten. Obwohl die offizielle Politik versuchte eine Sprache als Saatsprache und synkretistische Nationalität von „Jugoslawen“ aufzubauen, dieser Staat ist nie eine Nation geworden und musste zerfallen, sobald seine Völker die Möglichkeit hatten, in einem Referendum demokratisch über Ihre Selbstständigkeit zu entscheiden. Ich hoffe, dass entweder das Mehrheitsvolk in BH (die Boschneiken) noch die Internationale Gemeinschaft nie versuchen werden, - geheim oder öffentlich - ein Volk

und eine Sprache in BH zu erschaffen. Als einzelne Bürger und Mitglieder unserer Volks- und Religionsgemeinschaften werden wir schrittweise den Staat BH nicht nur dulden, sondern aktiv unterstützen, nur wenn wir unsere ethnisch-religiöse Identität in echter Freiheit und Pluralismus beibehalten und pflegen dürfen.

Ich war mit meinem Erzbischof Vinko Kardinal Puljic bei einem Abendessen in Sarajevo eingeladen, wo ein europäischer Diplomat fragte: warum insistieren die Bischöfe und die Priester an der kroatischen Nationalität der Katholiken in BH? Wäre es nicht besser, den katholischen oder Orthodoxen Glauben zu behalten und bosnische Nationalität anzunehmen?, schlug er vor. Ich frage mich aber, ob man die eigene Familie, in der man geboren und erzogen wurde, verraten darf? Ist etwa eine Sünde, ein gewusster Kroat in Bosnien zu bleiben und Staatsangehöriger von BH zu sein? Es ist mir zwar bewusst, dass das diesen kleinen europäischen Staat kompliziert macht, aber wir sind nicht daran schuld, dass in unserem Land seit Jahrhunderten verschiedene Völker- und Religionsgemeinschaften sich begegnen, ohne zu verschmelzen.

Stephen Goodwin hat im vergangenen Jahr seine Dissertation hier in Deutschland veröffentlicht, wo er seine Forschung in BH über die Rolle der glaubenden Bürger und Religionsgemeinschaften in der Erneuerung der Zivilgesellschaft vorgestellt hat. Sein Hauptkonzept ist soziale Erneuerung (restoration) durch gegenseitige Versöhnung und Vergebung. Er sagt:

„The international community acting as an external force has not resolved the conflicts in BH, and military success in ending the war did not translate into established peace... The act of reconciliation is most naturally situated in the locus of personal and relational, not the structural and institutional. Peace-building and restoration are pre-eminently human endeavours involving the moral and ethical will of individuals and communities alike. It is for this reason that religion – with all its known difficulties in the Balkans – can only play an integrally positive role“ (S. Goodwin, 2006, 79-80).

Trotz ständiger Erwartung der Glaubensangehörigen, dass sich ihre Religionsführer zuerst um die Rechte und Programme ihrer eigenen Gemeinden kümmern, bestehen es in BH konkrete Geste und Texte wo einzelne Gläubiger und Religionsoberen versuchen, eine plurale Zivilgesellschaft zu bilden. S. Goodwin analysiert in seinem Buch 28 Interviews mit gläubigen Per-

sonen aus verschiedenen Gemeinden, die mit andersglaubenden für das Gemeingut zusammenarbeiten, motiviert von eigenem Glauben.

Einflussreiche muslimische Theologen betonen, dass es bosnischen Muslimen wichtig sei, Muslime zu bleiben und in Europa angenommen zu werden. Einer von ihnen ist Dr. Mustafa Cerić, der Grosse Mufti von BH. In seiner *Declaration of European Muslims* verurteilt er die Terroranschläge an unschuldige Zivilisten in New York, Madrid und London und ermuntert die Muslime in Europa, in die europäische pluralistische Gesellschaft sich zu integrieren. Von den Westeuropäern erwartet er gleiche Rechte und gleiche Gelegenheiten für ihre muslimische Mitbürger. Er hat drei Professoren der Islamischen Theologischen Fakultät in Sarajevo beauftragt, den Entwurf *Platform der islamischen Gemeinde in BH für Dialog* anzufertigen und dieser Text wird jetzt unter den Imams diskutiert, bevor er veröffentlicht wird. Dem Entwurf gemäss, jede Religionsgemeinschaft sollte die eigene Einzelnen und Gruppen verurteilen, die eine Hasssprache benutzen oder die Andersglaubenden beleidigen. Die Verfasser glauben, dass nur eine gerechte Strafe das Verbrechen stoppen kann, weil „circulus vitiosus“ des Verbrechens in BH sich öfters wiederholt. Sie aber sagen auch:

„Es gibt keine Alternative zu Versöhnung und Vergebung in multikulturellem Bosnien, und die Rolle der Glaubensgemeinschaften in diesem Bezug ist enorm. Dialog und Koexistenz sind nicht unsere Taktik oder intellektuelles Genießen, sondern unsere strategische Option, weil in ihnen sehen wir unseren einzigen Weg zum Überleben“ (Platforma 2006, III,c).

In diesem Jahr hat die Islamische Gemeinde in BH ihre Kommission für inter-religiösen Dialog gegründet, in der als Mitglieder die Professoren ihrer Theologischen Fakultät teilnehmen. Ich kenne persönlich diese Herren als fromme und ausgebildete Muslime, die den Dialog nicht nur theoretisch proklamieren, sondern auch durch ihre freundliche Kontakte mit Andersglaubenden praktizieren.

Die katholische Kirche in BH hat innerhalb ihrer Bischofskonferenz eine Kommission für Kontakte mit Kulturen und Religionen gegründet, die Rundtischgespräche dreimal im Jahr veranstalten. Das nächste Gespräch findet am 26. Juni statt, mit Thema: „Erziehung zum interreligiösen Dialog durch Religionsunterricht in staatlichen Schulen“. Orthodoxe und muslimische Partner sind eingeladen, ihre Erfahrung und Meinung

über dieses Thema mitzuteilen. Die katholische und orthodoxe Bischöfe sind seit 1997 schon sieben mal zusammengekommen. Ihre Zusammenkünfte beenden immer mit einer Erklärung über verantwortliches Benehmen der Glaubenden in unserer pluralen Gesellschaft, aber es fehlt ein Exekutivkomitee, der die Initiativen der beiden Bischofskonferenzen ins Leben vollbringen würde. Mehrere male wurde es versucht, ein Zusammentreffen aller Religionsoberen mit Saatsbehörden zu organisieren, aber niemals bisher konnten sich die Zuständigen nicht einmal den Termin vereinbaren.

Interreligiöser Rat wurde am 9. Juni 1997 von muslimischen, orthodoxen, katholischen und jüdischen Religionsoberen gegründet, die ihren Sitz in Sarajevo haben. Er ist eine von rund 5000 NGOs in BH, ohne sicheres Budget. In letzten Monaten hat dieser Rat versucht, eine Liste der Menschenrechtsverletzungen herzustellen, besonders fokussiert auf die Behinderungen vom Praktizieren der Religionsfreiheit. Die religiös gemischte Gruppe, die mit diesem Projekt beauftragt wurde, konnte selbst nicht forschen, deswegen hängt sie total von den Berichten der lokalen Religionsdienern aller Religionsgemeinschaften ab. Der Prozess der Datenversammlung dauerte zwei Monate und das Material wurde auf folgende fünf Teile verteilt: 1. Angriffe an Religionsdiener, Gebetshäuser und andere Verletzungen der Religionsfreiheit; 2. Die Lage der Zurückgekehrten; 3. Religionsunterricht; 4. Beziehungen zwischen den Religionsgemeinschaften und dem Staat; 5. Vorschläge. Der Bericht von 13 Seiten wurde am 11. Juni 2006 diskutiert und die Verabschiebung wurde verschoben weil ein Mitglied die Genauigkeit der Daten über seine Glaubensgenossen bestritten hat.

Im dritten Kapitel des katholischen *Kompendiums der Soziallehre der Kirche* (2004) wird es kurz von Menschenrechten (n. 152-159) gesprochen. Unter diesem Begriff versteht man jene Rechte die „unmittelbar mit der Natur des Menschen als einer mit Vernunft und freiem Willen begabten Person gegeben und deshalb allgemein gültig, unverletzlich und unveräußerlich sind“ (J. M. Diez-Alegria, 1969). Menschenrechte umfassen sowohl die Rechte der einzelnen Personen als auch die Rechte der Völker, Nationen, Minderheiten, Religions- und Kulturgemeinschaften. Wir wissen alle, dass Frieden, Gerechtigkeit und soziale Kohäsion in einem pluralen Staat von einem stabilen Gleichgewicht zwischen dem individuellen oder personellen Recht und dem ethnischen, kulturellen oder religiösen Gemeindefrecht abhängen.

Als Einzelbürger und Gemeinschaften in BH haben wir solchen Gleichgewicht, der uns allen annehmbar und unterstützbar wäre, noch nicht geschaffen. Aber wir glauben alle, dass wir leichter sowohl unsere ethnisch-religiöse Verschiedenheiten verantwortungsvoll aufbewahren sollen und trotzdem die gemeinsamen Werte ernsthafter pflegen könnten, wenn wir schnell in alle europäischen Strukturen als Staat und als ethnische Gemeinden integriert würden. Personen und Institutionen, die uns auf diesem Weg helfen, sind unsere echte und langfristige Freunde.

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MUSLIME IN BOSNIEN UND HERZEGOWINA ZWISCHEN INNEREN DIALOG UND FRIEDENSFÖRDERNDEN BEZIEHUNGEN ZU ANDERS GLAUBENDEN¹

Ich wurde gefragt, einen Überblick der Lage unter Muslimen in Bosnien und Herzegowina darzustellen, da ich ein katholischer Theologe in Sarajevo bin, der an dem interreligiösen Dialog teilnimmt. Zuerst muss ich aber meine Leser an die Tatsache erinnern, dass ich ein Aussennstehender bin, dem nicht alle Möglichkeiten gegeben sind, wichtige Daten zu sammeln und objektiv zu ordnen. Ich bin aber bereit, nicht zu karikieren oder zu schmeicheln.

DER NEUE REIS SEIT 23. 09. 2012 UND DIE NEUEN MUFTIS
SEIT 26. 04. 2014

Professor Dr. Mustafa Cerić hat das Amt des Grossmufti oder *Reis* vom März 1993 bis September 2012 ausgeübt. Seine Freunde und Mitarbeiter haben eine Festschrift über fast zwei Jahrzehnte seines Dienstes veröffentlicht². In dieser Festschrift hat der katholische Erzbischof von Sarajevo Kardinal Vinko Puljić seinen Beitrag benannt: „Die Kontakte von Reis Cerić mit Ver-

¹ Publiziert in *Religionen Unterwegs* (Wien), Nr. 2, 2015, 4-9.16.

² Aziz Kadribegović-Ahmet Alibašić-Ekrem Tucaković (Hrsg), *Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini. Dvije decenije reisu-l-uleme Dr. Mustafe Cerića* (The Islamic Community in Bosnia and Hercegovina: Two Decades of the Grand Mufti Dr. Mustafa Cerić), CNS Sarajevo 2012, 558 Seiten, S. 477-544 auf Englisch.

tretern der Katholiken im Heimatland und in der Welt“³. Die zuständige Versammlung der muslimischen Delegierten hat am 23. September 2012 als seinen Nachfolger den Mufti von Tuzla Mag. Husein Kavazović gewählt. Zwischen drei offiziellen Kandidaten und 374 möglichen Stimmen, wurden allein seinerseits 240 verzeichnet. Im Vergleich zu seinem Vorgänger, der viele Reden in europäischen Versammlungen gehalten hat und unter anderem mit dem Preis Eugen Biser in München am 22. November 2008 ausgezeichnet wurde⁴, hat Reis Kavazović in seiner ersten Mitteilungen betont, dass er vor hat, die eigenen Gläubigen in ihrem Glauben zu bilden. Die Hauptgelegenheiten für diese innere Mission bleiben die Freitagsgottesdienste und der konfessionelle Religionsunterricht in öffentlichen und privaten Schulen mit Muslimischen Schülerinnen und Schüler die eine genügende Anzahl vorweisen. Darf ich kurz erinnern, dass erst seit 1993 in öffentlichen Schulen BiH, konfessioneller Religionsunterricht besteht. Dies erfolgte durch die Forderung der Muslimischen, Orthodoxen, Katholischen Religionsoberen und mit Zustimmung der kollektiven Staatspräsidentschaft. Die Bedingungen sind: es soll in der diesbezüglichen Lokalschule mindestens sieben Schüler solcher Konfession geben. Des weiteren sollen die glaubenden Eltern diesen Gegenstand für ihre Kinder in der Volksschule wählen, aber in der Mittelschule sollten die Schülerinnen und Schüler selbst entscheiden. Der Religionslehrer wird von seiner Glaubensgemeinde ausgebildet und dekretiert so dass der Schuldirektor eine qualifizierte Person an die Liste der Lehrer seiner Schule stellen kann.

Gemäß den Daten von Nezir Halilović, dem Koordinator des Islamischen Religionsunterrichts, arbeiteten im Jahre 2013, 717 Religionslehrer in Volksschulen und 156 Lehrer in den Mittelschulen BiH. Von muslimischen Schülerinnen und Schülern nahmen 92,2% in der Volksschulen und 82% in den Mittelschulen an ihrem Glaubensunterricht teil. Neulich ist der Religionsunterricht auch in den Kindergärten eingeführt worden und die Zahl von Schuljahren in den Volksschulen ist von acht auf neun verlängert worden (4 Volksschule und 5 Hauptschule).

Der neue Reis hat in seiner Kurban-Bajram Anrede vom 15. 10. 2013 seine Mitgläubenden zum Dialog *ad intra* und *ad extra* aufgemuntert:

3 Kardinal Vinko Puljić, „Kontakti reisa Cerića s predstavnicima katolika u domovini i u svijetu“, *Op. Cit.*, 199-215.

4 Vgl. Eugen Biser-Richard Heinzmann (ed), *Response from the Eugen Biser Foundation to the Open letter by Muslim Scholars and Dignitaries, 'A Common Word Between Us and You'*, Eugen Biser Foundation, Munich 2010, S. 57-58 Dr. Mustafa Cerić vorgestellt, S. 71-73 seine Rede auf Englisch.

„Wenn wir unser *hal* (Zustand) beschauen, wenn wir uns um uns selbst umdrehen, der Zustand in welchen wir uns befinden und die Umstände und Probleme die uns umfassen, unsere Teilungen und Spaltungen sagen uns, dass die praktische Erfüllung der Symbolik von *Arefat* noch weit auf unserem Weg liegt... Heute gibt es immer weniger Feldarbeiter in unseren geistlichen Ackern, die schwere Arbeit verrichten und immer mehr Heuschrecken, die Früchte vernichten und erst grün gewordene Schösslinge unserer Geistlichkeit abnagen... Bosnische Muslime sollten nicht die Diener der fremden Ideologien und Führer werden, nicht deren die ihrer eigene Völker in Unfreiheit halten... Die Geschichte lehrt uns, dass irgendeine Erreichung die unerreichtbar und unbesorgbar ist ohne einer Zustimmung von Vertrauen, Frieden, weisen Entscheidungen, guter Kommunikation und Bereitschaft für das Gespräch unmöglich ist“. Dann zitiert er Q 2,208; 21,105; 16,125; 8,46⁵.

Anfang September 2013 hat Reis Kavazović eine Revision der finanziellen Geschäftsführung der Islamischen Gemeinschaft (IG) verordnet und seine Intention angemeldet, alle Spenden aus islamischen Ländern durch Rijaset von der IG einzahlen zu lassen. Diese Entscheidung hat eine scharfe Reaktion von seinen Vorgänger und von vier humanitären Vereinen herausgefordert. Einer von diesen Vereinen diente als Propagandamittel von Wahhabiten und sein Führer hat den Reis wegen angeblicher Zuneigung zu den Schia Muslimen im Iran und Lande angeklagt⁶. BH Radio hat am 11. 10. 2013 den Reis zu einem Gespräch über die bevorstehende Volkszählung im Lande eingeladen. In dieser Angelegenheit hat er alle BH Muslime dazu ermutigt sich als ethnische Bosniaken, religiöse Muslime, die die Bosnische Sprache sprechen, zu äußern. Auf den Vorwurf, dass die Religionsgemeinschaften sich zu viel in die Politik einmischen antwortete er: „Die Religionsgemeinschaften können nicht außer gesellschaftlichen Geschehnissen bleiben und ihre Stimme über gewisse Fragen, die wesentlich für die Gesellschaft sind, sollten gehört werden... Die IG wird sich das Recht vorbehalten, wie auch die anderen Kirchen in BH, auf die Probleme zu weisen. Wir haben entweder die Kraft oder Macht, sie zu lösen, weil wir keine Mitglieder in Parlamenten sind. Da wo aber über unser Leben entschieden wird, werden wir uns immer das Recht vorbehalten, einen Rückblick zu werfen, zu sa-

5 Der Text der Rede genommen an Internet Adresse www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/hutba-reisa-kabazivca-vrijeme-je-da-sevjetrovi-podjele-smire (6. 5. 2014).

6 <http://forum.avaz.showthread.php?5559-Reis-Husein-ef-KavazovicC4%87> (10. 05. 2014).

gen was wir erwarten und zu kritisieren das was an Kritik benötigt wird. So werden wir uns auch in der Zukunft benehmen“⁷.

Am 11. 12. 2013 hat Reis die Botschafter von Saudi Arabien, Katar, Kuwait, Libyen und Palästina, die in Sarajevo ihr Amt ausüben, auf ihr Verlangen, empfangen. Diese Diplomaten haben ihre Besorgnis um die Atmosphäre geäußert, die neulich in den Medien geschaffen wurde und so verstanden werden könnte als ob die arabischen Investoren und Touristen in BiH nicht erwünscht sind. Wenn dies der Fall in Zukunft weiter sein sollte, so könnten sich die guten Beziehungen zwischen BiH und den islamischen Ländern verschlechtern. Reis hat in dessen geantwortet, dass die IG alle Menschen willkommen heißt, die der guten Intentionen beitragen. Falls jemand verstanden hätte, dass es andere Ansätze oder Aussagen gäbe, so wurde es aus dem Kontext herausgerissen oder nicht gut gemeint⁸.

Von 31. 3. bis 3. 4. 2014 nahm der Reis am internationalen Symposium in Rom „Promotion des Weltfriedens durch interreligiösen Dialog und Zusammenarbeit der Religionen“ teil. Es ging um Erfahrungsaustausch als Mittel des Weltfriedens und Stabilität der Gesellschaft. Das Thema von Reis war: „Die Rolle der Religionsgemeinschaften in Promotion des Friedens – Beispiel Bosnien“. Er hat betont, dass die bosnische Kriegserfahrung gezeigt hat wie hinter vielen Verbrechen Menschen stecken, die nicht ohne Wissen oder Ausbildung waren sondern an Ermangelung der Moral und der Erziehung litten⁹.

Am 26. 4. hat die Versammlung der IG in BH (Sabor islamske zajednice u BiH) 67 Amendements im Text der Verfassung der IG aufgenommen, außerdem über neuen Rat der Muftis von der IG abgestimmt und neue Muftis gewählt. In BH hat die IG 8 territoriale Muftiaten und einen Militärischen. Interessant ist das sich unter den neuen Muftis Dr. Enes Ljevaković befindet, Professor von Sheria Recht an der Fakultät der Islamwissenschaften in Sarajevo. Er leitete Jahrelang die Kolumne „Fragen und Antworten“ dass im zweiwöchigen Magazin für die bosnischen Muslime *Preporod* erscheint und ist Mufti von Sarajevo ernannt worden. Reis Kavazović hat bei der Ernennung der neuen Muftis folgendes kommentiert: „Wir hoffen, dass die IG mit den neuen Muftis in eine neue Zeit austreten wird und dass wir mit Gottes Hilfe fähig werden, unserer Aufgaben zu entsprechen, was die BH Muslime von uns erwarten. Der Rat der Muftis hat neue Pflichten bekommen und soll die Verantwortung für die

7 Ebenda.

8 www.vijesti.ba/vijesti//bih/184028-Reis-Kavazovic-primio-posjetu-ambasadore...

9 Vgl. *Preporod* (zweiwöchentliche Zeitung der Muslime in BH), 15. April 2014, S. 6 und 36.

islamisch bosnische Tradition von der Hanafischen Schule übernehmen. Unsere Muftis sollen zeigen, dass sie fähig sind den Islam so zu interpretieren wie er hunderte Jahre lang hier gelebt wurde“¹⁰.

Am 30. 04. wurde das Denkmal für den Papst Johannes Paul II vor der Herz Jesu Kathedrale in Sarajevo errichtet und feierlich geweiht. Die Zeremonie wurde vom Erzbischof Kardinal Vinko Puljić geleitet, in der Anwesenheit von Nuntius Luigi Pezzuto, zwei Mitgliedern des Staatspräsidiums, dem Mufti von Sarajevo und anderen Gästen. Sieben Jahre hat das Ringen um diesen Denkmal gedauert¹¹. Da der Reis Kavazović während dieser Feier anderswo sein musste, hat er den Erzbischof Puljić am Abend vorher besucht und Glückwünsche seiner Glaubensgemeinde ausgedrückt. Am 01. 05. hat er folgendes dazu geäußert: „Johannes Paul II hat geholfen, dass Bosnien und Herzegowina ein autonomer Staat wird. Vatikan hat unter den ersten BH als selbstständigen Staat anerkannt. Unter den ersten Religionshäuptern hat er Sarajevo besucht. Die Islamische Gemeinde in BH erweist ihm ihre Sonderachtung, weil er der erste Papst ist, der den Dialog zwischen Islam und Katholizismus eröffnet hat“¹².

KUWEITISCH-BOSNISCHES ZENTRUM DES MITTLEREN WEGES IN SARAJEVO

Ministerium von Kuwait für Stiftungen (*Waqif*) und Islamische Fragen hat im Mai 2006 in London und im November desselben Jahres in Washington eine Konferenz organisiert wo der mittlere Weg im Islam studiert wurde. Aus dieser Initiative ist das Internationale Zentrum für den islamischen mittleren Weg entstanden, das die Bücher und Broschüren über innerliche Beziehungen von Muslimen zu einander und zu Anders glaubenden theologisch und soziologisch untersucht. Am 7. Juli 2012, am Ende des Mandats von Reis Dr. Mustafa Cerić, hat die Islamische Gemeinde in BH ihr „Centar za dijalog – Vesatija (*Al Wasatyya Center for Dialogue*) als ihre juristische Person gestiftet.

10 www.kilx.ba/vijesti/bih/reisu-l-ulema-kavazovic-sa-novim-muftijama-u-novo-vrije-me/140426049

11 Vgl. Mato Zovkić, „Das Ringen um das Denkmal für Papst Johannes Paul II in Sarajevo“, Alojz Ivanisevic (Hrsg.), *Re-Sakralisierung des öffentlichen Raums in Südosteuropa nach der Wende 1989?*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main 2012, 205-207.

12 <http://e-posavina.com/index.php/vijesti71716-reis-huseni-kavazovic-ivan-pavao-ii>.

Dieses Zentrum wurde am 3. Oktober 2012 in Sarajevo von Dr. Adil Abdulah el-Fetah mit großer Unterstützung von Kuwait eröffnet. In der Nachricht über diese Feier wurde erklärt, dass Vesatijja die Mitte zwischen zwei Enden bedeutet und dass die Stiftung die Religionsfreiheit für andere unter Muslimen und für Muslimen unter anderen erforschen wird (Harmonisation vom Inneren und Äußeren im Glauben, glaubwürdige Tradition und Vernunft, Idschtihad)¹³.

Das Zentrum hat Ihre Arbeitsräume in der neuen Gazi Husrev-Bey Bibliothek bekommen, die von der Katar Regierung finanziert wurde. Direktor des Zentrums ist Mag. Senad Ćeman, Mohamed-Suleyman Tadei wurde Sekretär und Reis emeritus Dr. Mustafa Cerić ist Präsident des Verwaltungsausschusses. In diesen drei Jahren und dank ca. 60 tüchtiger Mitarbeiter, hat das Zentrum etwa Dutzend Bücher und Broschüren aus Arabischer und Englischer Sprache übersetzt und veröffentlicht. Direktor Ćeman bemüht sich durch eigene Beilagen oder die der anderen Autoren die Bedeutung des Zentrums an die Leser des *Preporod* nahe zu bringen. Er organisiert auch von zeit zu zeit öffentliche Vorlesungen im großen Saal der Gazi Husrev-Bey Bibliothek. Professor John Esposito, ein christlicher Islamforscher aus den USA, hat am 3. Oktober 2013 seine Vorlesung folgend genannt: „Muslimisch-Christlicher Dialog und Beziehungen im 21. Jahrhundert: Herausforderungen und Perspektiven“. Dies hat er zusammengefasst:

„In an age of globalization of communications, travel, religions, and religious extremism, all are challenged to understand and respect the religious and cultural traditions of others and to distinguish the transcendent from the dark-side, the mainstream from the extremist. In a post 9/11 world, it is critical to know and understand the richness and diversity of the Muslim experience.

- Muslims and Christians are challenged to embrace a religious inclusivism that, while not compromising their faith, avoids a religious exclusivism that undermines a healthy religious pluralism and feeds interreligious and intra-religious (Sunni-Shia) division and conflict.
- Both need to denounce and marginalize their preachers of hate.
- Muslims need to follow the lead of Islamic reformers who emphasize the religious interconnection of all the People of the Book and thus their common humanity, citizenship and rights.
- Not only religious leaders but also schools and seminaries, churches and mosques and yes the family.

13 <http://vakuf.ba/aktuelnosti/otvorenje-centra-za-dijalog-vesatijja/236>

Finally, all people of faith need to remember their own histories.

- Avoid pious religious and historical amnesia.
- Compare ideal to ideal; reality to reality”¹⁴.

An inneren muslimischen Dialog in BH gehört auch eine dynamische Aufbewahrung und schöpferische Umgestaltung der Tradition. Professor Fikret Karčić, hat sich mit der Geschichte des islamischen Rechts aus dem Gesichtspunkt der Reform beschäftigt und große Impulse dazu beigetragen¹⁵. Deshalb hat die IG BH ihr Institut für bosniakisch islamische Tradition gestiftet. Seine Direktorin ist Frau Dr. Dževada Šuško, die in Deutschland aufgewachsen ist und ihre Ausbildung da abgeschlossen hat¹⁶.

EIN SÄKULARISIERTER MUSLIME POLEMISIERT GEGEN ZWEI THEOLOGEN

Tarik Haverić wurde im Jahre 1955 in Sarajevo geboren und hat in Zagreb das Studium der Filmakademie und Philosophie beendet. Im Dezember 1999 hat er an der Universität Paris X-Nanterre mit der Dissertation „Ethnos und Demos. Der Fall von Bosnien und Herzegowina“¹⁷ promoviert. Lebt in Sarajevo, ist Mitglied einer kleinen politischen Partei und Abgeordneter im Kanton Sarajevo; er ist auch Professor an der Juristischen Fakultät in Zenica wo er über die Theorie des Staates und zeitgenössische juristisch-politische Systeme vorliest. Schreibt polemische Aufsätze über den Zerfall von Jugoslawien, Nachkriegsprobleme und über die Reform des Islams in BH¹⁸.

- 14 Dank an Dr. Ahmet Alibašić ich habe den elektronischen Text dieser Vorlesung. Das Buch von J. Esposito *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York 1999) unter dem Titel *Islamska prijetnja mit ili stvarnost*, Selsebil, Živinice 2001 ist übersetzt und veröffentlicht worden.
- 15 Hansjörg Schmid, *Islam im europäischen Haus. Wege zu einer interreligiösen Sozialethik*, Freiburg im Breisgau 2012, unter fünf muslimische Theologen, die in Europa über Islam schreiben, analysiert auch den Gedanken von F. Karčić. An SS. 572-573 seines Literaturverzeichnis bringt er 25 Essays- oder Büchertitel von F. K.
- 16 Zwei Symposien wurden in Sarajevo über muslimische Traditionsforschung in Bosnien organisiert, erstes im Jahre 2006, zweites im 2010 und die Referaten von diesen Symposien sind veröffentlicht worden.
- 17 Übersetzt und publiziert auf Bosnisch, *Etnos i demokratija. Slučaj Bosne i Hercegovine*, Rabic, Sarajevo 2006.
- 18 Seine gesammelte Aufsätze sind in Form von zwei Bücher publiziert worden: *I vrapci na grani*, Rabic, Sarajevo 2009 (Auch die Sperlinge am Zweig, 40 Aufsätze entstanden vom 1988 bis 2006) und *Čas lobotomije*, Rabic, Sarajevo 2011 (Die Stunde der Lobotomie, 18 Aufsätze, drei davon über Muhammed).

In *Oslobodjenje*, Sarajevo Tageszeitung, hat er im April zwei lange Artikel mit der Überschrift: „Bosnische Muslime und (Post) Modernität“ verfasst. Dem ersten Teil hat er den Titel: „Immer mehr Stimmen für die Reform des Islams“, gegeben und dem zweiten: „Neue Lesungen des Korans nur in BH möglich“. Er ist ein bosniakischer Intellektueller, der ein kultureller Muslim ist und von den westlichen demokratischen Systemen sehr begeistert ist.

Er weist das traditionelle Prinzip *Islam din wa dawla* (Islam ist Religion und Staat) ab und betont, dass die Reform des Islams nicht mehr genügt weil die Säkularisation stattfindet und BH ins Europa integriert werden sollte. Er bedauert, dass der Zerfall von Jugoslawien die Entstehung der ethnischen Parteien in BH mitgebracht hat und die Folge daraus wurde, dass die politischen Eliten sich nur um das eigene Volk sorgen, ohne den gemeinsamen Wohlstand aller Bürger zu unterstützen. Die bosnischen Muslime stehen als Volks- und Glaubensgemeinde vor drei Möglichkeiten: a) ihren reformierten Islam weiter zu leben im säkularen Staat dessen Gesetze sie befolgen müssen; b) die existierende Praxis doktrinär zu vertiefen; c) der Praxis und den Institutionen des originellen Islams zurückzukehren. Er befürwortet mit ganzem Herzen, eine neue Lesung des Korans im Lichte der Erfahrung in den säkularisierten und demokratischen Ländern des Westens. In diesem Sinn kritisiert er den Professor Enes Karić, der auf ein Schreiben der schiitischen Stiftung „Mulla Sadra“ in Bosnien über die Entstehung des kanonischen Korantextes mit aus der sunnitischen Sicht dieser Frage folgend geantwortet hat¹⁹. Mit den anderen Islamgelehrten aus Bosnien betonte Karić, dass die bosnischen Muslimen wissen was Islam ist und sie bräuchten keine ausländische Lehrer, um das zu lernen. Haverić betont, dass die Art und Weise von Karić unwissenschaftlich sei und schlägt vor, den Koran von der praktischen Erfahrung zu lesen. Er wirft den offiziellen islamischen Theologen im Lande vor, dass sie die schiitische Stiftung in BH wirken lassen, ohne das politische System in Iran zu kritisieren.

Professor Dževad Hodžić promovierte an der Philosophischen Fakultät in Sarajevo mit der Dissertation über die ethische Verantwortung in der wissenschaftlich-technologischen Zeit²⁰ und liest philosophische Ethik an der Fakultät der Islamwissenschaften in Sarajevo. Er ist auch Sprecher von Rijaset der IG in BH und schreibt von Zeit zu Zeit eine Ko-

19 Vgl. Enes Karić, „Zbrka u „Mulla Sadrinom“ pamfletu o Kur'anu“, http://www.rijaset.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18707:zbrka

20 Vgl. sein Buch *Odgovornost u znanstvenotehnološkom dobu*, Tugra, Sarajevo 2008.

lumne in *Oslobodjenje*. Haverić kritisiert zwei seine Essays wo er neue Möglichkeiten der islamischen Wirkung in der demokratischen BH befürwortet und kritisiert so genannte Plenum -proteste vom Februar 2014 wo die Teilnehmer versuchten das Prinzip von der revolutionären Legitimierung des politischen Willens einzuführen. Hodžić problematisiert in seiner Antwort am 18. April 2014 in *Oslobodjenje* das Konzept von der Modernität von Haverić und nennt ihn einen säkularisierten Wahhabiten, da er einen Bruch mit der Tradition als Bedingung für den Fortschritt befürwortet.

Haverić und mehrere muslimische Theologen in BH fragen sich ob der Islam als Religion mitschuldig daran ist, dass die muslimischen Länder nicht so entwickelt sind wie die Länder des sogenannten christlichen Westens. Karić hat in einer Studie, in *Glasnik* 2014 veröffentlicht und untersucht wie die neuen Islamgelehrten die Rolle des Martin Luthers im Islam nehmen²¹. Er verneint irgendeinen Einfluss von Luther im Islam oder umgekehrt, aber zitiert mit Sympathie den irakischen Reformator Ali Shariati (1933-1977), der die Muslime aufmunterte einen muslimischen Protestantismus einzuführen, um den Prozess des Denkens und das Geschick der Gesellschaft ins Bessere zu verändern. In seinem Interview für *Diwan* (die Zeitschrift für BH Muslime die in europäischen Ländern leben, April 2014) wurde folgende Überschrift gegeben: „Der christliche Osten und der islamische Westen“. Da sagt er, dass Muslime in Europa eine bessere Stellung als Muslime in vielen islamischen Ländern haben. Übt aber über die bosnisch-muslime Selbstkritik:

„Außerdem müssen wir uns daran erinnern, dass z. B. Deutschland eine halbe Million von Flüchtlingen aus Bosnien-Herzegowina aufgenommen hat. Die meisten von Ihnen waren Bosniaken. Auch andere europäische Länder haben viele bosnisch-herzegowinische unglückliche Menschen aller ethnischen Gruppen aufgenommen. Abgesehen von unseren bosniakischen Frustrationen, ist es notwendig die Chancen einzusehen, die wir durch eine europäische und westliche Anerkennung von Bosnien-Herzegowina als einem souveränen Staat bekommen haben. Haben wir, Bosniaken, immer für das Staatswohl gekämpft, ganz unabhängig davon, wie dieser Staat war und wie seine Verfassung geregelt wurde? Das glaube ich nicht. Der politische und kulturelle Dialog mit bosnischen Kroaten und bosnischen Serben ist fast völlig unterbrochen. Ebenso gibt es keinen reifen Dialog unter den

21 Vgl. Enes Karić, „Suvremeno islamsko mišljenje i odnos prema Martinu Lutheru i protestantizmu“, *Glasnik* 2014, br. 1-2, 17-40.

Bosniaken selbst und kein reifes politisches Klima. Was noch mehr bedauerenswert ist: Wir machen alles dafür, dass ein solches Klima überhaupt nicht entsteht! Bis 2006 haben wir uns mit dem Gedanken vertröstet, dass wir Bosniaken (oder bosnisch-herzegowinische Muslime) „Lieblingskinder“ der Internationalen Gemeinschaft sind. Erst später kam die Rechnung. Und gerade in diesen Tagen sehen wir die schrecklichen Folgen davon. Wir zünden staatliche Gebäude an, wir zünden die staatliche Flagge an. Wir wollen mit der Unordnung die herrschende Unordnung abschaffen. Wenn wir auf diese Weise denken und träumen, dann endet das nicht gut“²².

Zum Schluss, es ist gut, dass die BH Muslime ihren inneren Dialog führen und ehrliche Fragen über ihre Beziehungen zu einander stellen. So werden sie immer fähiger werden im Respekt und Frieden zu anders Glaubenden im eigenen Land und in Europa zu leben.

22 Enes Karić, Interview zu *Diwan*, Deutsche Ausgabe, April 2014, 19.

DAS RINGEN UM DAS DENKMAL DES PAPST JOHANNES PAULUS II IN SARAJEVO¹

Der bosnische Franziskaner Velimir Blažević in seinem Buch „Papst Johannes Paulus II. - der echte Freund von Bosnien“ (*Papa Ivan Pavao II. istinski prijatelj Bosne*, Sarajevo 1997) hat alle Äußerungen von Johannes Paulus II. und seiner Mitarbeiter in verschiedenen Diensten des Hl. Stuhls in der Zeit von 1991 bis 1996 zur Unterstützung von Bosnien und Herzegowina gesammelt, als einem Staat der drei Völker und anderer Bürger die da leben. Der Papst wollte Anfangs September 1994 die belagerte Stadt Sarajevo besuchen, um an der Notlage aller Bewohner teilzunehmen, aber die Herren des Krieges haben es nicht ermöglicht. Nach der Unterschrift des Friedensvertrags im Dezember 1995 und der Begründung des dreigliedern Präsidiums, konnte der Papst am 12. und 13. April 1997 seinen pastoralen Besuch in Sarajevo verwirklichen. Das zweite mal besuchte er hat er unser Land am 22. Juni 2003 in Banja Luka, wo er selig erklärt hat den Mittelschullehrer Ivan Merz (1896-1928). Schon im Jahre 1998 hat Željko Komšić, ein nach links orientierter junger Politiker aus Sarajevo vorgeschlagen, ein Denkmal dem Papst Johannes Paulus II als dem Freund von Bosnien-Herzegowina zu errichten. Aber die Beziehungen zwischen verschiedenen Ebenen der Stadt- und Staatbehörden waren kompliziert, und darum erst im Jahre 2007 konnte diese Initiative ernst untergenommen und weitergeführt werden.

1 Ein Beitrag zu der Podiumsdiskussion in Graz am 17. 9. 2010 innerhalb der Tagung „Sakralisierung des öffentlichen Raumes in Südosteuropa nach der Wende 1989“, die von Pro Oriente organisiert ist. Publiziert im Buch, Alojz Ivanisevic (Hrsg), *Re-Sakralisierung des öffentlichen Raums in Südosteuropa nach der Wende 1989?*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main 2012, 205-207.

DIE INITIATIVE DER KROATISCHEN KULTURGESELLSCHAFT NAPREDAK UND DES ERZBISCHÖFLICHEN ORDINARIATS IN SARAJEVO

Die kroatische Kulturgesellschaft Napredak mit dem Sitz in Sarajevo wurde im Herbst 1990 nach 50 Jahre des Verbots durch kommunistische Behörden wieder hergestellt. Als der erste Präsident wurde unser Priester Dr. Franjo Topić ausgewählt und er leitet noch immer diese Gesellschaft, die die kroatische Kultur in BH und unter den Kroaten der Diaspora pflegt. Unter seiner klugen Leitung bleibt Napredak offen für eine langfristige Zusammenarbeit mit ähnlichen Vereinen der muslimischen Bosniaken und orthodoxen Serben in BH und anderswo. Anfangs März 2007 haben Napredak und Erzbischöfliches Ordinariat in Sarajevo vereinbart zugestimmt, eine gemeinsame Initiative für die Errichtung des Papstdenkmals vor der Herz Jesu Kathedrale in Sarajevo zu bewegen. Im März wurden die Briefe an das Staatpräsidium, an die Kanton- Stadt und Gemeindebehörde geschickt. Erst im Juli konnten sich die Delegierten der verschiedenen zuständigen Institutionen unter der Leitung von Kardinal Vinko Puljić im Ordinariat treffen. Die Prozedur wurde festgestellt und neben ein Organisationskomitee wurde es auch ein Exekutivkomitee gegründet mit den Vertretern der Erzdiözese Sarajevo, des Napredak, des Kantons Sarajevo, der Stadt Sarajevo, der Stadtgemeinde Stari grad gegründet, wo sich die Kathedrale befindet. Das Institut für die Entwicklungsplanung und Institut für die Erhaltung des kultur-historischen- und Naturerbes nehmen dabei auch das Teil.

Organisationskomitee mit 18 Mitgliedern traf erstes Mal zusammen am 18. Juni zusammen und unter anderen bei diesem Treffen haben zwei Mitglieder des Staatpräsidiums Haris Silajdžić und Željko Komšić teilgenommen. Es wurde entschieden, einen Umbau des Platzes vor der Kathedrale zu veranstalten und das Projekt um zu wissen zu bestellen, wie viel würde alles kosten. Acht Mitglieder des Exekutivkomitees wurden ernannt. Bei der Sitzung des Exekutivkomitees wurde es entschieden, durch internationale Bewerbung die guten Angebote zu versorgen. An der Sitzung der Stadtverwaltung von Sarajevo am 20. November wurde es entschieden, die vorgeschriebene öffentliche Diskussion über das Denkmal des Papst Johannes Paulus II vor der katholischen Kathedrale zu eröffnen und sie sollte bis 6. Dezember 2007 dauern. Am 6. Dezember hat die Kommission für die nationale Denkmalschutz eine Verordnung an Napredak mit Verbot irgendwas am Platz vor der Kathedrale zu verändern erlassen

und Verweis, dass das Föderale Ministerium für die Raumeinrichtung diese Entscheidung zu umordnen zuständig wäre. Am 7. Februar 2008 Dr. Topić und Erzbischof Puljić haben in ihrem Brief an die Staatsregierung finanzielle Hilfe für die Errichtung des Denkmals und Umbau des Platzes gesucht andeutend, dass alles etwa zwei Millionen KM, bzw. ein Million Euros könnte kosten. Am 26. Februar 2008 hat der Stadtrat von Sarajevo „Die Entscheidung über die Annahme der Initiative für Errichtung des Denkmals des Papst Johannes Paulus II“ angenommen.

Es folgten danach mehrere andere Briefe und Mitteilungen an die zuständige Strukturen der Stadt, des Kantons und der Föderation. Im April 2009 wurde in den Zeitungen „Die Bewerbung um die Verfertigung des Ideenprojekts des Denkmals des Papst Johannes Paulus II in Sarajevo“ veröffentlicht – Format A-4, sieben Seiten – untergeschrieben von Dr. Topić und Erzbischof Puljić. Zwanzig Künstler haben ihre Angebote geschickt und am 19. Juni 2009. hat ein Preisrichterausschuss mit zehn Gliedern entschieden, das Statueangebot von Mag. Art. Hrvoje Urumović und Platzumbau von Zvonimir Krznarić anzunehmen. Kantoninstitut für Entwicklungsplanung in Sarajevo hat in seinem Brief von 29. Juli die Siegerarbeit als sehr qualitativ bewertet. Die Stadtgemeinde Stari grad in ihrem Schreiben vom 21. Dezember hat die vorgeschlagene Arbeit angenommen und ganzes Material in CD Form verlangt. Anfangs 2010 wurde es festgestellt, dass der Platzumbau zu teuer wäre und es würde zu lange Zeit dauern. Deshalb, am 16. Februar 2010 wurde es auf einer Sitzung des Napredak, der Erzdiözese Sarajevo und der Stadtgemeinde Stari grad entschieden, den Denkmal vor dem Platzumbau zu errichten. Ein Vorschlag des urbanistischen Projekts „Kathedrale – Denkmal des Papst Johannes Paulus II“ wurde im April 2010. dem Kantoninstitut für Entwicklungsplanung in Sarajevo vorgeschlagen, aber es ist noch nicht gebilligt worden.

WIE WÜRDEN DIE MUSLIMISCHEN MITBÜRGER SOLCHES DENKMAL IM GEBIET ZWISCHEN TÜRKISCHEN UND ÖSTERREICHISCHEN STADTTEIL SEHEN?

Katholische Kathedrale von Sarajevo befindet sich in dem Stadtgebiet zwischen türkischen und österreichischen Stadtteil. Solang in der türkischen Stadtteil keine Statuen im öffentlichen Raum errichtet wurden, stehen im

Park hundert Meter westlich von der Kathedrale fünf Büsten von den heimischen Schriftstellern, die während des Sozialismus errichtet wurden (Ivo Andrić – bosnischer Kroate, Branko Ćopić – bosnischer Serbe, Skender Kulenović – Bosniak, Isak Samokovlija – bosnischer Jude und Meša Selimović – Bosniak) und seit 1997 die Statue eines nackten Jungen. Am 14. Juni hat die Stadtgemeinde Stari grad eine öffentliche Diskussion der zuständigen Institutionen und interessierter Bürger über die Errichtung des Denkmals organisiert. Das Ziel der Diskussion wurde als Besprechung über die genaue Position des Denkmals vorgestellt – etwas näher oder ferner von der Kathedrale. Zuerst, das Projekt wurde oberflächlich vorgestellt, aber einem Priester wurde erlaubt, in die Diskussion einzugreifen. Die Diskussion hat zwei Stunden gedauert und sie war sehr scharf. Obwohl niemand im Namen der Islamischen Gemeinde zu sprechen delegiert wurde, hat ein Imam seine persönliche Widersetzung geäußert erklärend, dass solches Denkmal eine Provokation für die muslimischen Bewohner der Altstadt sein würde. Ein anderer Diskutant, der sich mit Namen laut dargestellt hatte, hat angedroht, dass er die Statue zerstören wird, falls sie errichtet wird. Manche haben vorgeschlagen, durch ein Referendum die Meinung der Bewohner untersuchen. Andere haben vorgeschlagen, die Papststatue in die katholische Kathedrale aufzustellen.

Das Kantoninstitut für Entwicklungsplanung von Sarajevo hat am 7. Juli dem Napredak eine Mitteilung gerichtet, wo es unter anderem steht: „Da die öffentliche Diskussion mit einer Missbilligung der Bürger und der Nichtannahme des Planentwurfs resultierte, wir haben eingestellt alle Tätigkeiten an Planverfertigung... Falls das Projekt verändert werden soll, muss der Planträger alle Subjekte die eingeschlossen und interessiert sind koordinieren und ihre Zustimmung anschaffen“. Damit ist die Arbeit auf dem Projekt angehalten.

Islamisches Verlagshaus El-Kalem in Sarajevo hat neulich die bosnische und deutsche Übersetzung der *Islamischen Charta* aus arabisch veröffentlicht. Das Buch wurde verfasst von dem Internationalen Verband der muslimischen Gelehrten und ist angewiesen auch den Muslimen die unter Andersglaubenden leben. In diesem Buch spricht das Kapitel 21 von „Islam und Kunst“, Kapitel 23 trägt die Überschrift „Der Dialog“, und Kapitel 24, „Die Beziehungen zu Nichtmuslimen“. Im Kapitel über Islam und Kunst es steht: „Der Islam unterstützt die Kunst und fördert das Schöne, allerdings, tut er das unter bestimmten Bedingungen. Das sind hauptsächlich die folgenden: es wird vorausgesetzt, dass Kunst das Edle im in dem Menschen fördert und die Werte erschafft, statt sie es zu zerstören“. Zum Schluss, ich

freue mich, dass der Professor Dževad Hodžić von der Fakultät der islamischen Wissenschaften in Sarajevo heute mit uns ist und so kann das verehrte Publikum auch auf seinen Gedanken hören. Es scheint sich, dass es für die umstrittenen Fragen keine einfache Lösungen gibt.

P. S. IM JUNI 2018

Unter 19 angekommenen Angeboten, die eine staatlich-kirchliche gemischte Denkmalkommission bekommen hatte, wurde die Denkmalskizze von Bildhauer Hrvoje Uremović im März 2009 angenommen. Er ist 1976 in Sarajevo geboren, musste wegen des Krieges aus der belagerten Hauptstadt nach Split flüchten und lebt jetzt in Zagreb. Die Skulptur wurde aus Bronze ausgegossen und ist 2,92 Meter hoch. Sie stellt eine stehende Figur des Papstes im meditierenden Gebet dar, der an seinen Hirtenstab angelehnt worden ist. Die Statue wurde am Platz neben dem Haupteingang in die Kathedrale in Sarajevo hingestellt, von welchem der Papst Johannes Paulus II am



12. April 1997 die Bürger von Sarajevo begrüsst hatte und an dem sich ständig die jungen Menschen verschiedener ethnischen und religiösen Identitäten gerne versammeln. Die Statue wurde feierlich am 30. April 2014 präsentiert und vom Kardinal Vinko Puljić gesegnet. Das staatliche Fernsehen von Bosnien und Herzegowina hat die ganze Feier mit den Festreden von Stellvertretenden des Staatspräsidenten Bakir Izetbegović, Erzbischof Vinko Puljić und Kommissionsleiter Franjo Topić direkt übertragen.

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