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Committee for Relations with Muslims in Europe (CRME)

EMBRACING A NEW REALITY

MUSLIMS IN EUROPE AND THE TRAINING OF CLERGY AND PASTORAL WORKERS

**For internal use only
within the member churches of CEC
and in the Bishops' Conferences in Europe**

Geneva/St. Gallen, February 2009

Introduction

Muslims are now living in Europe as a permanent and growing presence. Estimates of the number of Muslims in Europe are imprecise in the absence of hard census data in most countries. They vary between 20 and 30 million in Western Europe, and numbers are increasing in most countries. This is largely because of a younger age profile, and through immigration and asylum. Conversion figures are not demographically significant. But there are many more Muslims in Turkey, parts of Eastern Europe, and Russia. The churches are only beginning to wake up to this fact, and take account of it in their educational programmes. The primary aim of this document is to detail the present position and the challenges and opportunities European churches face, and to provide positive possibilities for training of Christian workers both for the present and for the future. Examples of present good practices are also offered, for the consideration of readers.

This document is based upon the wide experience of members of the ecumenical Committee for Relations with Muslims in Europe. An important earlier report was produced in 1991. Intentionally this document builds on that good work. It outlines the dramatic changes there have been over the ensuing years, in the social, political and global context, and within the Muslim communities of Europe and their relations with the Christian churches. The impact of these changes is considered in a range of areas, including theology and dialogue, church life and Muslim communities, and faiths live together in Europe. Case studies are offered from various countries about training, and these vary greatly depending on the local context and history, the nature of the training institutions, the role of government, the experience of the churches in their relationship with Muslims (and vice versa), and the theological background to such relationships. Specific recommendations for training are given, which can enable reflection on what is possible within the various situations in Europe. The editors are quite aware that what is possible in one place may be quite impossible in another. The aim is not to produce guilt about what is not being done, but inspiration to challenge the churches to set their sights higher, in this vital area of encounter. Amongst the most critical issues our continent faces is that of relation between Christians and Muslims, within a global context which is rapidly changing. The aim of all training should be to increase confidence that Christians can engage with interested Muslims, without fear, as they seek together to contribute to our common future, as they practice their respective faiths.

The report will be generally available to the wider public, including interested Muslims. But it is a report coming out of Christian specialists in Christian-Muslim relations. It is addressed primarily to three groups of readers:

- The parent bodies of CCEE and CEC.
- Leaders of churches of Europe, as represented in CCEE and CEC.
- Training institutions where clergy and lay workers are trained - theological faculties in universities, seminaries and theological courses, chaplaincy or pastoral institutes, leaders of lay education programmes, specialist training centres.

SECTION 1

THE CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The earlier report *The Presence of Muslims in Europe, and the Theological Training of Pastoral Workers* (Birmingham 1991) published by the Committee named Islam in Europe (also a joint committee of CEC and CCEE), shows how realisation of the importance of Muslim issues within Europe had been growing gradually, well before 9/11/01. Training recommendations had been offered, though how much they were taken up clearly varied across countries, churches and training institutions. In that report, central international issues addressed included the break up of Yugoslavia and the Muslim-Christian tensions resulting, the first Gulf War, civil war in Lebanon, the ongoing impasse in Israel-Palestine. The Rushdie affair symbolised a growing clash about values within Europe, and potentially differing understandings of state, society and religion. Muslim confidence was increasing as they moved from being 'migrants' to 'citizens', and began to develop their mosques and educational institutions. Branches of Christian theology were beginning to be influenced by the Muslim presence, as well as pastoral encounters such as mixed marriages and the affect of conversion either way. The formation of the Islam in Europe Committee in 1987 was a recognition of this growing significance.

Key changes in recent years affecting Muslim-Christian relations in Europe are considered in the following sections of this report:

Key changes affecting Muslim-Christian Relations in Europe, since 1991

A. The profile of Islam has increased greatly:

(1) *Population:* As mentioned in the introduction, the birth rate may be higher for some time. But it is seen that this usually comes down as economic security and education increases. The conflagration in the Balkans, especially the consequences of conflicts in Bosnia/Herzegovina, and in Kosovo have been a key push factor in raising the profile of Muslims, and their spread across Europe. The issue of Turkish membership of the EU has become an issue around where opinion is quite polarised, and different governments take different positions. An internal EU issue is also the accession of new countries, some of them with Muslim minorities, such as Bulgaria, and all adding to the variety of contexts, with their different histories and experiences.

(2) *Indigenous Muslim communities:* These add a significant dimension to the European picture. There are Muslim communities in Eastern Europe who are not migrants, but have been there for centuries as part of society. Examples are the Tartars in Eastern Europe and Finland, and Muslims in the former Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.

(3) *Islamic issues:* These have become politicised in many European countries- questions of the Hijab, style of marriage, call to prayer, faith schools, Halal meat, have had to be

tackled in each country. The European Union has had to reflect, not least through the constitution debate, on the place of religion within the European Union and the Council of Europe. There is an annual invitation from the presidents of the EU Commission to the main representatives of religions, and this includes Muslim leaders. The place of modified *sharia* personal law, within one legal system, has also begun to be discussed and this is highly controversial, for example, in Britain. There is also, within the Muslim European world, a number of pan European initiatives such as a special 'European Council for *fatwas*' which has been working quietly for 20 years, centred in Dublin. It has two sub groups in English and French.

(4) *International incidents:* These have significantly increased the profile of Islam. 9/11, Madrid, the London bombings, Mumbai and Gaza are dramatic examples of this. So also the response to what is seen as Islamic terrorism, in Afghanistan and Iraq, in Lebanon and potentially Iran; the continuing impasse in Israel/Palestine; radicalisation in Pakistan, and also a range of issues involving Muslims in Africa. Some have claimed that the cold war has been replaced by a clash of civilisations, between the Christian world and Islam (the Huntington thesis). But it is clear that most of these conflicts are about political power and economic resources, whatever the religious rhetoric.

(5) *The media:* Some sections of the media have become somewhat obsessed with Islam, with endless programmes, books, films, press articles, about Muslims. These can be well produced and informative, and positive. But often they have a negative spin. These media outlets are often also negative to churches and to Christians. The cartoon controversy, begun in Denmark, was a sign of how sensitive feelings are, with polarisation between those for and those against publication. Clearly this becomes a confrontation between the right of freedom of expression, and artistic license, and the need to consider religious feelings and to act responsibly. The media ensure that what happens in one country is immediately internationalised. The internet adds further dimensions, as to how religions communicate, propagate their faith, and can organise radical movements.

(6) *The Internet:* Positively, the Internet enables dialogue, and positive education: for examples, the use of Face Book enables cross religious chat rooms. There are also international programmes through BBC, Doha Talks, Al Jazeera English channel. There are challenging films of a social or documentary kind, though they are not marketed widely. At the same time there is a danger that Muslims in Europe (and, indeed, Christian immigrants from Africa and elsewhere) watch only or mainly satellite TV programmes from their countries of origin. Doing this may be harmless but it discourages integration, and may create a linguistic and generational gap. Some programmes also may not be fair about political developments in Europe.

(7) *Schools and education:* Schools now give teaching about Muslims and Islam, as a routine, along with Christianity and other faiths, in some countries. In other countries the school system divides religious teaching, or includes it in history or art or literature (France). In some countries there are government financed Muslim schools (England, Sweden). In the Netherlands there are 41 Primary schools financed by the government (0.5% of all Muslim children and one Islamic High School (but their academic record is not high). In Germany, attempts to establish government funded Turkish schools have not yet succeeded. In a range of countries in Europe there are private Muslim boarding schools.

(8) *Islamophobia:* There has been documented growth in Islamophobia in some countries across Europe, as Muslims are demonised as a threat to European, Christian, or national

ways of life. Examples of reports on this phenomenon are a EU report from Brussels, and the Rowntree Report related to Britain. Some countries also report a phenomenon they name as 'Christianophobia', where Christians are mocked and denigrated.

(9) *Mobility*: Cheap international flights have led to many more people travelling to Muslim countries on business, or, notably, on holidays. This may increase appreciation or prejudice. There are considerable numbers of Europeans now living in Muslim countries, for work, but also for retirement (for example, Germans or Northern Europeans in Turkey or Egypt). Others live in two countries, their native European home, and in a Muslim country.

B. Changes within Muslim communities:

(1) Some have a growing self awareness, and wish to identify with being European, French, British, Norwegian etc, and to take part in local and national politics. They have been working at what it means to live as a minority Muslim community within a plural society. In the Netherlands, for example, 9% of the members of parliament are of Muslim background, two cabinet members are Muslim, and the mayor of Rotterdam is of Moroccan background. During the last century European countries have set up state religious law. This legal system is the framework for the institutional integration of Muslim countries. In most countries the Muslim communities are organised by private law usually as associations. But in some countries they are corporations under public laws. Examples are France, Norway, Austria, Belgium, Spain and Russia. In Germany and Britain there is a growing pattern of partnership between the state, local government and Muslim organisations. The four main Muslim representative organisations in Britain have recently come together to launch the Mosques and Imams Advisory Board, where the government gives encouragement, but this is clearly a Muslim initiative. In Germany, the four Muslim umbrella organisations founded the 'Koordinationsrat der Muslime in Deutschland' (Coordination Council of Muslims) in 2006. In general, and at differing speeds in different countries, Muslims have become more organised. This is partly their own wish, partly responding to government needs for partners to work with. At the same time they remain diversified in culture, ethnic background, language, educational proficiency, Islamic tradition, degree of identity with modern society. At times these can lead to significant divisions.

(2) Probably the largest group of Muslims have adjusted to life in Europe, and are making their way as workers, shopkeepers, restaurant owners, service industries etc. Their children are rising in the educational field, and the local language is now their first language. In some countries- Germany, France, Britain, for example, there are a growing number of Muslim entrepreneurs, professionals, advocates. Also financial capital from Muslim entrepreneurs does much to undergird the investment markets. They are beginning to be elected as members of local, regional or national parliaments in Germany, France, Britain and Denmark. They have also taken up ministerial responsibilities, in Britain and France.

(3) Others feel marginalised and economically past over, and disaffected, as seen in the riots in France and in the North of England. Factors include failure in education, unemployment, and poor housing. For some this leads to drugs, violence or crime, for others to increasing radicalisation, particularly of young people.

(4) There are a slowly growing number of converts from the indigenous populations, and these are sometimes high profile in their various countries. Many are through mixed marriages. Others, of course, convert to be Christians, or become indifferent to Islam.

(5) The majority of European Muslims wish to integrate, to work out what it means to be a European Muslim. An example is Islamic Charter of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, published in February 2002. A recent document is the 'Muslims in Europe Charter' signed by many Muslims in early 2008. A minority wish to live separate lives, uncorrupted by what they perceive as the Western way of life, and work for the Islamisation of society. Foreign policy issues have a strong effect on such attitudes.

(6) There are often links with countries of origin. Ease of travel and IT keeps such engagement going. This is particularly the case in Germany, where the Turkish state has strong influence on the large Turkish population, especially through the DIYANET network of mosques, and Turkish culture. is deliberately maintained. Influence of other economic, social and political links with Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia, and with groups in Pakistan, is found in several European countries, and is seen as a source of radicalisation of young people.

(7) There is a growing interest in expanding the range of services available to Muslims- chaplaincy provision, burial provisions, educational needs, diet requirements, prayer rooms. Growing involvement of government, national and local, with faith communities, spearheaded by their concerns about Muslims. In some countries government encourages or assists in the building of mosques- for example in partly financing in Norway, and in facilitating in France.

(8) There are major debates about the position of Muslim women. These have increased as women have become more educated, and in many cases now, more educated than men. Are they oppressed by social and cultural traditions, or free to choose their own path and identity? Are they confident about their appropriate place within Islamic and European society?

C. Changes within Christian communities:

(1) Increasing secularisation in Western Europe has led to the marginalisation of churches in public dialogue. However, there is much interest in the Decade of 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation (1517), Celebration of the birth of Calvin (2009), in order to reaffirm Christian identity. The vast annual attendance at the German Kirchentag, and the immense appeal of ecumenical centres such as Taize, and pilgrimage journeys to places as Santiago di Compestella, shows continuing interest in spirituality in Europe. There is also a growing commitment of churches to discover a new identity in the public place in several countries.

(2) In some European countries, the population of Christians has declined, due to demography. A number of churches have been encouraged to amalgamate, or restructure. There have also been decreasing numbers of regular attenders in mainline churches in Western Europe. But numbers attending at festivals and special events have often increased.

(3) There has been a growth in the importance of Eastern Orthodox churches. This is not only because of the revival in Eastern Europe, but also through migration to Western European countries of Orthodox Church members such as to Spain, Italy and Sweden. There are now five Romanian Bishops, for example, and two metropolitan provinces outside Romania. Considerable numbers have also fled the Middle East, and established their own bishoprics in Europe.

(4) Migration of Poles and others within the EU, and immigration from Africa, South America and parts of Asia such as the Philippines, have increased the size of the Roman Catholic Church in many countries. So also there has been a large increase of Protestant migrants from Africa, providing significant increases in church attenders within mainline churches, and the formation of many independent African churches.

(5) Theological polarisation between so called liberals, and conservative evangelicals has increased in some churches, such as the Anglican Communion, and attitudes to other faiths is often one of the places of divide.

(6) The 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu, Romania, in 2007 was a powerful symbol of the ecumenical movement in Europe, of Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant churches, taking place in the heart of Eastern Europe. But a case can also be made for the ecumenical movement having lost momentum globally and locally, as each church body focuses on its own future. Mission concerns can take a secondary importance, and the World Council of Churches struggles for financial support. The Vatican is deeply concerned about its relationship with Orthodox churches, but appears to be becoming more hesitant in its ecumenical relations with Protestant and Anglican churches.

D. Developments in Christian response, and Muslim-Christian engagement:

(1) *Response to secularism:* Secularism has become a central reality in national life in most countries, and in some, such as France, it is enshrined in legislation. It is amongst several reasons which affect attendance at all religious places of worship, especially amongst the young. More aggressive attacks on religion and religious values have led to a coming together of some Muslims and Christians, in defence of the appropriate place of religion in public life. Various approaches to religious experience have found a following across a range of people, not all of them young, and some of these are linked with Sufism or spirit movements in Christianity.

(2) *Response to violent extremism:* Fear of Islamic extremism has penetrated many Christian individuals and groups, and also affected moderate Muslim's confidence to deal with the issue. This is deepened because it is coming from within Europe- from France, Germany, Holland, Britain, Spain.

(3) *Solidarity with the persecuted:* There is a higher profile of those working to highlight persecution of Christians in Muslim lands, and their appropriate challenge to Christian and Muslim leaderships in Europe. The killing or imprisonment of prominent persons outside Europe is rightly profiled amongst the churches in Europe- for example, seven monks murdered in Tibhirine, in Algeria (in 1997, whose anniversary was remembered in 2007); prominent murders of Christians in Turkey; the killing of a nun in Nigeria during the Danish cartoon controversy, the periodic persecution of Christians in Pakistan or India.

These stories influence Christian congregations, whether through the media coverage, or through refugees. This can lead to polarisation, but also to joint statements by Muslims and Christians condemning such extremist actions.

(4) *Statements:* Positively, there have been a wide range of statements by Christian churches, in response to a number of issues and conflicts that have arisen. There has been lively intra Christian debate within the churches in most countries, with the presence of Islam being an energising factor in such discussion. More Christians are willing to engage with Muslims at all kinds of levels. These include the academic level, and inter faith dialogue. They include common actions- events, demonstrations for peace etc. They also include working together in the issues of life, 'the dialogue of life'. Muslim-Christian women's interaction has increased.

(5) *Individuals with responsibility:* In some countries there are people appointed, clergy or lay, who have an official responsibility to sensitise congregations to Muslim issues, and to enable relationships to develop. These may be Diocesan, regional or national. For example, there are around fifty such persons in France, and in Britain, and a range of people in Germany and Denmark. Most countries have a national officer, who coordinates local officers. Bishops and other national church leaders are expected to consult regularly with such officers.

(6) *Exchange programmes:* These have become more frequent. An example is that between EKD, Germany, and Iran, and between the Church of England and Iran. There are a range of joint programmes related to Israel/Palestine. The Anglican Church has a joint programme with Al-Azhar in Egypt. Many groups have been to Turkey to visit holy sites, for example a Muslim-Christian group from Leicester. Indonesia has also been involved in such programmes, and there have been student exchanges with Algeria. There are also university faculty contacts between countries.

(7) *Local and national forums:* In some countries, Christian- Muslim forums have been established at a national, or city level- for example in Britain with the Christmas-Muslim Forum, of which the Archbishop is President, in France with GAIC (Groupe d'Amitié Islamo-Chrétienne), and in Norway and Denmark. In Germany, the Christian-Muslim Working Group (ICA) was established on a national level as early as 1976. In Germany also notable is the Christian/Jewish/Muslim initiative 'Invite your Neighbour' (1999-2003) followed by 'Do you know where I am?' (since 2004). This has encouraged some hundreds of local initiatives. There are also many city level or local district initiatives such as those in Paris, Leicester, Drammen, Arhus and in a number of German cities.

(8) *Training opportunities:* Initiatives in training have increased, for lay people perhaps more than yet for clergy. From the Christian clergy side, these include the training of future pastors, or in service training, in Islam and in Muslim-Christian relations. Growth from the Muslim side has been slower, and there are still few initiatives for joint training, even on a small scale.

(9) *Academic study:* There has been a growth in academic interest in Islam and in Muslims in Europe- not primarily in textual work, but over a wide range of areas. Growth of 'scriptural reasoning' dialogue groups. Initiatives like *A Common Word* (2007) bring a wide response. This was the letter of 138 Muslim scholars and religious leaders, addressed to the Pope and other Christian leaders.

(10) *Pastoral issues:* Closer interaction has led to a wide range of pastoral issues coming to the fore more frequently: Muslim- Christian marriages, questions related to conversion and converts, care of prisoners and victims etc.

(11) *Theological difference:* There is a perceived polarisation between dialogical inclusivists and pluralists, on the one hand, and, on the other, those whose primary objective is evangelism and conversion. Often this difference falls away in face of the realities and opportunities of engagement, but these can affect any of the above areas of involvement.

SECTION 2

THE IMPACT OF THESE CHANGES UPON THEOLOGY, CHURCH LIFE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

The presence of other faiths used to be seen mainly as the concern of mission movements from Europe to Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The exception was the presence of the Judaism throughout most of Europe for centuries, with all the chequered history that this involved, culminating in the horrors of the Nazi period, and the focus since on looking towards a new way forward after the Shoah.

Recent times have seen large numbers of Hindus and Sikhs moving to Europe, particularly to Britain, with 559,000 Hindus (census of 2001). Another example is a significant Hindu community of 100,000 in the Netherlands (who have come via Surinam). Buddhist presence is widespread. The presence of these faiths has generally been seen as positive, and there have been many converts to Buddhism.

Now the presence of Islam and a range of other faiths are part of most, if not all, of European countries. It should be remembered that Christianity, as Islam, was born into a multi faith context, and its theology was developed during the time of the early fathers, within a pluralist world. It also arose out of Judaism, and this has led to the particular dynamic between these two faiths. We need therefore to go back to our roots in reflecting theologically on how to relate to the Islamic presence in Europe. Such theology needs to interact and respond to the kind of changes we have outlined in Part 1. Those changes are beginning to affect thinking and practice within Muslim communities.

Change is not uniform, and there is enormous diversity across Europe. Such diversity is a reality which need not be a threat to Christian churches or to Muslim communities. An attitude needs to be encouraged that is prepared to embrace these things positively, and to trust in God to guide us to a way forward. For God embraces all humanity in the creation stories, and we need not be afraid of working together with Muslim brothers and sisters. In the following sections, general areas will be addressed. A number of country case studies will follow. Information from Southern and Eastern Europe was limited, but this does not mean that we are not aware of the importance of these areas, where Muslims have lived for centuries. The report will consider theological and scripturally related questions, and then move onto practical areas of interaction.

(1) Theology of religions and Christian mission: There are clearly a variety of understandings of the status of people of other faiths, as found in Christian traditions, and these can loosely be summarised in three ways. For some, the imperative is to preach the gospel since it is the only door to salvation ('exclusivism'). For others, all religions are expressions of various relationships to God, and that human beings cannot judge between such expressions ('pluralism'). For a third group, Christ is at the centre of any understanding of God's salvific will, but above all, Christ reveals the openness of God's love for all ('inclusivism'). He remains the unique Saviour, but we cannot determine how

this eventually is achieved and where are its boundaries. That depends upon God's mysterious will, and the breadth of the operation of God's Spirit (cf *Nostra Aetate*, Vatican II), Christian mission is about expressing that love in word and action. These understandings all have their implications in relating to Muslims, and Christians need to face the challenge of reflecting on these possibilities. They must also be prepared to be 'evangelised' by Muslims (*da'wa*). The right to share one's faith, and the right to convert are part of the human rights as they are enshrined in the UN Charter and guaranteed in Europe by the Convention on Human Rights of the Council of Europe. This right is not fully accepted by all Muslims living in Europe. Also we can refer, for example, to point 11 of the Islamic Charta of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany. We can see this also in the final declaration of the CRME organised Christian-Muslim Conference in Mechelen, Belgium, October 2008.

(2) *Inter faith dialogue*: There are various ways of analysing dialogue between faiths. Two examples follow here. The Roman Catholic Church has distinguished between four levels of dialogue (*Dialogue and Proclamation- 1991*). *Dialogue of life, dialogue of engagement, dialogue of theology, dialogue of the spirit/heart*. These are simple and self explanatory, and provide a basis for a holistic approach to Muslim-Christian interaction. It is made clear that dialogue is not opposed to proclamation. A parallel model, based upon the WCC guidelines, also has four principles- dialogue begins when people meet people; dialogue depends upon understanding and trust, dialogue leads to common action; dialogue is the means of authentic witness. It should be noted that witness is likely to be two way, listening to the other, as well as proclaiming Christ. We must be ready to be transformed by the encounter. Dialogue with the unexpected and radically different other, leads to 'surprise and joy', as we talk about what matters most- holiness, being at peace, and what truly is (Rowan Williams). God alone is truth. We are all on the way, and are to be open to learning from the other. The Orthodox theology of dialogue centres upon their wide understanding of the place of the Holy Spirit in creation and redemption. The Muslim will fully understand the centrality of the search for holiness, peace and truth, in the dialogical encounter. Christians in Europe have usually made the first steps, which is not surprising, as they hold the historically powerful position, and remain the main faith in Europe. Also, dialogue for a Christian, is following in the steps of Jesus in his ministry, reaching out to others. The Trinity emphasises dialogue within the heart of God (*intra*), and this flows outwards (*ad extra*) (*missio Dei*). A significant minority of Muslims are now responding to the challenge of dialogue.

Another important document within these developments is *Charta Oecumenica*, signed by European churches in 2001. This came out of the joint committee of CEC and CCEE, and the section related to inter faith relations (sections 10-12) provides a strong ecumenical impetus towards the kind of priorities suggested throughout this document.

(3) *The place of Christian scripture, exegesis and hermeneutics*: There are also differences in the approach to scripture found within the Christian world. We should recognise that there is a growth in conservatism within some European churches. This has been increased through the immigration of Africans to many European countries. Many of them have had difficulties with Muslims in their own country. There has also been a growth in Pentecostalism, which had had similar effects. Most of these groups are very wary of those who make relationships with Muslims a priority. At the same time, others are finding a new excitement about reading the Bible in a multi faith world. For some this is found in a fresh discovery of the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible), and its commonalties with parts of the Quran. Parallels are found between certain interpretations of Jihad and Holy War. The

stories of Joseph, the place of the prophets, the psalms as inclusive concepts in prayer come to the fore. Reflection on a commonality between the values of the Kingdom of God, and the ethics found in the Quran has proved fruitful. Comparison can be found between the stories of the Gospels and some of the traditions related to Mohammed in the Hadith. Christians have also been challenged to justify and indeed to rejoice in the diversity of our gospels and the writings of Paul, in terms of their witness to Jesus Christ.

Christians have also had to reflect on how the scriptures can be interpreted into a multi faith context, and a world where many have no knowledge of any scripture. This is a challenge for the educational task at all levels, and the preaching from scripture.

(4) Interpretation of Quran: Many Muslim thinkers are reflecting on how the Qur'an is to be interpreted as the pure Word of God. Most remain traditional. They vary how they interpret their traditional positions, and from which Islamic tradition they come, or under whose influence. Some reject involvement with the majority Christian community and with western society, others see a traditional interpretation of the scriptures as a clear basis for engaging with society and Christians. A minority think that the Quran and the Hadith are influenced by the period of history when they were revealed. One therefore needs to make a difference between the spirit of the Qur'an, and contextual influences at the time of its writing. This frees them to reflect on the scriptures in the light of today's world. This influences women as well as men. New interpretations are happening in Muslim countries as well as in Europe. Examples include Tariq Ramadan (Switzerland) Farid Esack (South Africa/USA), Mohammad Arkoun (Algeria/France), Anne Sofie Roald (Norway/Sweden), Abdulkarim Soroush (Iran), and Amima Wadud. The consequences of these different attitudes make a difference in the areas we are about to consider, and in inter faith dialogue.

(5) Understanding of basic Christian convictions: Christians are challenged to explain how they can believe in Christ as more than a prophet, by questioning from Muslims. They are led to understand why Muslims reject the sonship of Christ through dialogue with Muslims. This forces Christians to explain in understandable terms what we mean by 'Son of God.' The same applies to the explanation of the cross and resurrection as being at the centre of the Christian story, and the place of the suffering God (as per Bonhoeffer). God coming in the flesh is a deeply disturbing concept for Muslims, but is the heart of Christian faith. The 'second coming of Christ' is also a rather different concept in Islam, and Christians are led to think about their own understanding of this difficult, but credal concept.

The paradox of the Trinity stems from the early church as a picture or symbol of how Christians experience God. Muslims need to be reassured that affirmation of the Trinity does not mean we are dividing God, or believe in three gods. Christians are absolutely committed to the oneness of God, but this does not limit the language of how that oneness is experienced. Within the Trinity, the place of the Spirit needs to be emphasised, and the breadth of God's presence through history and in the wider world beyond the church. The contribution of East European and Syrian Orthodox churches, and of theologians such as Jurgen Moltmann, from Germany, and JV Taylor, from England, can be noted here. Here the concept of *logos spermatikos* ('without Him was not anything made that was made'), can be introduced as a potentially inclusive concept.

(6) Apologetics: Christians can learn from Muslims about the importance of defending their faith. Many Muslims know only about Christian beliefs, as taught by fellow Muslims, and the information they pass on is what Christians would see as misinformation or misperception. Understanding the 'other' is a vital challenge. But at times dialogue can no

longer proceed with any benefit, where there appears to be a dialogue of the deaf. Christians should be prepared to explain the faith within them, or as St Paul puts it to 'confess the faith of Christ crucified', which was 'foolishness to the Greeks and a scandal to Jews.' They should be prepared for what they say as being radically unacceptable to Muslims. But they should also at the same time be prepared to listen to the Muslim, and hear how they define themselves. Defending the faith does not mean defending everything that has happened in Church History, or in the actions of the contemporary church, even less of so-called 'Christian nations.' This will help Muslims to feel they do not have to defend everything done in the name of Islam- 'not in our name'! Sometimes it is necessary sometimes 'to tell the truth in love.' We must hold to relationships while standing firm against distortions of what we see as the truth about Christian faith. An example is the use of the Gospel of Barnabas, composed, serious scholars of this document agree, in the early 17th century. If Muslims quote this as if it is the gospel, Christians should be prepared to express clearly our dissension from its use in dialogue.

(7) *Ethics*: Both religions are concerned about how to live a good life under God. There is more than a human referent for ethical standards. There are important commonalities between Muslims and Christians. So also the general command to 'love our neighbour as ourself', as highlighted in *A Common Word*. Both also have universal ethical norms, though with contextual working out of those norms in a given situation. In decision making, both involve reflection on scripture, tradition and reason. Christianity, however, should not revert to 'proof texts', and simply referring to 'God's law.' Nor should Christians adopt an attitude that is confrontational to the secular, or be over ready to dismiss the 'the enlightenment'. The UN Declaration on Human Rights is vital for today's approach to ethics, for a Christian, even though it does not spell out any God reference.

Sensitive areas in ethical discussion are likely to include the relationship between the individual and society, the place of democracy and freedom of the individual, the ethics of conversion, and gender issues. Perhaps most sensitive will be the approach to questions of human sexuality, including marriage and divorce, homosexuality, cohabitation, polygamy, sex education etc. Included also will be questions of gender understanding, the upbringing of children, the care of the elderly. All these are seen by Muslims, as by Christians, as being religious questions, even if the two faiths sometimes come to different conclusions.

Common approaches can be developed towards ecology and the environment, reverence for life, and how to prevent the breakdown of law and order, and the increase in crime. So also there can be common approaches to the evil of racism, and the rise of the far right in several European countries. Responsibility for the use of money, and God's gifts on the earth can centre around the common concept of stewardship given to human beings. Consideration of waste and litter, and conservation, can be approached together to 'save the earth'. There needs to be reflection upon the place of personal responsibility, and the place of conscience in ethical decision making.

(8) *History*: Value and respect needs to be given to such European stories as that of Andalucian Spain, being conscious, however, that much of the lauded perfection may have a mythical dimension. The reputation for Muslim-Christian harmony in the Ottoman Empire, again, can be celebrated, but also exaggerated, and there is a need for accurate research. This will need to include alleged discrimination against Christian communities. The crusades are clearly a major blot on Christian history, but there have been many examples of Islamic aggression also. The colonial periods, affecting British, French and Dutch and Italian engagement with Muslims outside Europe are bound to have an influence

positive and negative on their story. But also these periods have had a strong influence on how Muslims have experienced Christianity in those parts, and they now bring those stories to Europe. Both Christian and Muslim Africans often have a longing for a common Africanness, though they often politically very divided. Christians have also often experienced Islam as aggressive and something to be feared, from within the post independence period- for example in Pakistan, Malaysia, or parts of Indonesia. But in parts of West Africa the prevalence of mixed marriages means there is much common history and toleration, and these stories are brought to Europe. The history of North Africa has added to the complexity of the situation of Muslims in France. Other issues have affected Russia over the centuries.

(9) *Spirituality, prayer and worship:* Spirituality is at the heart of both Muslim and Christian faiths. Both centre upon public times of worship-*salat* for a Muslim, the daily offices and the eucharist (mass, divine liturgy, holy communion). These can be observed by the other, but are not normally participated in by the other faith, which can lead to confusion. But the intention behind both is the praise of God, the acknowledgement of our dependence upon Almighty God, our prayers for others, the expression of solidarity with our fellow believers, and the sense of being protected by others. Alongside these times, through dialogue there can arise times of mutual spirituality. These may be controversial, and not acceptable to all, for theological reasons. No-one should be forced to join anything they are not comfortable with. Examples of prayer alongside each other include famous public occasions such as prayers for peace at Assisi (1986), attended by Pope John Paul 2nd, and the regular prayers Sant Egidio held ever since; the Commonwealth service held every year in Westminster Abbey, attended by the Queen of England; prayers held in many places after disasters such as the tsunami in 2005, or prayers before the Iraq war. In Holland there have been Assisi style prayers for the opening of parliament since 1986, and annual prayers in Leeuwarden. Some such prayer events are civic, some are within churches. But all include many faiths, and prayer is alongside, and not mixed together.

Prayer can also arise in long standing dialogue groups, or between individuals who need each others' prayers. Here, it is important to be sensitive to the group, and to feel when prayer becomes appropriate. It is also important that words are carefully chosen and are as inclusive as possible. Another type of engagement is with Sufi movements, or with *dhikr* chanting, or Shia chanting during the month of *muharram*. The phenomenon can be compared with the use of the Jesus prayer in Orthodox tradition. The use of the rosary can also be seen as a common practice, where the names of God or Hail Mary (Ave Maria) are chanted. Prayer at the tombs of saints in popular catholic and Islamic traditions is another apparent commonality of practice. There have been some examples of very deep and long term engagement, known as 'monastic inter religious dialogue.' (MID). This is often with Buddhism, but also found with Muslims.

(10) *Leadership structures:* Muslims have often gone through a major challenge on coming to Europe. In some contexts, they are used to tribal or family leadership, in others, to the dominance of the state authorities, as in Turkey or Iran. Leadership in religion and within the state are not separate in various places. Muslims in Europe are faced with the challenge of being a Muslim in a state without an all embracing Islamic framework. Their presence has caused new issues to arise, for example the Muslim challenge on the way meat is slaughtered.

The Imam is a religious official, teacher and leader of prayers, and how much power the Imam has varies with the context. Mosque officials and committees have considerable local power. However, others have moved in a direction which is affected by the western context. Councils now have a democratic structure, though voting may be affected by old patterns. The concept of 'shura' relates to the attempt to establish a more participatory structure in western Muslim communities. Umbrella organisations and mosque committees struggle with this tension, between the old and the new. Adjusting to western demands for partners has led to change. The same has happened with the role of Imam. Many continue in a traditional way, others have grown into a role that is more than just a prayer leader or teacher in a madrasa. The media, and politicians, have encouraged this, with their wish to speak to representative religious figures. Overall, there has been the phenomenon of the increasing clericalisation of Muslim Imams in Europe, as partners, Christian or in government implicitly impose their models, or Imams themselves see they need to this to get recognition. This has implications for their initial and ongoing formation.

Christian leaders, at a local or national level should avoid the temptation to accelerate the ongoing process of clericalisation of Imams, wanting to recreate them in the image of Christian clergy, for the purposes of co-working and dialogue. They should not, intentionally or unintentionally, distort the basic functions of Imams as teachers and leaders of prayer.

The movement towards chaplaincy has also led to some Imams, as well as lay people including women, becoming facilitators of pastoral care within a range of institutions and communities. This role is demanding in a different way, and requires different forms of training, than the old purely scholarly schools of training. It requires understanding also of the new European and national contexts, and speaking and preaching in the local language, be it French, English, Danish etc. The younger members of the community often only understand the European language.

(11) Pastoral care: Living in the West has led to a range of new issues for Muslim communities. Mixed marriages arise, whether the leadership like it or not, people change faith and issues of converts both ways have to be faced, many Muslims study in Christian schools, hospitals, and prisons are now mixed in their populations, Muslims are recruited to the armed forces. Universities and colleges have students from all faiths and none. Muslims grow old in the west far from home, and die and need to be buried in Europe, with the need for bereavement care. Clubs for young people may include Muslims as well as Christians, and the issues of alcohol and drugs arise in all cities and wider areas. Care of migrants will usually involve a high proportion of Muslim refugees, often without papers, and with many problems.

Muslims often come with structures of family, and community care. They have not had experience of pastoral care in a different kind of society, where life tends to be individualistic, with the young going their own way. Where the family holds together, the problems may be lessened, though those who opt out of this can be very lonely. Another area of challenge is the nature of marriage, for societies which are used to arrange marriage, often to cousins. Bringing brides from the home countries leads to significant problems if they are not educated and do not know the European languages. Divorce is growing fast.

In the light of these realities, how are Christian and Muslim care structures responding? One way is clearly through the role of chaplains in institutions, whether clergy or lay. The Christian chaplains/pastors find themselves responding to a range of these problems- for

example in prisons, hospitals and universities. For example, in the Netherlands there are official army, hospital and prison Imams, paid for by the government, as also in Britain. Christian care of immigrants is a major calling in many countries. How to advise in cases of inter faith marriage, particularly when children come, is a delicate ministry. The convert coming from Islam, needs special care, not just from the priest but from the congregation, to provide a new 'family' often. The convert away from Christianity needs to be known that they are still loved, his/her family need to be reassured that they are not 'responsible' for what they see as apostasy. The challenge also of how to pray with the bereaved or sick from another faith, can arise for a Christian pastor. How to offer new hope to those without hope through alcohol or drug addiction, or through long prayers of imprisonment. How to show love in a way that 'sets people free'. This may include affirming them as Muslims, and introducing them to appropriate pastoral or community care, it may on occasions to respond to their request to know more about the Christian faith. This situation must never be exploited in the quest for converts.

(12) Education of children and young people: The situation varies from country to country. Secularism has led to an ignorance in understanding the religious fact and culture throughout Western Europe, and in several East European countries. Some countries such as France include the teaching of religious facts in various disciplines, such as history, literature, art etc. The purpose is to understand the cultural heritage of Europe, as well as of France, of the world as well as the local. In France confessional teaching is given in private schools or in chaplaincy within public schools. In Norway, the emphasis is upon Christianity- 50%- and other faiths and philosophies and ethics- 50%. Few schools are faith schools. In Britain, the government is encouraging the opening of many more faith schools, whether Christian or Muslim or Hindu or Jewish or Sikh. However, there is a clear distinction between Anglican schools which cater for the whole community, and Muslim, Catholic or Jewish schools which are largely or completely confessional. Religious education is broad, as in Norway, and is required in all schools. Confessional teaching has been compulsory in Romania since 1990. There are significant developments in Germany, where the partnership between religious organisations and state religious education has a firm place in the public educational system. Efforts are being made to include Islam within this system, and there are now established professional training programmes for future Muslim religious teachers at several German universities. The syllabus in Madrasas is under scrutiny in several places, with an encouragement or requirement to include citizenship education, as well as traditional subjects.

SECTION 3

CASE STUDIES FROM SELECTED COUNTRIES

In the following examples, we are primarily considering the formation of Christians. However, an increasing challenge is how far, if at all, Christians can be involved in the training of Muslims, whether Imams, chaplains or community workers. Here the language of communication is very important, as trust is developed, and it is realised that such training can be beneficial and indeed essential for both parties. We must avoid Christians transposing their ideas and terminology, thereby contributing unintentionally to the clericalisation of Islam. Governments generally, and many Muslims, want Imams to be trained in Europe, in the relevant local language. They fear the influence of Imams imported from abroad, even if for the moment such leaders predominate. Government also seeks for competent people to talk with them, as do Christian leaders.

The following examples therefore include attempts to be involved in the training of Muslims, as well as Christians. But here great sensitivity needs to be shown, and any decision to participate needs to be taken by Muslims themselves, and this will only happen as they develop trust, and also see where their interests lie as European Muslims.

The examples which follow vary in their style and length. Some are more general, others more specific. We cover only nine countries from where we were able to get information, and do not claim that they are representative. We would have liked to add further cases from Eastern Europe, but we failed to access material. The reader is invited to seek inspiration where appropriate to their own context.

Example 1: Bulgaria

Muslims and Christians in Bulgaria have been living together for more than 600 years. The Muslims are approximately 13% of the population, which makes over one million people. Bulgaria has the largest proportion of Muslim citizens in the EU. The policy of militant atheism during the communist regime (1944 – 1989) and the general European trend to secularism have led to ignorance about religion in general and about the faith of the 'other' in particular.

This negative experience from recent history is not the only explanation of the religious ignorance in the country. Many other factors contribute to this situation. Some of them have deep roots reaching back to the time of the Ottoman Empire, of which Bulgaria was part for 500 years. In the empire, Bulgarians as Christians had the status of second hand citizens (Dhimi), which led to a struggle for nationhood of the Bulgarian people (from the middle of XIX century). Conscious efforts were made to build national identity by rejecting Ottoman culture, or by rebranding many of its aspects as "Bulgarian" and embracing it as a model of 'Western modernity'. This difficult process continues today. Myths and prejudices accumulated about Muslims and Islam during Ottoman rule and in the course of building national identity, influence negatively the study of Islam and Christian – Muslim Dialogue. This is true for Orthodox theology as well as for secular studies. However during the last fifteen years there are positive signs of change in this attitude.

Today even Christians living in religiously and ethnically mixed areas of Bulgaria have an inadequate idea of the religion of Islam. As an expression of good neighbourly relations people from both religions commemorate the main religious festivals of the “other” by taking part in the ritual meals of their neighbours at Christmas, Pasha, Eid ul Fitr (Ramadan) and Eid ul Adha.

The situation of Christian – Muslim relations and knowledge of the “other” in society mirror themselves in Orthodox and Muslim theological education. In Bulgaria, there are two Orthodox seminaries with middle (secondary) -school status; two faculties of Orthodox Theology at Sofia University and Veliko Tarnovo University, and two chairs of Orthodox Theology at the universities of Shumen and Plovdiv. There are three Muslim middle (secondary) schools in the towns of Russe, Shumen and Momchilgrad, and one Higher Muslim Institute in Sofia. Both the Orthodox Church and the Chief Mufti’s Office organize courses for priests and imams, but Muslims are more active in this field.

Christian pupils at the seminaries and Muslim pupils at the Islamic middle schools get sketchy ideas respectively about Islam and Christianity in the classes of History of Religions where they also study Buddhism and Hinduism.

At the faculties of Orthodox theology and at the Higher Muslim Institute, where students study for a bachelor’s degree, Islam and Christianity are dealt with in lectures within the History of Religions where many world religions are covered in one semester. At a greater depth, Islam is studied as a dedicated subject within the Orthodox faculties at Master of Theology level. At that level students have the opportunity to write a thesis on a Muslim topic, but very few do this.

There is no joint training of imams and priests and no studies in Muslim-Christian relations or dialogue. Many Orthodox theology students regard the study of Islam mainly as for apologetic and missionary purposes.

The Chief Mufti and some Orthodox bishops (and sometimes priests and imams) meet rarely at conferences and seminars organized by academic establishments and NGOs on ethnic peace and inter religious dialogue. Also the Patriarch and the Chief Mufti appear together at official state celebrations. This at least gives positive message to their flocks and ecclesiastic officials.

Example 2: Denmark

The training of Christian clergy, pastoral workers, and Imams

In Denmark pastoral education consists of 5 years of studies at one of the two theological faculties + 6 month training at the pastoral seminary.

Studies in Islam are an optional possibility within the subject “Theological studies of religion” (15 ETCS) during theological education. Deeper studies and reflection are possible if a subject related to Islamic studies is chosen for one of the “free choice” modules for a BA or MA project.

If the option chosen is “Islam”, a visit to a Mosque is sometimes included. There are no long term dialogue opportunities, or study of pastoral issues which arise in a multi faith society. But consideration is given to community and social issues, international questions,

and the place of mission in relationship to Muslims. Muslim resource persons do not usually take part in such education.

A new initiative, from which others could learn, is an in service training course recently established. It consists of four weeklong modules spread over two years, and has been developed from 2008 at the Centre for further Pastoral Education (arranged by the ELCD's Office for Relations with Other Religions). The theme is "The Church's Encounter with Muslims and Islam". Included in the programme are visits to Hamburg and to Malmo.

There have also been a range of study tours for pastors and others in the last few years:

Study tour for pastors to Leicester, 2004

Study tour for pastors to India, 2005

Study tour for pastors to Egypt, 2006

Study tour for Bishops to Leicester, 2006

24 young people, Muslims and Christians to Leicester in 2006

The training of Imams:

There are no examples of any joint training with Imams, nor of Christian clergy involvement in such training. Up to now there has been no training programme for Muslim chaplains or Christian participation in this area.

The government has not involved directly in such training. But a new centre has just been established at the University of Copenhagen, which also appeals to Imams (however only few will probably have the academic qualifications to join). The centre is called "Centre for European Islamic Thinking", and Professor Jorgen S. Nielsen (formerly Director of the Centre for Christian – Muslim Relations at the University of Birmingham) has been appointed as director with two academic assistants.

Example 3: England

The training of Christian clergy and pastoral workers

There is normally some such learning now about the Qur'an, though not normally extensive, except for a small minority who decide to specialise in this field. However, most theological colleges and courses have an exposure programme, perhaps of a weekend, or about four days. This will include engagement with Muslims, and reflection upon this experience from a Christian perspective. Most will have visited a mosque before they are ordained. There may also be a follow up in post ordination training, and the specialist Centres in Leicester and Bradford are involved in such programmes.

Long term dialogue programmes are quite rare. An example is Leicester, where they have continued for seven years, one for clergy and lay people, and one just for women of both faiths. In Cambridge and in St Ethelburga's in London there are scriptural reasoning programmes.

However, there are numerous Councils of Faiths/Faiths Forums. A volume from the Interfaith Network has a page on each of these, well over 100. Many have been formed since 9/11. The committed minister can be involved in most places. The government is preparing to bring in a policy to require there to be an inter faith council in every district of the country, whether there is a high level of diversity, or little diversity. Of course these

involve a range of faiths, and not just Christianity and Islam, in view of the demography of England.

Issues of pastoral care in a multi faith society (inter faith marriage, conversion, women and family, asylum, refugee questions etc) are addressed in the kind of intensive learning programmes above. This is how clergy often meet Muslim questions in their daily ministry. This may be directly, or through the issues brought by their congregation members. Inter faith marriage is increasing, as are questions related to conversion. Muslim women themselves are raising their own questions about their place in community and mosques, and may share these aspirations with Christian women clergy.

The place of Christians and Muslims in society and community is now very high on the agenda, with the government, and local city councils concerned at all kinds of levels. The question often posed by Muslims is how can we work together, as Muslims and Christians, to stand together in a secular society, where leading secularists such as Richard Dawkins, or Christopher Hitchens, are increasingly strident. The government focuses upon Muslims and their role. St Philip's Centre is doing several courses in this field for secular agencies, and there are efforts being made to make 'religious literacy' required for all local authorities. Courses are given for the police in both Leicester and Bradford centres.

Questions of Christian mission have been highlighted in the national programme of the Church of England, names Presence and Engagement, and this is now ecumenical. What is the broader mission purpose of having churches in Muslim majority areas? How to increase the confidence of Christians to share their faith? Specific questions of evangelism? Are we there to evangelise Muslims, or to concentrate on sharing the gospel with nominal Christians?

International questions have become central in recent years. This has been sharpened by British involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and because of the Holy Land, and Lebanon. More knowledge and reflection is needed on the history of Muslim-Christian relations, and of the Middle East. People depend overmuch on the media, TV programmes, which easily sensationalise. Questions of terrorism have become increasingly central since 9/11/01, and above all in Britain, the London bombings of 7/7/05.

Muslims are now often involved as resource persons. Most future clergy will have received at least one lecture from an Imam. If they have had a more extensive course, they will have heard from involved lay people, and probably from a woman resource person. Occasionally they will have received a full course of teaching. A balance is sought between input from Christians involved with Muslims, and direct teaching from Muslims.

In service training is becoming widespread. Post ordination training courses, in service training, specialist sabbaticals, and MA programmes are available through the St Philip's Centre, Leicester, and Bradford Churches Centre for Dialogue and Diversity.

A range of groups have visited Leicester and Birmingham from Europe over the years. There are Diocesan links between Anglican Dioceses and Lutheran Dioceses in Scandinavia (under the Porvoo Process) though they have not yet been focused on this area. Individuals have made invited visits to give lectures in Europe, and have learnt from these visits. There was also been a joint Leicester Muslim-Christian group visit to holy places in Turkey in 2007. The Christian Muslim Forum organised reciprocal visits of Muslims and Christians to and from Indonesia in 2007.

Training of Muslims

There is as yet no joint training. But there have been two now annual 48 hour residential Imams and clergy conferences. There has recently been a regional meeting in the north, and there are plans also being made for a conference between Imams and Clergy in the East Midlands. There have been joint retreats for women, and youth conferences. These have all come from the umbrella of the national Christian Muslim Forum. First moves are being proposed for joint seminars between Christian clergy in training, and students in Darul Looms (Deobandi seminaries). This has been slow to happen, because of apprehension from the leaders of Darul Looms.

The only known example of Christian clergy giving input in training of Imams is at the Muslim College, in West London. Here Zaki Bedawi initiated a programme by which people of other faiths, particularly Christians, taught about their faiths in the College. The College is researching on how to continue this after his death. Very traditional syllabi have prevented this happening elsewhere.

The government has become very interested in Imam training, because of its desire to prevent extremism. There has been an initiative for the training of religious leaders, and five pilot schemes have been tried (2007). The syllabus, which is being imposed, is around matters of citizenship, child protection, health and safety etc, rather than on religious content. Enrolment is difficult to secure for a 20 week evening class. The government appears to be waiting to see what the main Muslim bodies come up with through their new Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, which is in process of formation. The Government requires English tests now for Imams from overseas.

There is now direct Christian involvement in chaplaincy training. A significant example is a one year part time Certificate from the Islamic Foundation, Markfield (just outside Leicester). The Advisory Board is half Christian, and placements are usually with Christian chaplains in hospitals, prisons and educational institutions such as universities. Much of the teaching is from Christians, and there is a day dedicated to inter faith dialogue. Christians are also involved, alongside Muslims, in assessment. It is recognised here that there is long Christian expertise in this area. There is now a full time Muslim chaplain in the army, who works alongside Christian chaplains. Over 100 Muslims have completed courses at Markfield in the last 6 years, and some of the outstanding students have been women, for whom chaplaincy provides clear opportunities, which they lack in mosques.

The Department of Communities and Local Government (of central government) has taken a number of initiatives. The latest (2008) is to establish two large funding streams- for Fighting Violent Extremism, and for local inter faith initiatives ('Face to Face and Side by Side'). Though these are open to all faiths and organisations, the main target of the first fund explicitly are Muslims. And until 2001 (after 9/11) there was little if any central government money for faith organisations, and local authorities which helped were the exception. The government appears to recognise the existence of 'faithful capital', as well as 'social and economic capital'.

Example 4: Finland

There are around 30,000 Muslims in Finland. This limits the amount of practical encounter that is possible, and of mutual hospitality between churches and mosques. However, there has been a study group on Islam since 1988, and twice a year dialogue meetings with Muslim organisations and scholars since 1996. They have been working at issues contained in the Lutheran World Federation document *Beyond Toleration- Towards deeper relationships with Muslims* (2006).

In the faculty of theology in the University of Helsinki, Islam is a part of the comparative religion course, which is mandatory for all students. Encounter with Muslims is part of another course, which is taken only by a small percentage of students. Islam also features significantly in the missiology courses. Those training to be teachers of Lutheran Christianity also visit mosques as part of their general education.

Example 5: France

On the Catholic side, there exists a secretariat for Relations with Islam, of the Conference of French Bishops. Around 50 Diocesan people are mandated to be responsible for Muslim-Christian relations. The work is often combined with the pastoral care of migrants from North Africa. They are eager to build bridges between Christians and Muslims, by developing awareness of the importance of dialogue. There is a pastoral academic training in some Catholic Universities.

On the Protestant side, a new committee, the Church and Islam, was created with the same objectives. There is also the independent organisation, GAIC (Groupe d'Amitié Islamo-Chrétienne). This puts its energy in the same direction, and in particular it focuses upon an Awareness Week in November each year in France and the wider Europe.

The government has put some effort into the training for Imams under the Home Ministry. This training is mainly cultural, and should be taken over by 'instituts universitaires.' Different modules have been explored, and they will lead to a University Diploma, with links to higher training. It started in the beginning of 2008 in Paris and Aix en Provence. It contains courses on culture, religions, the Arab language, sociology, economics, philosophy and law. Theological formation will be taken up in a second stage, because of sensitivities. More details of this course can be seen below (3).

Some examples of good practice in France

1 – The Certificate for pastoral work in Muslim-Christian dialogue (Certificat pour la pastorale du dialogue islamo-chrétien, CPIC), awarded by the Institute of the Science and Theology of Religions (Institut de Science et Théologie des Religions, ISTR) in Paris.

For the last three years, this institute has offered pastoral formation to all those who wish to become involved in this encounter with Muslims, as a response to a concrete need. It is held on a two days a month, which allows those who work or live outside Paris to take part. It is aimed at pastoral workers in parishes and dioceses, teachers at all levels, those working in healthcare, social care and culture, and chaplains.

The first year focuses on learning about Islam and the theology of inter-religious dialogue in introductory classes, audio-visual presentations, and the study of Muslim texts. Cultural trips and religious meetings are included, as are debates connected to current affairs and recent publications. In the second year, classes go into greater depth about Islam, with more emphasis on the art and culture of the Muslim world. There is also important focus on pastoral encounters through particular themes – mixed marriages, healthcare chaplaincy and youth movements. Students write an individually tailored dissertation, and receive a certificate which vouches for their ability to work for the Church in the pastoral area of dialogue between Muslims and Christians.

In addition, this programme seeks to contribute to the establishment of an inter-diocesan network for sharing and support, which will be vital in the years to come.

2 – Non-university pastoral formation: the Orsay seminar on *Knowing and Encountering Muslims*.

The course takes place in July each year over a full week in Orsay, in the south of Paris, and it is organised by the *Service for Relations with Islam*. It is aimed at Christians, and usually about forty attend. This is not only a series of courses on Islam, but a *formation for the encounter* with our Muslim neighbours. Direct testimonies from Muslims and Christians involved in dialogue are a key part of the programme, and factual, historical, spiritual, pastoral and theological issues are addressed throughout the course. Preparatory and follow up reading are given.

3 – The University diploma *Religions, Secularism, Multiculturalism* from the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences of the Institut Catholique de Paris.

Although described as being broadly aimed at a wide range of workers in the field of religion, including teachers, community and social workers, and religious workers, this diploma also responds to the very precise needs for formation of future Muslim imams and chaplains. This has been on the agenda of the French Council of Muslims (*Conseil Français du Culte Musulman, CFCM*) since it was established in 2003.

Two projects associated with the University were started in 2005 but their progress was hindered due to the need to respect ‘laicity’. This latest initiative has come from the *Institut Catholique de Paris*, in partnership with the Muslim Institute of the Paris Mosque.

The aim of this University Diploma, equivalent to a Baccalaureate + 2 years, is to seek to understand how important it is in today’s modern, individualistic and multicultural societies affected by community issues to promote a real mutual understanding between the different parties in a secular social democracy based on common values. The search for social cohesion is a key focus. These include the full understanding of ‘laicity’, the secular democratic laws and values of the French Republic, the French language and culture. This is included along with the development of respect for cultural and religious diversity, and the knowledge of different faiths needed to appreciate this. The basis of the Diploma is that theological and pastoral formation is the business of the religious community, cultural and citizenship formation is the business of the whole community.

The varied methods used are to enable the development of reflective skills, as well as practical, analytical and strategic skills, along building up their knowledge base. Field

work is included. Civil servants responsible for religion, multiculturalism and integration, are used as resource persons, as well as university lecturers and religious practitioners.

This demanding Diploma consists of four modules of classes and a dissertation. Modules are entitled General Culture, Legal issues, Religion and Culture and Multiculturalism. It commenced in February 008, and the first intake consisted of 25 students, 20 of whom are Muslims. 7 of these are young men training to be Imams, and 3 are women training to be chaplains.

Example 6: Germany

Training courses of Imams together with Christian clergy and lay workers in Germany

For a number of years training courses for Imams and Christian clergy (and lay workers) have been organized in different parts of Germany. In Rhineland and Westphalia, for example, a regular course has been initiated and carried out by the Protestant churches since 1988. In Lower Saxony such courses started ten years later and are held every two years on a regular basis. On the invitation of the Turkish partner two of these courses took place in Turkey.

These courses are part of the further-education programmes for pastors and clergy (Pastoralkolleg) and are also open to social workers, church council members and other lay people. Normally these courses last one week. Working with young people, family and marriage issues, activities for elderly people, reading Bible and Koran, everyday conflicts, religious freedom, obstacles for living together and the role of preaching in mosques and churches have been some of the subjects covered. They were often linked with other Christian-Muslim activities and encounters and should also be seen in the framework of similar courses carried out in regional churches along with Jewish partners in Germany.

In 2004 an initiative was taken by the German Federal Government, "Religionen im säkularen Staat" (religions in the secular state) in order to promote further encounters of clergy (and lay people) and Imams. The "Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung" (Federal Office for Political Education), in Bonn, has been mandated to accompany and evaluate these activities. So far approximately a dozen seminars have been prepared and carried out in co-operation with Protestant and Roman Catholic conference centres (Evangelische und Katholische Akademien). Examples have been in Essen, Iserlohn, Köln, Ludwigshafen/Rhein, Loddum, Mülheim/Ruhr, Mannheim, Nuremberg and Stuttgart. Most of these courses last two days and include lectures by invited speakers, presentation of local projects and experiences, group work, and cultural contributions.

On the Muslim side, the Turkish state related organization DITIB and others have been involved as participants of those courses. This is due to the fact that most of the imams in Germany are sent by the DIYANET to serve in Turkish mosques in Germany. They are linked to the Turkish General Consulate in Germany which is in some cases also a partner in the above courses (financing translation from Turkish to German and granting leave for Imams to participate in the courses). Beside around 800 Turkish Imams sent for a four years term by DIYANET, there are another 250 Imams serving in the Islamic Federation Milli Görüş (IGMG) who speak much better German. Joint courses took place with the Association of Muslim Cultural Centers (VIKZ) with which more than 200 Imams are

associated. For 2008 seminars with Alevis (Association of Alevi communities) are planned which might also include women.

The evaluation of these courses shows that those Imams who are trained and sent by Turkish authorities are less fluent in German and only partly familiar with every day life in Germany. Those trained in Germany are much better integrated and able to build a bridge between mosque life and German culture. Areas of work which are covered by Christian clergy like visits to hospitals and prisons do not belong to the traditional role of Imams. Some Imams are interested in getting better trained to deal with professional social work and conflict management.

Example 7: The Netherlands

1. Islam in the Netherlands

With 877.000 people in 2008 out of a total population of almost 17 million, the Netherlands has the highest percentage of Muslims in Europe. The majority are of Turkish and Moroccan background, with significant minorities from the former colonies of Indonesia and Surinam. The first Indonesian mosque was opened in 1956, and by 2003 there were 453 registered mosques.

2. Imams and their training. Cooperation with Christian faculties.

Most imams originate still from the countries of origin. Two private Islamic universities (not yet recognised) train Muslim theologians, future imams, and chaplains for hospitals and other institutions. For Christianity and Science of Religion, Christian teachers are employed and Dutch academic rules are followed. Two universities, the State University of Leiden and the originally Protestant Free University in Amsterdam have centres for Islamic theology. Muslim assistant professors are employed. Contacts are maintained with Islamic universities abroad. The department of Islamic theology at the Free University differs from a traditional department of Islamics because Muslim students are helped to think critically about their own religion. The faculty of Christian theology highlights the position of the churches in the Muslim world, Islam in Indonesia, Muslim women in Dutch society etc. The school for higher vocational training in Diemen, near Amsterdam, started its programme for Muslim teachers in 2006. All these programmes are government sponsored in order to prevent a too great dependence upon imams and teachers from abroad. For that reason cooperation was obtained from the major Muslim organizations in the Netherlands in order to secure employment for their graduates, as imams in mosques and as Muslim chaplains in the armed forces, in prisons and hospitals.

3. Long history of Islamic studies in Dutch universities

Dutch universities have a long tradition of Islamic studies, going back to 1578 at Leiden. Gradually all theological faculties began to provide opportunities for Islamic studies, including Arabic and occasionally Indonesian, Persian and Turkish. Islamic studies form a compulsory subject for all future ministers in Protestant churches. But the programmes and methods of teaching differ considerably. For example, the Free Reformed teach Islam as a missiological subject, while in the Christian Reformed Church it is taught from two angles: science of religion and missiology. The Protestant Theological University of the Protestant Church of the Netherlands teaches Arabic as an optional subject and Women in World

Religions, and dialogue get special emphasis. Islamic studies can be continued as an optional subject for MA students of this university or for preparing a thesis. Professors at a state university teach *about* religion rather than religion as a subject to which he or she is committed on a confessional or denominational basis. For two professors at the Faculty of Christian theology of the Free University, it belongs to their core task to reflect on Christian-Muslim relations in past and present inside and outside Europe.

The two Roman-Catholic faculties (Nijmegen/Tilburg combined with Utrecht) have full fledged academic Islamic and Arabic studies, but for future priests Islamic subjects are optional. For them only the course on Science of Religion is compulsory, and here Islam takes only a small part, though there is also an MA specialization on Christianity and Islam. There is specialist work on intercultural ethics, especially medical ethics, at Tilburg.

4. Training non-academic pastoral workers

Besides academically trained ministers, many churches employ men and women as pastoral workers, who graduated from vocational training centres. These vocational training centres do not teach Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Arabic etc. But Islamic studies are a compulsory for all pastoral workers. Trainees for other professions can follow courses on Islam as well.

5. Special features of studying Islam in the Netherlands

An increasing number of Muslim students, men and women, follow academic courses on Islam and thus Christian, Muslim and non-religious people get to know each other in the classroom. Some institutions report about combined studies of Judaism and Islam, involving encounters between Christians, Muslims and Jews, and in one case a course on Zionism and Radical Islam in Israel. There is usually a focus in courses on Islam in Europe, and in the Netherlands in particular, and most institutions employ Muslims as staff or guest lecturers. Encounter visits are arranged locally or to Muslim countries.

Several specialists on Islam contribute on a regular voluntary basis to courses and lectures on Islam for lay people, groups of women, professionals audiences inside or outside their academic institutions, and they also contribute to the media. In service training for ministers has been less successful. Scholars in other Christian theological disciplines have become more aware of possible Islamic dimensions in their field of research: Bible/Qurâ'n; church history e.g. Anselm, Raymond Lull, St Francis, Thomas of Aquino, Erasmus, Luther and Calvin about Islam, the churches in the Middle East, Asia, Africa in a Muslim context; Orthodox Churches and Islam, images of God in Islam and Christianity, Jesus in the Qurán and Bible; interreligious marriages, joint prayer questions etc. Some programmes are presented in English in order to accommodate foreign students.

Example 8: Norway

At the School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger, Islam is compulsory in the first year, and in the Master of Theology. Masters' students may also write their dissertation on a Muslim related topic, and at least half do if they are studying Religious Studies (major). There are also compulsory courses in Intercultural Communication and Theology of Mission. There are similar Islamic studies at the University of Oslo, and the Lutheran School in Oslo, within their theological study programmes.

These courses are all quite short, and the engagement with the Qur'an in translation is of necessity limited. There are also possibilities to visit a mosque, and to encounter a Muslim visitor to the class. But such experiences are voluntary. Pastoral issues are addressed in the above programmes and in the so-called Practical Theology. Wider issues related to the place of Muslims in society, in Europe and in the global context, and questions of Mission and Islam are also focused upon. There are as yet no long term dialogue programmes in any of the faculties.

However, in 2007, the Faculty of Theology at the University of Oslo introduced a new program for continuing education for religious leaders with a foreign background, under the title of "Being a religious leader in Norwegian society". The background of the project was a parliamentary decision to offer a more thorough 'knowledge of society' to religious leaders who have migrated to Norway. Because of the Faculty of Theology's competence in the field of inter-religious studies, the Faculty was given the task (by the Ministry of Labour and Inclusion) of implementing the project.

Since this could easily be taken as a politically disciplining measure, the Faculty took pains to involve the faith communities directly in the planning process. Thus representatives of the Islamic Council, the Buddhist Association, the Baptist Association and the Roman Catholic Church were invited to join the Faculty staff in laying out details of the programme. The same religious communities were also granted quotas and asked to nominate candidates for the first round of the program that is currently being carried out. These procedures clearly helped in giving the faith communities a strong sense of ownership of the programme.

In concrete terms, the program consists of three modules. (For those who would like to include the program in their academic career, the modules are 10 ECTS credits each.) The heading of the three modules are as follows: (1) "Religion, Norwegian legislation and international human rights conventions", (2) "Values, religious plurality and inter-religious dialogue" and (3) "Moral and religious counselling".

The most numerous groups among the participants are Muslim leaders (most of them imams) and Christian clergy of different denominations. But some Buddhist monks, a Hindu leader and a Jewish rabbi have also taken part. The participants' evaluations have been good, and for a large part enthusiastic. The programme is currently being implemented as a pilot project which will subsequently be evaluated by the University and the Ministry. Hopefully, it will be possible to establish the programme on a permanent basis.

Example 9: Romania

Muslim communities in Romania. Their legal status

The Muslim community is a historical one in Romania, with a population of 150,000. Half are from the historical community of the Turks and Tatars from Dobrogea (a historical region between the Danube River, Delta and the Black Sea), the other half are immigrants from the Middle East (mostly Arabic countries and Iran). The first Turks immigrated to Dobrogea in the 13th century. From the 15th century, the region was part of the Ottoman Empire and was united with Romania in 1878. After this year, the Muslim community was official recognized. Even in the Communist period, it was one of the 14 recognized religious communities. After the promulgation of the new Law of Religions (2006) it is now one of 18 recognized religious communities.

During the Middle Ages, the Romanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldova were under Ottoman suzerainty, but had autonomy (they were not Turkish provinces). As a consequence of the treaties between the Romanian princes and the Sultans, no Muslim was allowed to settle down in the Romanian principalities and no mosque was built there, before Dobrogea was united with Romania and the Muslim community was official recognized. So, it is an irony of the history that the Muslims were accepted in the Romanian society only after Romania gained independence from the Ottomans in 1878 and Dobrogea was annexed.

After 1878, many Turks left the province and moved to the Ottoman Empire. In 1900 the Muslims were 17% of the population of the province. Now, they are below 3% of the population. In 1900 there were 238 mosques, now there are in whole of Romania 77 mosques. In 1878 the Romanian Government recognized in Dobrogea 4 Muftiyats (something like Muslim bishoprics). After 1943, there has been just one Muftiyat, in Constanta, the main town in Dobrogea, on the Black Sea.

The Mufti or the religious leader of the community is elected (by secret vote) every four years by the Consultative Council (Sura-i Islam / Consiliul Sinodal), composed by 25 members, 15 of them imams and 10 representatives of the Turkish Political Party of Romania, and the Cultural Associations of the Turks in Romania. On the local level, there exist 70 Islamic communities (like parishes), 67 in Dobrogea and just 3 outside this region, in the towns of Bucharest, Galati and Braila. Each community is led by a committee (5-7 persons).

Islam in the theological curricula. Interreligious dialogue

There are over 20 Theological Faculties (14 Orthodox). In their curricula there are also Religious Studies courses (2 or 3 semesters), within which a central focus is Islam.

Because Islam is not equally important in all Romania (there are regions without any Muslims and regions with just a dozen Muslims in one town), there is no full Faculty for Islamic studies in Romania. In the last few years, some Faculties (for Theology and International Relations) decided to organize some courses in the History of Islamic countries and an Introduction into Islamic faith (e.g. in the Faculty for International Relations in Sibiu).

There has existed in Romania a long standing Christian Inter-confessional dialogue. But Interreligious Dialogue in Romania started just a few years ago. In Constanta, there was

established, in the University of Ovidiu a Centre for Religious and Legal-Canonical Studies within the three Abrahamic faiths (Christianity, Judaism, Islam). On 8 June 2006, the Faculty of Law of the University of Ovidiu organized a whole day Symposium on the Liberty of Religion. Participants included Ambassadors from Turkey, Georgia, Israel, Azerbaijan, the then Chief Rabbi from Israel, representatives of the Churches in Romania. On 27 November 2007 this centre organized (in collaboration with the Orthodox Archbishopric of Constanta, the Muftiyat and the Embassy of the USA) a Symposium "The monotheistic religions and their importance in the society from today". Also, the *Evangelische Akademie Siebenbuergen* from Sibiu organized some seminars in Constanta.

In 2-5 November 2007, the Institute for Inter-Orthodox, Inter-confessional and Inter-religious Studies INTER from Cluj Napoca organized an Interreligious Conference in Cisanadioara / Michelsberg (near Sibiu). The public session of this Seminar, organized in the Orthodox Theological Faculty from Sibiu, was the first opportunity for students to meet Muslim professors. In 2008 there was established, in the same Faculty, a Master in Religious Studies, with the participation of a Professor from the University of Ankara. It is the first time that a Muslim professor was invited to teach at a Theological Faculty.

After the election of the new Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, His Beatitude Daniel, relations with the Muftiyat were intensified. On 20 December 2007, during the Feast of the Sacrifice (eid ul adha) the Romanian translation of the book of Salman Rushdie (Satanic Verses) was published and available. The Romanian Patriarchy protested and expressed its sympathy for the Muslim Community. The Mufti sent his gratitude to the Patriarch and disapproved of the translation, but also recommended that all Muslims from Romania should read this book. On 29 February 2008, the Patriarch invited all the recognized religious communities from Romania to a meeting about the teaching of religion in the public schools. The Ministry of Education planned to declare the teaching of religion as optional. All the religious communities protested, included the Muslims.

On 12 March 2008, the Mufti Muurat and the Turkish and Tatar deputies in the Romanian Parliament (Iusein Ibram and Aledin Amet) made an official visit to the Patriarch Daniel. They decided to have a closer collaboration in humanitarian tasks.

Example 10: Sweden

Training of clergy and pastoral workers

Swedish society has gone through rapid change during the last 20-30 years towards becoming more multicultural and multi religious. Islam is the second largest religion with about 350 000 Muslims. The multi religious development raises new questions and challenges to the church that call for knowledge about the others and a new self-consciousness.

The pastoral training for pastors in Church of Sweden includes a Master of Theology (5 years). Only a small part of the compulsory education requires study in Islam. A more deep study in Islam is chosen by only a small percentage of students, although some changes can be observed. For example at Gothenburg University the course about Church of Sweden, chosen by all pastor candidates, implies studies of interfaith engagement and the pastoral challenges of a multi religious society. For many years the theological faculty also offered a course in multi faith relations that involved a study trip to Birmingham.

During the pastor studies the candidate also takes part in courses and pastoral preparation given by the diocese and these courses may in some dioceses include training of interfaith issues.

When it comes to joint training for Christians and Muslims there was an attempt to start a course of pastoral training for Christians and Muslim social workers some years ago. Unfortunately it was difficult to find Muslims for that course. That can partly be explained by problems of finding employment after such an education because of the poor finance situation for the Muslim organisations.

There is progress towards more training for deacons and pastors (and in some cases lay people) in contemporary challenges for the church and multi faith issues. The courses are provided mainly in dioceses with larger cities and therefore larger number of Muslims. People from the dioceses of Gothenburg, Stockholm and Lund have done study trips to multi faith Centres in London and Leicester to learn from societies that have more experiences of living together with different traditions and faiths. In 2008 a centre for inter religious dialogue was opened in the Diocese of Stockholm. The centre also works nation wide.

An example from Diocese of Gothenburg

In 2005, there was a diocesan clergy conference for three days about challenges and possibilities of Christian and Muslim dialog. The conference was held for about 1000 pastors and deacons. In 2008, a more advanced course was held for a smaller group of clergy. Interfaith activity has been planned and organised in a project in the diocese since 2007 with financial support from the Church of Sweden nationally. The activities are mainly joint events with the aim of getting people from different faith communities to work together. Examples of such events are:

- Abraham's tent. Local Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities pitch a tent together for a day somewhere in the city. The tent is a symbol for friendship and hospitality. Abraham's tent is not for theological debate but a meeting place where food, songs, prayers and even dance are shared in friendship.
- Soccer for peace. Priests and imams meet on the football pitch in a good spirit. The matches have been followed up by dinners/Iftars and seminars.
- Photo exhibition "Sacred Rooms". The exhibition shows mosques, churches, temples and synagogues from different part of town. It is a flexible exhibition that displays the local Sacred rooms were it is shown. The exhibition has been used in churches, libraries, and city halls.
- Schools and multi faith issues. A group of Christians, Jews, and Muslims are training to work in the public schools to start discussions with teachers and headmasters about what kind of support the faith communities can provide for the schools.

The project should also provide knowledge and reflection about interfaith dialogue. The number of lectures about Islam and interfaith dialogue that are asked for in parishes and different groups in the diocese is increasing.

Training for Imams

In May 2008, the Swedish government initiated an investigation to consider a Swedish-based education of imams, currently or in future to be active within Muslim communities and organisations in Sweden.

The objective of the investigation, which will be presented in a governmental report in May 2009, is threefold. To begin with, the investigation seeks to chart the different kinds of educational needs for imams that are requested by Muslim communities and organisations in Sweden. Secondly, the investigation will chart and analyse the needs among future and currently active imams for education in the Swedish language and the Swedish social system, as well as theological education in Sweden. Finally, the investigation will consider the different opportunities for such an education that at present are available within the Swedish educational system.

Clergy from Church of Sweden is asked to comment and support the investigation and here are some challenges that have been pointed out:

- What are the expectations on Imams from Society? Is it perhaps Muslim chaplains that are needed?
- Will the labour market change for Imams or Muslim Chaplains in Sweden? Who will be able to pay for their services?
- Could the pastoral training be joint or partly joint, Christian/Muslim? How can we gain from each other and be challenged by each other.

SECTION 4

RECOMMENDATIONS

The first three sections have detailed major changes in both Muslim and Christian communities in Europe in the twenty years up to 2008, and the impact these developments have made on each other and on the wider society. An outline has been given of the main changes in theology and Muslim-Christian relations, and how these changes have been responded to in various countries through training and educational initiatives. Several areas of training need to be addressed: initial clergy formation, in service training, training for senior positions, specialist training for chaplaincy, teaching at various levels including religious education teachers, social work, youth work. Lay training is vital. Christians cannot and should not dictate what should be part of Imam training. Members of mosque committees, Muslim professionals, and those at the grass roots should also be included where possible. There is more possibility of chaplaincy training being a joint enterprise. But some suggestions can be made, in the light of experience in a few European countries.

General recommendations

Some general points now follow, and these build upon the encouraging stories already shown in the case studies above. Exchange of information between countries and churches, as represented by the CRME committee, also helps to show ways forward:

- (1) *We recommend that reflection and training about Islam should not be taken in isolation from the presence of other faiths and ideologies in Europe.* These include the other major world faiths. The growth of a pervasive secularity across all countries of Europe must be recognised, even though there are country differences in the intensity of this. All these affect faith, as well as dialogue between faiths.
- (2) *We recommend that, wherever possible, engagement with Muslims should take place ecumenically.* There is a changing ecumenical situation, with the growth in confidence of the Orthodox churches since 1991. Ecumenism varies from country to country, but initiatives, such as CRME, show that it is essential to work together in engaging with Muslims.
- (3) *We recommend beginning with personal encounter- 'people meeting people'- rather than with dogmatic presuppositions, and such encounter should include women as well as men, lay people as well as clergy.* This in itself can help to dissolve prejudices. Within Muslim Christian relations, the principles of dialogue noted in our previous section, give space for experience to be primary, and this means meeting Muslims and not only talking about them. Theological reflection is essential but on the basis of meeting as individuals and groups. Meeting may be local, national or international. Joint study tours can be very profound. Meeting should also, if possible, be sustained and not just a one off occasion. Greeting each other at festival times, and visiting the prayer place of the other is useful, provided there is adequate follow up and discussion.

(4) *We recommend that Muslims should be included in the teaching of matters Islamic, though there is also a clear place for Christian scholars of Islam playing a lead in teaching also.* It is also good to hear how Muslims see Christians and Christian faith. Team teaching can be a good method, provided that there is firm chairing, or good prior understanding and respect for each other. Regular or one off exchange of teachers is one way forward. There also needs to be honesty about difference as well as similarity, in any educational encounter.

(5) *We recommend that, as well as all the theological disciplines such as bible, theology, mission, ethics, church history, we also use disciplines such as anthropology, philosophy, sociology and psychology of religion, in studying Islam and Muslim-Christian relations.* Here we will learn Muslims and Christians, and their religious practices, are seen in a non confessional and academic way. Theological reflection remains critical, and it is the duty of those involved in dialogue to give an account of their convictions, and why they are involved with Muslims. This will involve scriptural reflection, and if possible reading the Bible and Qur'an together with Muslims, as well as considering theology from a multi religious dimension.

(6) *We recommend becoming aware of local, national and international dimensions, in the present context, and historically, that affect Muslim-Christian relations.*

(7) *We recommend Muslims and Christians to engage on common tasks together, in the local community and beyond.* Working together for the common good is itself one of the most powerful educational tools, and builds up trust as groups plan and act together.

Specific suggestions on training of clergy and responsible lay people:

Preliminary note

It should be noted throughout this document, that Roman Catholic formation for the initial training of priests, is centralised in the Vatican. Its fundamentals do not vary from country to country. It is therefore difficult to expect this document to affect the heart of that training, though it may provide useful background and suggestions, for consideration within the main fixed syllabus. The same may apply to the Orthodox Churches' systems.

However, this does not mean that the suggestions cannot be applied for in service training for clergy, and for lay training. Here, context can provide more possibilities.

As regards other churches, the applicability will depend on context, and method of training. In some churches and countries, most of the training is in universities, with pastoral institutes offering the pastoral training, in others all or most of the training is in seminaries or theological colleges/courses, coming under the church. Clearly what can be found usable will depend on these factors.

For in service training, for the training of chaplains, and the training of lay people, possibilities are very wide, and ecumenical programmes can be looked for, as well as those in one denomination or another.

With these points in mind, we make the following points:

Initial training:

(1) *We recommend compulsory training in the basics of Islam, for all clergy, and the reality of Muslim communities as they are met in the local and European context, and exposure programmes locally and in other places within Europe.* This formation should be a balance between the academic and the pastoral. It should be available for those in leading church positions also. Optional models can be offered in relevant fields- see above country case studies- and these should be available free standing, or as part of BA, MA or other accredited programmes. Such accreditation can be offered over as wide a range and educational level as possible. Trainees will benefit from mentoring from those experienced in the field.

(2) *We recommend specialist training for lay people who have a special responsibility for relations with Muslims, or who work in a pastoral or teaching role with Muslims.*

(3) *We recommend the development of research possibilities, including the learning of Arabic where this is necessary, but also research in areas of engagement, mission and pastoral care.* Church lawyers can benefit from directed research about ‘sharia’ etc.

(4) *We recommend exchanges of staff and students between different contexts, and the structures and financing of possibilities to do this.* If there is any possibility to learn with Muslims, then that should be encouraged.

(5) *We recommend searching for diverse resource persons such as specialists in law, languages, Middle Eastern or Oriental studies and those who have returned from a period of service outside Europe within a Muslim context.* This aids training of the next generation of resource persons and leaders, whose primary experience will of necessity have been in Europe and their own national context.

Ongoing training:

(1) *We recommend short and flexible courses for those in ministry, related to their context, with credit given if possible.* They should focus upon the list of topics we have discussed in Section 2 above. This kind of training often has been already tried and tested, though this is not universal. Training in facilitation and networking is important. Candidates should be encouraged to make foreign travel to Islamic countries as part of such training, and if possible to do this with companions. But going to cities in local or European cities can be just as beneficial.

(2) *We recommend special courses for those who are likely to represent the church at more senior levels in society, including Bishops and their equivalents in the various church structures.* For example, courses on the use of the media, which is so important at the public level. They will need to consider how to give advice on a whole number of practical areas, such as those in pastoral care. They need to be confident in working with leaders of society, and with Muslim leadership, in enabling cohesion, and facing areas of conflict with sensitivity.

(3) *We recommend sabbaticals or study leave be made widely available, with funding, to enable sustained study and exposure programmes in this and related fields.*

Learning with Muslims:

(1) *We recommend, where the context allows, that we take opportunities offered to give appropriate courses, to enable Imams to grow in understanding of the society, culture and religious diversity including Christianity, in which Muslims are living in Europe, and within their own national and local context.* Imam training has followed traditional paths for centuries. The majority of Imams in Europe have been trained in Islamic countries, and come to Europe often not knowing the local language in the country in which they are working. Their understanding of Christianity will usually be what they have learnt from Muslim teachers. Their contact with churches in their own country may well have been minimal or nil. A minority of Imams are now trained in Europe, in a few countries, such as Britain, Holland, Germany, and France. This training remains similar, though in the local language.

(2) *We recommend joint learning between Muslims and Christians where possible.* Where learning alongside Muslims can happen, it can provide a real challenge to Christians. Examples can come through many of the subject areas above, but clearly it is most likely to happen in the practical areas. It is more likely to happen outside a seminary context, with lay people, women and men, engaged together in common. There are already examples of joint training, and these need to be developed. At Bossey, Geneva, in summer 2008, the WCC held a four week training for younger Muslims, Christians and Jews, to know the other, and to engage together within a secular society.

(3) *We recommend taking opportunities to participate in chaplaincy training, playing an appropriate part in facilitating Muslims to be chaplains in prisons, hospitals, the educational sector, and also learning from them in these and other fields.*

(4) *We recommend using opportunities through secular institutions to offer training in adult education.* Here Christians can offer training on such areas as citizenship, understanding of faith and culture within the European context etc. Ministers and Imams can join together in media training, and discussion and reflection together on ethical and public policy questions. Joint courses can be offered within professional training, for example to teachers, doctors or nurses, police officers, those who serve in the armed forces.

(5) *We recommend offering programmes where women, Muslim and Christian, can learn together.* Examples are Muslim and Christian mothers learning in after school classes, and in coffee groups, arts groups and dialogue groups. Such programmes directly or indirectly help to build confidence for participation in leadership. The Islamic Foundation, in Leicestershire, has run a series of weekends for Muslim women, focusing upon developing leadership potential, and learning about different faiths, from adherents of those faiths, including visits to worship centres.

Specific examples of university courses, specialist centres, or networks

We recommend the use of institutions and programmes developed to enable education in Muslim-Christian relations.

Contexts vary. In some countries, university education is the central part of the formation of clergy, with pastoral and practical studies added on at the end. In other contexts,

seminaries and theological colleges and courses are the main place of formation. The place for the introduction of the above studies will depend on such variations.

A notable and now long standing initiative is the scholarships offered to Muslims to study for considerable periods at the Gregorian University in Rome.

The Bologna process has led to cross fertilisation between European university faculties. There has also been an enormous growth in the development of religious studies including the study of Islam, at the expense often of the study of theology, and especially of Christian theology in isolation from other disciplines. Training of Christians within religious studies departments needs to be addressed, as well as in theology faculties. We recommend the use of exchange programmes within the established Erasmus or Socrates programmes, and also the Anna Lindh programme based in Sweden.

Birmingham has had a long history of academic study related to Islam and Muslim-Christian relations. This used to be in a specialist centre, and is now included within two departments of the university - Islam, and Inter religious Relations. There are examples in Germany, in Nuremberg, and in Tübingen, where there is an agreement of cooperation between the theology faculty and the Muslim faculty in Sarajevo. There is a significant new initiative in Copenhagen, led by Professor Jorgen Nielsen.

In England there are specialist centres in Bradford and Leicester. The Bradford Centre is called Bradford Churches for Dialogue and Diversity, and relates to the often difficult situation in that city. The St Philip's Centre for Study and Engagement in a Multi Faith Society, Leicester, offers training to a range of church and secular groups, has received numerous groups from Scandinavia for short courses, and has received its first group from Germany. It has also been involved in return visits and consultancy, to projects in Norway and Sweden. There is a network officer who provides information about a range of local inter faith initiatives in London. The Irish School of Ecumenics in Dublin is another example, which includes Muslim-Christian relations within its range of courses. A well known network is Journee D'Arras, which has met annually for more than twenty five years, and brings together practitioners from around Europe in Muslim-Christian relations.

FINAL NOTE

This report is inevitably incomplete, because it is a description of work in progress. The previous report referred to above, provided many challenges to places of formal theological training within the churches, seminaries and universities of Europe. The present report shows that there has been some progress since then. Inevitably, this has not been uniform, and we see different initiatives going forward in various countries at varying speeds. These developments accelerated after 9/11, but were not created by that watershed event. We trust that this report shows how the churches have played a significant role in enabling countries within Europe to stand against a facile 'clash of civilisations' hypothesis, which would suggest further conflict with the Islamic world was inevitable. Education and training play a key role in enabling attitudes that go beyond tolerance to active and positive engagement between Christians and Muslims at local, national and European levels. CRME has itself shown this by the active involvement of its members in their own contexts, by its engagement with Muslims in some of its meetings, and by its organisation of its very successful conference at Malines in October 2008. This report represents the fruits of such engagement. But the process of change is ongoing, and we would expect a future report to have gone far beyond where we are at present. The historical context will have changed, but also more doors will have opened. We challenge our readers from within the churches and institutions to push open some of those doors for themselves, so that our training can be further enriched.

This report has been agreed by all the members of CRME

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Contribution from the Lutheran Church of Finland

February 2009

**Forberedelsesdag til
KEKs generalforsamling,
Kirkens hus, Oslo, 20. mai 2009**

- utkast -

Møterom: Nidaros

Program:

08.45: Andakt i kapellet, Kirkens hus

09.00: Åpning ved Berit Hagen Agøy (5 min.)
Presentasjon av delegatene, runde (20 min.)
Generell informasjon, og informasjon fra nordisk-baltisk forberedelsesmøte,
Powerpointpresentasjon, (Beate? 15 min.)
Informasjon fra KEKs sentralkomité og generalsekretariatet, Elise Sandnes (15 min.)
Spørsmål og samtale (30 min)

10.30: Kaffepause

11.00: Informasjon fra Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), Eva Frydenborg (15 min.)
Informasjon fra Church and Society Commission (CSC), Erlend Rogne (15 min.)
Informasjon fra Churches in Dialogue Commission, Stephanie Dietrich (15 min.)
Spørsmål og samtale (45 min)

12.30: Lunsj

13.30: Tema, visjoner og langtidsplaner, biskop Tor B. Jørgensen (15 min.)
Spørsmål og samtale (20 min.)
Kandidater, oppnevninger og nordisk-baltisk balanse, Berit Hagen Agøy (15 min.)
Informasjon til generalforsamlingsprogrammet, Elise Sandnes (10 min)
Praktisk informasjon, Beate Fagerli (10 min.)
Spørsmål og samtale (15 min.)

15.00: Kaffepause

15.30: Prioriteringer og hovedsaker (leder: Berit Hagen Agøy)
Diskusjon og oppsummering

16.00: Møteslutt

Norske deltakere på KEKs generalforsamling:

Dnk:

Beir Hagen Agøy - delegat
Tor B. Jørgensen - delegat
Gerd Marie Ådna - delegat
Helen Storelv Rabone - delegat
Erlend Rogne - delegat
Elise Sandnes - delegat
Olav Fykse Tveit - observatør
Beate Fagerli - observatør

CCME:

Josef Moiba - delegat (CCME / Den norske kirke)
Eva Frydenborg - delegat (CCME / Den norske kirke / Norges Kristne Råd)

GEKE:

Stephanie Dietrich - gjest

EDAN

Torill Edøy - observatør
Sindre Ertzeid - other (assistant)

Norges Kristne Råd:

Dag Nygård – observatory (deltid)

Media:

Siv Thomson – Den norske kirke

Steward:

Ragnhild Stav - stewardsprogrammet

Rapport fra møte i Brussel 30.-31. mars 2009 om "Churches responding to the European Year of Migration"

v/Iselin Jørgensen

Bakgrunn

Under generalforsamlingen i Lyon 2010 vil CCME (Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe) bli sammenslått/integrert i KEK (Conference of European Churches). CCME vil da bli en kommisjon under KEK som en av flere.

I den forbindelse ønsker CCME å få oppmerksomhet i KEK rundt migrasjonsspørsmål. En kampanje for 2010 står derfor høyt på ønskelista, noe KEK har gitt klarsignal for. Arbeidstittel for kampanjen er "European Churches responding to Migration 2010".

Ad hoc – møte

30–31. mars ble det innkalt til et møte om kampanjen. Colin Powell, KEK, var til stede på deler av møtet. Ellers var disse møtt opp:

Doris Peche, generalsekretær CCME

Daniel Calero, Sverige

Franca Di Lecce, Italia

Maria Lourijzen, Nederland

Adejare Oyewole, UK

Mark Saba, Finland

Katharina Wegner, Tyskland

Thomas Stephan, ansatt CCME

Iselin Jørgensen, Norge

Vi begynte dagen 30. mars med å få en presentasjon av Thomas W. Stephan. Med flotte bilder og ord fikk vi visjonen for kampanjen. Vi ble tatt med inn i strukturer, arbeidsområder og målsettinger.

Resymé av presentasjon:

Teologisk: Hvert menneske er skapt i Guds bilde og må bli sett som verdifullt

Juridisk: alle mennesker er like for loven

Sosialt: religion har en viktig rolle som et verktøy for integrering

Migrasjon er en realitet i samfunnet. Migrasjon gir oss utfordringer både sosialt, politisk og teologisk. Alle kristne og alle kirker har en plikt til å "welcome the stranger".

Hovedmål:

- Gjøre synlig kirkenes plikt/ansvar for migrantene, på grunnlag av Bibelens budskap.
- Fremme en inkluderende politikk på europeisk og nasjonalt nivå for migranter, flyktninger og etnisk minoritetsgrupper.

→ Kirkene ser at Europa har et mangfold av situasjoner: Ulike samfunn og ulike utfordringer i ulike land.

→ Vi trenger en praktisk basis som kan styrke og gi inspirasjon til kirkene i møte med utfordringer og fremmedfrykt, for å kunne belyse de positive aspektene med migrasjon.

Kampanjen skal bygges på hovedmålene og derfor:

- gjøre synlig kirkenes ansvar for å respondere på Bibelens ord om å ta vare på flyktningene i landet
- arbeide for en inkluderende politikk på europeisk og nasjonalt nivå for migranter, flyktninger og etniske minoritetsgrupper

Realisering

Kommunikasjon: Kampanje ID (logo), webside, brosjyrer, pressekontakter, universiteter og forskningssteder...

Materiell: Kalender over aktiviteter, gudstjenestemateriell, bønner og sanger, studier/rapporter, oversatt versjon av "Theological Reflections on migration", "reklameartikler" (penner, kopper, t-skjorter osv)...

Aktiviteter: "Kick-off event" og avslutningsmarkering, møter og konferanser, lokale festivaler, debatter, høringer, utvekslingsprogrammer...

Presentasjonsrunde

Alle delegatene presenterte arbeidet i deres land/område. Sverige har blant annet planer om å lage en stor praktisk bok for menighetene. Finland er opptatt av å få fakultetene på banen. Sistnevnte er ikke lett i Tyskland der Thomas Stephan har kontaktet fakulteter i hele landet. I England er en opptatt av å ikke dele mellom det som skjer i lokalmenighetene og press på politikere. I Norge vektlegges politisk påvirkning fra sentralt hold. Kvinneforeningers innsats ble vektlagt av Doris Pesche.

Kalender

Vi tok en god runde på kalenderen. Det er et ønske om å ha en økumenisk kalender med oversikt over alle store merkedager hvor det er naturlig å fremme migrasjon og integrering som tema.

Tanken er at en selv kan få bestemme når og hvor en vil legge inn sine aktiviteter, men det kan være praktisk å ha en oversikt over det som allerede ligger til rette.

Gjennomgangen av kalenderen tok 3 timer(?!).

Kommunikasjon

Logo er laget. Ble ikke veldig godt tatt i mot i gruppa, men ingen protester.

Vi diskuterte videre fokus for kampanjen. Det er viktig med politisk påvirkning. Men det kom helt klart frem at delegatene også ønsker å fokusere på teologi. Det er så viktig å skape god mangfolds-/integreringsteologi i Europa. Vi må arbeide for en holdningsendring på grasrotnivå.

Hva med å lage materiell som aktivt kan brukes av prester i lokalmenigheter?

Om vi sender ut store bokressurser, vil det kanskje nå inn til noen, men svært få. Vi trenger noe praktisk. Kanskje en prekenkommentar/ideer til prekener til ulike viktige tekster?

Det at prester har en mulighet til å slå opp i et hefte/bok foran hver kirkelig merkedag og lese dagens bibeltekst med ”migrasjons – og integreringsøyne” vil være en viktig del for å få forkynnelsen i gang.

Det at hvert medlem av CCME/KEK blir utfordret til å bidra med en tekstgjennomgang hver, kan være en idé. Slik vil de få et eierforhold til materialet. Samtidig krever dette både oversetting og gode korrekturlesere.

Iselin er bedt om å legge frem et forslag til CCME.

Kan dette være en spennende tanke på nasjonalt nivå også?

Hvor går vi videre?

Jeg måtte dessverre ta et fly for å rekke hjem til fasteaksjonen 31. mars, og fikk derfor ikke med meg avslutningen. Jeg venter derfor i spenning på rapport fra CCME på dette punktet.

Brussel, 30.–31. mars 2009
Iselin Jørgensen

