Islam and the West:
Common Cause or Clash?*

Ralph Braibanti

This article systematically presents an alternate scenario to the theme that Islam and the West are heading toward an inevitable clash of civilizations. It explores the common moral values shared by Christians and Muslims and identifies many areas where both Islam and the West would benefit if they made common cause. The paper proceeds to deconstruct some of the imagined differences between Islam and the West and proceeds to examine the emerging reconciliation, mutual understanding, and cooperation between the Vatican and various Muslim groups and governments. The author laments the decline of morality and virtue globally. He insists that the upsurge of spirituality and piety in contemporary Muslim societies may benefit not only the West but all of humanity. If Muslim fervor and Christian order can make common cause, it can stem the moral and spiritual decline of civilization.

The Call to Common Action

The ecumenical decree of Vatican Council II, *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Times, 1965), was a stunning repudiation of an attitude toward Islam regnant for more than half a millennium. It erased in a few poetically elegant sentences the imagery in Dante's characterization of Mohammed as *seminator di scandalo e di scisma*. Its newly sensitive appraisal of Islam eclipsed the somewhat less felicitous but potentially more powerful final sentence of paragraph 3: "On behalf of all mankind, let them [Muslims and Christians] make *common cause* of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace and freedom [*et pro omnibus hominibus justiciam*

Ralph Braibanti *is James B. Duke Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Duke University.*

socialem, bona moralia necnon pacem et libertatem communiter *tueantur et promoveant*]" (emphasis added).[1]

This is clearly an exhortation to act. The errors of the past were acknowledged, animosities were to be forgotten, and points of agreement between the two religions were portrayed without animus or condescension. The final step "on behalf of all mankind" was implicitly assertive of the claim to universality which is so critical a dimension of both faiths.

Now, more than thirty years later, it seems appropriate to survey how the worlds of Islam and Christendom have met the challenge of making "common cause." Since *Nostra Aetate*, proclaimed during the pontificate of Paul VI, a tidal wave of anti-Islamic sentiment has swept the West. Its devastating impact is apparent in movies, television, and books of popular culture and is well documented by such studies as those by Jack G. Shaheen and Edmund Ghareeb.[2] The effect of this sentiment, made popular by such vilifying expressions as "Islam and the rest" and "green menace,"[3] has been bordering on paranoia.

This apprehension and the accompanying climate of unease has monopolized our attention. Its negative implications have been generated first by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and successively by such events as the Arab oil embargo of 1973 which was induced by the Arab-Israeli October 1973 war, Iranian hostage-taking, Iraqi aggression, and terrorism. It has been intellectualized by Samuel Huntington's analysis of the "clash of civilizations" first advanced in the Summer 1993 issue of *Foreign Affairs* and later in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996).[4] Although all seven commentators writing in the September/October 1993 issue of *Foreign Affairs* disagreed with this perspective, the notion of a civilizational clash has further embellished the imagery of fear, and the new paradigm has entered the vocabulary of world politics. The apocalyptic suggestion that a nexus of "Confucian-Islamic" ambitions challenging "Western interests, values and power" might rely on nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons to advance those ambitions added a new dimension to this anxiety.

Global Islam in the Postcolonial Period

It is clear that the years since *Nostra Aetate* have been stamped indelibly by a remarkable recovery of Islamic identity. The end of empire released powerful forces which had been suppressed by colonialism. The effect of this explosion has been both global and profound, benign and sinister.

Since the establishment of Israel in 1948 scarcely a week has passed without the world's attention being called to Islam. These incidents span the spectrum of the human condition: war and peace, oil blockades, embargoes, freezing of assets, the maturation and disintegration of nations, famine and plenty, catastrophe and humanitarian relief, terrorism, ethnic cleansing, hostage-taking, boundary disputes, destruction of mosques, aggression, secession, and the creation of new states. Such events cover the globe: from Palestine to the Philippines, from Kashmir to Kuwait, from Cyprus to Chechnya, from Bangladesh to Bosnia, from the Central Asian Islamic republics to Morocco and the Sahara, from Turkey to Brunei Darussalam. In this theater of political and religious drama, the costumes and stage settings may change from the permissive lifestyle of pre-1975 Ras Beirut to the rigid austerity of the Taliban of Afghanistan. But the plot retains its Islamic character. For half a century we have not been able to escape the shock of these dramatic convulsions. If some actions were to vanish from the Islamic stage or if scripts were lost there are always Kashmir and Palestine waiting impatiently in the wings.

Negative impressions of Islam have been codified by the term "Islamaphobia" now widely used in Europe, especially France and Britain. In the United States and to a lesser extent elsewhere this attitude is slowly but perceptibly giving way to an idiom grounded in hope, interreligious understanding, and conciliation rather than conflict. Within the realm of Islam, the recovery of Islamic identity provides a glimmer of optimism for the resuscitation and radiation of Muslim values held dear by all civilizations. This would be the natural fulfillment of the Qur'anic injunction for the universalization of Islam. It was aptly, even prophetically, described by Alya Ali Izetbegovich, the Muslim President of Bosnia-Herzegovina: "Their [Islam and Christianity] kinship, if we draw all the necessary conclusions from it, could direct the relations of these two great world religions to an entirely new dimension in the future. . . . As Islam in the past was the intermediary between the ancient cultures and the West, it must again today, in a time of dramatic dilemmas and alternatives, shoulder its role as intermediary nation in a divided world. This is the meaning of the third way, the Islamic way."[5]

In the non-Islamic world, popularly though carelessly characterized as "the West," the idiom of concord and the constructive potential of this relationship was further demonstrated by the Oxford lecture by the Prince of Wales in 1993. He affirmed that "Islam can teach us today a way of under-

standing and living in the world which Christianity itself is poorer for having lost." He reaffirmed this view in a separately televised comment in 1995 when he said that he would prefer to have the Crown's title "Defender of *the* Faith" [emphasis added] changed to "Defender of Faith." He specifically mentioned Islam as one of the faiths of Britain. The lecture and subsequent commentary were widely reprinted in the Muslim world where they were received with enthusiasm. The response in Britain was, not surprisingly, less cordial. Despite some apprehension, Islam flourishes in Britain. The Christian Research Association, a charity based in London, reports that by 2002 it is expected that worshipping Muslims will be 760,000 and churchgoing Anglicans 756,000. In 1992, 1993, and 1994, 32,000 Muslims joined mosques each year; during the same years there was an annual decrease of Anglican churchgoers by 14,000. Two Muslims, Nazir Ahmed and Waheed Alli, were made peers on June 20, 1998, and assumed their seats in the House of Lords as Lord Ahmed and Lord Alli.[6] There had already been two Muslims in the House of Commons from the Glasgow/Govan and Mid-Bedfordshire constituencies. Statistically, these appointments and elections may appear to be insignificant since (as of August 3, 1998) the House of Lords had 1,160 members and the House of Commons 656. But the peerages suggest a political adroitness on the part of the Blair government and the acquiescence of the Crown consistent with Prince Charles's statements on Islam. Membership in the Commons indicates both the increasing political activity of Muslim voters and the confidence of some non-Muslims in electing Muslims as their representatives.

These salutary assessments of the potential of a global effervescence of Islam are found in a slowly emerging recognition in religious, intellectual, and political circles of the theological validity and demographic, hence political, weight of Islam. This latter idiom, more positive and constructive in its effect, could very well be the threshold toward the fulfillment of the "common cause" of *Nostra Aetate*.

A Resurgent Political Identity

It is clear that in this, the Hijrah year of 1419, the Muslim world is in a markedly different position than it was half a century ago. It seems poised either for a period of ascendancy or decline; it is too early to judge which will be its fate. Its emergence to a position of prominence is suggested by several factors.

During the past twenty-five years there has been an exponential increase in the number of books and journals on Islam. Scholarly journals devoted to more general topics now regularly publish analyses of Islam; scarcely an issue of *Foreign Affairs* appears without one or several articles on Islamic themes. Once the paucity of scholarly and popular studies on Islam was bemoaned; now the surfeit is lamented. Almost every institution of higher learning in the West offers courses relating to Islam. Islam has made significant inroads into Western intellectual life even though it may not yet be firmly embedded.

All Muslim states are now free of colonial rule, although still subject to cultural imperialism from the West. A few Muslim states have attained a comfortable degree of wealth and (complaints from poor states notwithstanding) have distributed a significant share of that wealth to further Islamic interests abroad. The 59 states which are constitutively Islamic are nearly one third of the 185 members of the United Nations. The admission of Palestine as a nonvoting member in 1998 suggests both the growing influence and self-confidence of Muslim states. A subtle manifestation of a slowly maturing political influence was the effort to resolve the stalemate in Baghdad over inspection of chemical weapons sites in 1996. The decision not to use force was induced as much by Arab resistance as it was by the intransigence of Russia, France, and China. That show of independence bespeaks the growing but still marginal influence of Muslim states. Russian, Chinese, and French attitudes toward Islam are more empathetic, in part because of commerce, competition in the Central Asian republics, a more sympathetic view of the Arab cause in Palestine, and (in the case of France) the growing political power of the Muslim immigrant minority and their progeny.

There is an impressive array of Muslim international organizations which, taken together, could in the distant future compete with the United Nations for influence in diplomacy. The paramount one is the Organization of the Islamic Conference (O.I.C.) with its fifty-five members and five observer states.[7] The twenty-two Arab states have been organized since 1945 in the Arab League. The six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council have a remarkably successful regional entity about which an impressive body of analytical literature has accreted. The Maghreb Union for North Africa and the Economic Council embracing the six Islamic Central Asian republics are further examples of transnational regional structures. The *Ummah Islamiya* (Commonwealth or World Community of Muslims) has

reached an institutional identity of unprecedented geographic scope. Muslim minorities, though not always comfortably ensconced in their larger non-Muslim societies, are nevertheless becoming influential political forces. In sum, the political recognition of Muslims both globally and within non-Muslim states is beginning to approach a level commensurate with their demographic bulk of one quarter of the world's population.

The image of an unvarying linkage of terrorism with Muslim militancy has perceptibly changed. It is now customary for official U.S. government spokesmen and media commentators to qualify their remarks with such caveats as the following: the larger Muslim community is peace-loving and law-abiding and cannot be blamed for a fanatical splinter, and Islam does not countenance terrorism against the innocent. This is not to suggest that such explanations, unheard of five years ago, have eliminated anti-Muslim discrimination in the United States. The Council on American-Islamic Relations reports that for the year ending April 1998 there was a sixty percent increase in anti-Muslim discrimination incidents (248), a decrease in incidents of harassment and violence (from 85 the previous year to 36), and an eighteen percent increase in total incidents (284).[8] Notwithstanding these negative implications, these qualifying comments in the media are first steps in understanding the diversity within Islam and the unrepresentative nature of fanaticism.

The annual U.S. State Department report *Patterns of Global Terrorism – 1997* shows a decrease in international terrorist incidents from 1978 to 1997.[9] The peak was reached from 1985 to 1988 with more than 600 incidents reported for each year. The low was reached in 1996 (296 incidents) and 1997 (304 incidents). In the only reported years from 1992 to 1997 the largest number of incidents (831) occurred in Europe; the second largest (602) in Latin America; the Middle East ranked third with 422 incidents. For the same years there were 7,621 casualties in the European incidents and 2,692 casualties in Middle East incidents. These statistics cannot be taken at face value. They are modified somewhat by Muslim implication in incidents in Europe. But even adjusting for this factor does not detract from the suggestion that terrorism is universal and is not the exclusive domain of Muslims. The State Department named thirty-four terrorist groups as of October 8, 1997. Fewer than half (15) were related to the Middle East. The remaining nineteen were associated with Asia (9), Europe (6), and Latin America (4). Non-Muslim groups include such entities as Aum Shinrikyo (Japan), Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque, Spain), Irish Republican Army,

Kahane Chai (Israel), Japanese Red Army, and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (Peru). Whatever change in perception these statistics suggest is set back by the 1998 bombings in Tanzania and Kenya assumed (but not proved) to have a Muslim connection and by the stated aim of Osama bin Laden to attack Americans everywhere. The ferocity and magnitude of such terrorism as the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marine base in Beirut (241 Americans killed), the 1988 bombing of a Pan American Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988 (270 killed), and the bombing of U.S. military headquarters in 1995 in Riyadh (5 killed) and a U.S. military housing complex near Dhahran in 1996 (19 killed) does not help the Muslim image. While guilt has not yet been legally established, the implications of Muslim involvement are strong enough to influence public perception. These incidents eclipse declarations unequivocally denouncing terrorism issued by Muslim groups in America and Europe and by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States, the Muslim World League, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and Al-Azhar University.

The most strident harbingers of global chaos provoked by Muslim terrorism, Amos Perlmutter, Yossef Bodansky, and Steven Emerson, may find some corroboration of their pessimism in such events.[10] But perspective is essential. The use of poison gas by the Buddhist Aum Shinrikyo, the Oklahoma City bombing by an American Christian, the long-standing terrorism by Northern Irish Catholics, the violence of Indian Hindus and Burmese Buddhists against Muslims, the vicious ethnic cleansing by Christian Orthodox Serbs in Bosnia and Kosovo, the violence of drug-related Catholic mobs in Latin America, and the terrorism of Hindu Tamils against the Sinhalese Buddhist government of Sri Lanka demonstrate the universality of terrorism and the cultural and religious diversity of its origins. Insofar as this universality is recognized, terrorism can no longer be viewed as an exclusively Muslim behavior.

The recovery of Islamic identity is dramatically evident in physical form throughout the world. New Islamic centers, some of spectacular architectural splendor, have been built in both Muslim and non-Muslim settings. Saudi Arabia has financed 210 such centers in such places as Edinburgh, London, Los Angeles, Rome, Lyon, and Madrid. In the United States, where the first recorded Muslim prayer group met in Ross, North Dakota in 1900 and built a mosque in 1929, there are now nearly 700 mosques. The oldest mosque in continuous use in the United States, the "Mother Mosque"

in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, built in 1934, was renovated and rededicated in 1991. A new mosque was built in 1971 with Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabian financial help. Twelve Islamic universities have been established at such sites as Kuala Lumpur, Bangladesh, Niger, Uganda, Islamabad, and Paris. A new complex for the Islamic Centre at Oxford University is in the planning stage. The Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences in America in Fairfax, Virginia, is doing significant research, teaching, and outreach education. A first-class Islamic high school is located in the same area. The eight universities of Saudi Arabia, including three Muslim universities (Imam Muhammed Ibn Saud, Umm Al-Qura, and Islamic University Al-Medina) now attract students for advanced degrees from other countries, both Muslim and non-Muslim. The Qur'an, translated into scores of languages (even Zulu), is printed in Saudi Arabia in what is said to be the world's largest and most modern printing plant. More than 10 million copies have been distributed world-wide. Islam is now studied in some schools in parts of Germany and England. In the United States a reinvigorated Islamic presence is manifest in the inclusion of imams as chaplains in the armed services and the celebration of the Eid in the White House. Most of these projects have been initiated and financed by Saudi Arabia. Ironically this largesse has often been a source of envy and discontent by some Muslim states, where it is labeled with the epithet "Wahhabism." This is a pointed reference to the strict interpretation of Islam in Saudi Arabia whose establishment resulted from the alliance of Abdul Wahhab, a dedicated preacher, and the Al-Saud family in 1744.

The pilgrimage (*hajj, hadj*), the pinnacle of religious experience for Muslims, has significance beyond its spiritual dimension.[11] The *hajj* is also the physical manifestation of the architectonic idiom of *ummah* which proclaims the embrace of all mankind. It is the outward and visible structure of the soul of Islam. Each year more than 2 million Muslims assemble to perform carefully prescribed rituals at the holy places of Mecca, Medina, and related sites. The official delegations of each country meet with the members of the Saudi royal family, usually the King, for an exchange of views of political and diplomatic significance. Disruptive incidents have been rare. The overall effect has been a deepening of a sense of solidarity among Muslims, though this does not always translate at the governmental level.

This effervescence of a global Islamic identity represents a potential shift in economic and political power which is epochal. There is not likely to be a return to an international system in which Islamic identity is relegated to

subordinate status either as an esoteric aberration or a powerless source of obscurantism. Islamic states are clearly forces to be reckoned with.

New Christian Appreciation of Islam

The escalating political visibility of Islam on a global scale is complemented by developments in religious affairs. If not in consequence of *Nostra Aetate* they are in consonance with its intent. The attitudinal change is such that if Dante were composing his *Divina Commedia* in 1999 instead of 1300 he might be tempted to place Mohammed in *Paradisio* rather than in *Inferno*. Mainline Christianity has modified its missionary strategy and its earlier exclusionary views of other religions. Evangelical Protestantism, however, still retains much of its zeal and messianic impulse. The proselytizing zeal of Islam continues unabated, invigorated by Saudi largess and in a less respectable mode by a fanatical fringe who see America as the Great Satan.

The new Catholic view of Islam was declared in the encyclical letter of Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam* (*His Church*) (1964): "We do well to admire these people [of the Moslem religion] for all that is good and true in their worship of God." This attitude was confirmed in an encyclical letter (*Lumen Gentium*) (*Light to All Nations*) (1964) issued two months later which stated that "the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place among whom are the Moslems." It was *Nostra Aetate*, one sentence of which was mentioned at the beginning of this essay, which established this relationship most clearly and fully:

> Upon the Moslems, too, the Church looks with esteem [*respicit*]. They adore [*adorant*] one God, living and enduring, merciful and all-powerful, Maker of heaven and earth and Speaker to men. They strive to submit wholeheartedly even to His inscrutable decrees, just as did Abraham, with whom the Islamic faith is pleased to associate itself. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere [*venerantur*] Him as prophet. They also honor [*honorant*] Mary, His virgin mother; at times they call on her, too, with devotion. In addition they await the day of judgment when God will give each man his due after raising him up. Consequently, they prize the moral life, and give worship to God especially through prayer, almsgiving, and fasting.

> Although in the course of the centuries many quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this most sacred Synod urges all to forget the past and to strive sincerely for mutual under-

standing. On behalf of all mankind, let them make common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom.

It clearly defines points of congruence in the two faiths and, in the last two sentences, sets the tone for the future and, as indicated at the beginning of this essay, exhorts to action. These views are buttressed by a new attitude toward missionary effort set forth in *Ad Gentes* (To All Nations) (1965) and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the Modern World) (1975). *Redemptoris Missio* (Mission of the Redeemer) (1990) calls for interreligious dialogue and understanding of recipient cultures for which the term "inculturation" is frequently used. This is a clear departure from the notions implicit in "heathenism" and "paganism." This new attitude has been elegantly summarized by John Paul II in his book of essays *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (1994).[12] Here he emphasizes Muslim "religiosity" and "fidelity to prayer" while admitting that both the "theology" and "anthropology of Islam [are] very distant from Christianity."

The spirit of *Nostra Aetate* is sustained structurally by Paul VI's establishment in 1964 of the Secretariat for Relationship with non-Christians, a curial body. In 1974 the Commission for Islam and the Commission for Judaism were created in an entity now called the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The current president of both the Pontifical Council and the Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims is Cardinal Francis Arinze, formerly Archbishop of Onitsha, Nigeria. The ecclesiastical rank of the president of the Secretariat and his joint appointment as head of the commission on Islam attest to the importance given to Islamic affairs. The Secretariat's national counterpart in the United States is the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The new vision projected by *Nostra Aetate* resonates in mainline Protestantism as is evidenced in the statement of policy adopted by the National Council of Churches in 1980. An exception is evangelical Protestant fundamentalism with its insistence on biblical inerrancy and correlative beliefs in the literalness of Old Testament prophecy and millenarianism. These notions are espoused by such televangelists as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Jimmy Swaggart, and W.A. Criswell. Their belief that the Second Coming is contingent on Jewish possession of the Holy Land places them in a position antagonistic to Arabs in particular and hence to Muslims and disdainful of Islam as a religion. Grace Halsell's *Prophecy*

and Politics (1986) illuminates this curious phenomenon in fascinating detail.[13]

From the perspective of the Qur'an, Christianity has always fitted harmoniously into the Islamic worldview. Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians have special status as people of the Book (*ahl al-Kitab*, *dhimmi*, *zimmi*). These non-Muslims living in Muslim countries are protected by elaborate and detailed provisions of the Shari'ah (Islamic law). That harmony has been challenged largely because of competition between Islam and Christianity for global hegemony epitomized by the Crusades. More recently it has been exacerbated by the establishment of Israel and the unequivocal support given it by the West led by the United States. Insofar as colonialism and Christianity have often been equated, the decolonization movements (often revolutions) which began in 1947 have also contributed to this departure from Qur'anic precepts.

Notwithstanding these interreligious tensions there is some evidence of concord generated from the Muslim side as well. Jordan is an outstanding contemporary example of peaceful Christian-Muslim co-existence. The Christian population is about 3 percent; the Muslims are almost entirely Sunni. Due in large measure to the sagacity of King Hussein I and Crown Prince Hassan bin Talal, Jordan has demonstrated that the impetus for interreligious understanding can and does emanate from the Muslim side. The Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies established by Prince Hassan in 1994 has been a sponsor of conferences and publications, including his book, *Christianity in the Arab World*.[14] Jordanian contacts with Catholicism have been especially fruitful. King Hussein made seven visits to the Vatican and in 1965 Pope Paul VI visited Jordan. Catholic relations with Morocco have been similarly cordial. The papal visit to Morocco in 1985 at the invitation of King Hassan II was characterized by John Paul II as "not simply a courtesy visit but an event of a truly pastoral nature . . . certainly an unprecedented event." There is evidence of interreligious understanding in the United Arab Emirates. Izz Al-din Ibrahim, an Egyptian scholar, and cultural advisor to Sheikh Zayed, leader of the Emirates, has long been interested in this theme and has written and lectured about it.[15]

The largest concentration of Christians—nearly equal to Muslims—is found in Lebanon. Some passing reference to the discouragingly complex Lebanese situation seems appropriate. In 1954 Christians (mostly Maronite) were nearly 54 percent of the population. Migration, the higher Muslim birthrate, the civil war of 1975–76 and the Israeli invasions of 1978

and 1982 have shrunk that percentage. No census has been taken since 1932, but rough estimates by demographers reduce the Christian population to about one third. The five major groups—Maronites, Greek Christians, Sunnis, Shiites, and Druze—have for centuries been subdivided into at least seventeen religious/ethnic subgroups. The perennial disarticulation of the Lebanese confessional polity with its intricate formula of representativeness in government was due as much to divisions within sectarian communities as to Christian-Muslim discord. Free of Ottoman and later French colonial and mandatory rule in 1943, Lebanon has had a turbulent independent existence. No definitive conclusion can be drawn on the vacillating state of Christian-Muslim harmony. Conflict among sects within each major group and the establishment of Israel in 1948 have tormented the polity. Nevertheless, Islam and Christianity coexisted and without such external interventions may have had a more harmonious prospect.

Most other Muslim states have fulfilled the Qur'anic prescription for treatment of *ahl al-kitab,* though sometimes imperfectly. The most notable exceptions are Sudan, Indonesia, Algeria, and Nigeria, where terrorism against Christians, though only recently, has been reported. The rise of Islamization in these and some other countries such as Pakistan, Iran, and the Taliban control of Afghanistan have made Christian minorities feel less secure than ever. The imposition of Islamic legal provisions such as punishment for *hudūd* crimes and restrictions on female dress, work, and education have affected the social practices of Christians though they may not have been directed specifically against Christian religious beliefs.

The opening in 1995 of the largest mosque in Europe in Rome built with Saudi funds in the shadow of the Vatican symbolizes this new relationship. Another event of symbolic significance was the meeting in Rome on September 12, 1997, of the Supreme Pontiff and the Second Deputy Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Sultan. This was the first time that a senior member of the Saudi royal family met with the head of the Roman church. It is a fulfillment of the wish often expressed by King Faisal for cordial relations and dialogue with Christianity.

Contemporary Muslim polities have not excluded non-Muslims from significant government positions. In Pakistan, A. R. Cornelius, a Roman Catholic, was on the Supreme Court for seventeen years, eight of them as Chief Justice. Kamel S. Abu Jaber, a Catholic senator of the Upper House of Parliament of Jordan, was foreign minister and in August 1998 Michel Marto, a Christian, was appointed finance minister. Tarik Aziz, a Chaldean

Christian, is deputy prime minister of Iraq. Léopold Senghor, a Roman Catholic, was Senegal's president for two decades. Boutros Boutros Ghali, a Coptic Christian, was deputy prime minister of Egypt. These are the most conspicuous examples among others.

There is a hefty corpus of scholarship and conference reports on the Islamic-Christian relationship, though it has been eclipsed by the imagery of an inevitable and irreconcilable tension. It would be less than wise to pass over three promising institutional developments: the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations of Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, England; the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding of Georgetown University; and the journal they now publish jointly (*Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations*). The yearbook *Islamochristiana* published by the Vatican's Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi is a notable scholarly source for this theme. These are but samples from a large universe of comparable enterprises.

The significance of the attitudinal change suggested by these developments is truly astounding. They represent a reversal of sentiment which had been deeply embedded in the West for more than a thousand years. This new attitude provides the philosophic underpinning and the emotional climate which encourages a new partnership—not Islam against the West—but Islam and the West against the decline of civilization.

Doctrinal Commonalities:
A Basis for Common Action

Attitudinal change in both the political and ecclesial spheres is a prerequisite to cooperation or "common cause." It is not likely to be achieved without a depth of epistemological commonality. This was suggested earlier by the quotation from *Nostra Aetate*.

A brief survey of points of convergence of Islam and Christianity can be made by two rather dramatic episodes widely separated in time and cultural space. The first is the experience of an American Unitarian clergyman, Moncure D. Conway, as related in *My Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East* (1906).[16] In 1905 Conway met in Calcutta with a group of "Brahmans, Brahmos, Moslems and Parsis [Zoroastrians]" to discuss religious and philosophical subjects. One of the Brahmans asked his opinion about the "miraculous birth of Christ." Conway responded that he regarded it like the legend of the virgin-born deity of the Hooghly River, "a story of mythological and poetic interest but not to be regarded as historical." The

Brahman said that was also his opinion of both events. Conway then continued to relate this revealing exchange:

> The Moslems, of whom there were a dozen of high rank in the room, had said nothing and I remarked that I would like to hear their opinion. Thereupon the Moslems bent their richly turbaned heads together in private consultation. At length one of them arose and said that they all felt "bound to accept the narrative just as it stands in the New Testament."

Conway concluded that "the Moslems were the only orthodox Christians present." In Colombo, Sri Lanka, where he found the same views he concluded that:

> Moslems are not Christians, but the only ones in the East who maintain literally all of the miracles ascribed to Christ in the gospels or related to his birth. It is very rare to find among them a skeptic.

The second illustration is a much more contemporary event in England reported in 1993.[17] A British television series, *Spitting Image*, featured a rubber puppet of Christ styled as a hippie. One of the British Muslim associations protested, pointing out that Muslims revere Christ and that those responsible for the television series should be severely punished. Withdrawing the puppet, the producer said that before production he had discussed the puppet with Church of England leaders who regarded the caricature as "innocuous." The Muslim committee concluded that the Anglican clergy "should be heartened by the leadership provided by British Muslims in protesting [Christian] blasphemy."

Those two references suggest several Christian-Muslim points of congruence. The experience of Moncure Conway vividly conveys two impressions. The first is the absolute inerrancy of the Qur'an, dictated by God through the Archangel Gabriel to Mohammed. In this respect devout Muslims are like fundamentalist Christians for whom the Bible is God's inspired word to be believed literally. Muslims also believe in the annunciation and the virgin birth of Christ, both of which are described with great beauty in the Qur'an (3:31–50; 19:20–35). There is irony in Conway's characterization of Muslims as more Christian than Christians in their adherence to these beliefs. The growing sentiment in Christianity to reject literalness in favor of metaphorical interpretation is a view recently given wide attention by David Jenkins, Anglican Bishop of Durham, England, and John Spong, Episcopal Bishop of Newark, New Jersey (both of whom are

now retired), and many others, and it lends some prescience to (Unitarian) Conway's remarks. Some Muslims note the anomaly that scriptural literalism may well disappear from Christian doctrine leaving Islam as the sole repository of many Christian beliefs.

The episode of the rubber puppet clearly illustrates the respect which Muslims have for Christ as a prophet. Indeed all the prophets of the Old Testament from Abraham to Christ are accorded respect; none may be blasphemed. Blasphemy, a word almost forgotten in Christian circles, cannot be tolerated. The puppet story shows that the Conway experience of 1904 lives on nearly a century later. It is manifest in different forms such as the blasphemy of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses,* which was condemned by the whole Muslim world and led Iran to call for his assassination.[18]

Beyond the suggestions prompted by the Conway and puppet illustrations there are many other parallels in the two faiths. The renowned French Orientalist Louis Massignon, who is considered to have influenced the views of Paul VI and *Nostra Aetate*, placed much emphasis on Mary (Maryam) as a critical point of confluence between Islam and Catholicism. James Bill and John Alden have suggested that the respect accorded Fatima, daughter of the Prophet and wife of Ali, is comparable to Christian Marianology.[19] The mystical tradition of Sufism is an important nexus in the analysis of Massignon whose specialty was the work of the great mystic Hallaj. It is also the focal point of the work of Henri Corbin, the French scholar of the Shia tradition.[20] The Shia modality reveals parallels not found among Sunnis; examples include the reverence for saints and the prayers for their intercession in human affairs, worship at gravesites, the hierarchical structure of the clerical class and their authority in both temporal and spiritual matters, and the elaborate Muharram celebration of the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali with the drama of the Ta'ziyeh and self-flagellation. While these beliefs and practices are not shared by the Sunni community with the same intensity (if they are shared at all), they are important aspects of Islam. Massignon, who abandoned Christianity for several years, eventually was ordained a priest in the Melkite rite of the Greek Catholic church. He wrote of that event, "In 1908, I had become, through the apprenticeship of Arabic, the liturgical language of Islam, an 'interiorized' *islamisant*, converted to Christianity by the witness to God implied by the Muslim faith."[21] In celebrating the richness of Islam he rediscovered his

own Catholicism. This was a confirmation of the congruence of the Islamic and Christian epistemes.

Similarities cannot mask the profound theological differences which have been explored for centuries by theologians. This is not the appropriate venue for such a discussion. So strong is the Muslim belief in the oneness of God (*tawhid*) that Muslims are wary of any suggestion of weakening this strict monotheism. Hence the most important difference is the perception of Christ whom Muslims regard as a prophet, but not as divine or the son of God. Nor can they countenance the concept of the Trinity which they regard as diluting the absoluteness of *tawhid*. Their repudiation of Trinitarianism is so firm that some Muslims even question whether Christianity is monotheistic. They reject the "tragedy of redemption" and deny Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. They disdain monasticism and celibacy (although there is some hermitage among Sufi mystics). Sunni Islam has no clearly delineated ecclesial structure, nor are there liturgical observances other than formalized prayer and the ritual performance of hajj. The Muslim's knowledge of Christianity comes through the prism of Qur'anic sources which subsumes both Judaism and Christianity, acknowledges yet perfects both, and purges both Jewish and Christian scriptures of aberrations. Hence Islam as the final stage in the evolution of Abrahamic monotheism embraces the truth of its two predecessors, rejects the untrue, and finalizes prophethood with Muhammed (Seal of the Prophets). On the one hand this perspective makes it appear impossible to have any meaningful interreligious dialogue. On the other hand the commonalities, if divorced from intervening political issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian controversy, have led to cooperation. The spirit of interreligious cooperation may also be compromised by the competition for conversions. Islam and Christianity are alone among world religions in their dynamic impulse for the universalization of their religious domain. This has been a source of conflict through the centuries. Neither religion has renounced its evangelical claims. Even while showing greater mutual respect, each has strengthened its missionary efforts. Both *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *Redemptoris Missio* make clear that the Church must continue "to struggle for the world's soul" and that inculturation which is designed to adapt to indigenous cultures and religions must not detract from the centrality of the "new evangelization." The global spread of Islam, a consequence both of birthrate and missionary zeal, continues at a remarkable rate. In *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* John Paul II was confronted with the projection that

by the year 2000 Muslims will outnumber Catholics for the first time in history.

Natural Law: Fulcrum of Understanding

The similarities and differences which have been sketched above pale in significance when set against the quintessential episteme which can be the fulcrum of acting in common cause. It is the doctrine of natural law which is common to both. The origins and definition of natural law have been debated for centuries in the West.[22] The dialectic, which began with Aquinas, John Calvin, Hugo Grotius, and others, continues in our time. The question is whether natural law as a body of ethical imperatives is derived from a supernatural source or from common patterns of behavior recognized experientially as imperative. If the latter is thought to be the source, then such a body of law, or pattern of behavior, is autonomous and does not derive its validity from a celestial mandate.

Certain features of natural law as defined by Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae* have been central to Roman Catholic thought. Giorgio del Vecchio, a leading Italian natural law philosopher, conceives of it as a system of highest truths based upon common elements in man's nature. Other advocates of natural law, especially Victor Cathrein, move away from the metaphysical to the theological origins of natural law. Thus the primary source is God; human law must correspond to this God-given law but cannot transcend it. The biologist Edward O. Wilson labels these as the transcendentalist and empiricist worldviews.[23] Of the former he says: "There is a supreme principle, either divine or intrinsic in the order of nature, and we will be wise to learn about it and find the means to conform to it." He describes the empiricist principle:

> Strong, innate feeling and historical experiences cause certain actions to be preferred; we have experienced them, and weighed their consequences and agree to conform with codes that express them.

The question of the origins of human morality is the preeminent theological/philosophical issue of our time. Its resolution will have profound impact on human liberty. Wilson puts it deftly:

> The choice between [these views] will be the coming century's version of the struggle for men's souls. Moral reasoning will either remain centered in idioms of theology and philosophy where it is now or it will shift towards science-based material analysis. Where it set-

tles will depend on which worldview is proved correct, or at least, which is more widely perceived to be correct.

Wilson takes a strong position in defense of the empiricist view expanding it to a new realm. Denying the transcendental origin of a code of morality (natural law), he suggests that it emerges from an evolving system of ethics based on biology and genetics. This thesis contradicts the "immutability" attribute central in both Catholic and Islamic doctrine. It elevates the relativity of morality by implying the immutability of a genetic base and the mutability of biological development.

Catholic doctrine, derivative from St. Thomas's reasoning, is firmly embedded in the transcendental origin of natural law, i.e., God-given.[24] Aquinas distinguishes four types of law: eternal law (*lex aeterna*), divine law (*lex divina*), natural law (*lex naturalis*), and human law (*lex humana*). The Jesuit scholar R. J. Henle explains their interrelationship thus: eternal law is in the mind of God embracing the universe; divine law is the revealed law of the Bible; man's working out of natural law results from his practical reason applied to his understanding of eternal and divine law; human law is man-made (statutes, regulations) which should be compatible with the higher law. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains, natural law allows for some degree of empiricism, i.e., human reason based on experience:

> The natural law is written and engraved in the soul of each and every man, because it is human reason ordaining him to do good and forbidding him to sin . . . But this command of human reason would not have the force of law if it were not the voice and interpreter of a higher reason to which our spirit and our reason must be submitted.[25]

Natural law is "immutable and permanent throughout the variations of history." It is expressed first in the Decalogue, and is revealed further in the Old Law (Old Testament) which is imperfect and a preparation for the Gospel or New Law. The New Law "fulfills, refines, surpasses, and leads the Old Law to its perfection."

No recent exposition of natural law is more lucid or eloquent than the encyclical letter of John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* (The Splendor of Truth) (1993) (35.1-53.3). It anticipated the mutational, relativist moralism defended by Wilson and other secularist bio-ethicists who deny the transcendental origins of moral law. It repudiates the validity of determining moral values by a statistical count of human actions. It reaffirms the uni-

versality and immutability of natural law by its assertion that "man always exists in a particular culture . . . but is not exhaustively defined by that culture" (53.2). Human nature transcends culture and assures that man does not become a prisoner of his culture.

Natural law theory undergirds the political thought of the Declaration of Independence, which proclaims that man is "entitled" to "certain unalienable rights" by the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" and again that these rights have been "endowed by their Creator." The historical and scriptural revelation of such natural law in the Declaration lacks the explicitness specified in Catholic doctrine. The scriptural sources are implied by virtue of the Christian background of the interpreters. The change in cultural background of contemporary interpreters (i.e., legislative and judicial officials) weakens the scriptural application of the natural law base thus weakening the parameters of interpretation. Human freedom in a political system cannot exist if the final determinant of action depends on law made by man alone. The Nobel Laureate F. A. Hayek attributes the rise of the Nazi and Communist systems to the rejection of natural law premises and the ascendence of man-made law.[26] This, as Carl F. H. Henry points out, is the road to nihilism.[27]

Natural law, conceived as derivative from a transcendent source, intersects at this point with Islam. The Qur'an is the revelation of natural law; the Sunnah and the Hadith are subsidiary sources; and the Shari'ah, amplified by ijtihad and ijma', is the corpus of Islamic jurisprudence (canon law) which has accreted. The Islamic concept differs from Catholic doctrine only with respect to the origin of scriptural legacy of natural law. The Decalogue and the Old and New Laws are thought to be divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Qur'an is thought to be dictated by God through Gabriel to the Prophet. The result is a quality of scriptural literalness comparable to the biblical inerrancy of some Protestant sects such as those now in control of the Southern Baptist Convention. While there are mechanisms for adaptation to time and place, the political effect is the endowment of natural law with greater validity and sanctity and hence greater political strength. This special status is given symbolic if not real significance in the polity of Saudi Arabia, which regards the Qur'an as its constitution.

The chasm between the secular values now regnant in the United States and in most of the West and Islamic values grows wider even as the appreciation of the similarity of Muslim-Christian social values deepens. The technological dynamism of the United States, relentlessly radiating its val-

ues, has long been a concern of non-Muslim countries as well. In France, Maurice Duverger said that there is only one "immediate threat to Europe. It is American civilization."[28] Servan-Schreiber rejected American civilization as a "deformed caricature" which Europe must not imitate.[29] Similar concerns have been expressed in most Muslim countries. Successive leaders of Pakistan, perhaps the most dependent on American foreign aid of all Muslim countries, have loudly deplored their enmeshment in this web of dependence. Ayub Khan titled his book *Friends Not Masters*,[30] and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto followed with *The Myth of Independence*.[31] At the 1995 meeting of the O.I.C. Committee on Science and Technological Cooperation, Farooq Leghari lashed out against the "total dependency" of the Islamic world on the West.[32] This web of dependence is strengthened by the arrogant intervention of public and private national and international bodies and pressure groups calling for universalization of norms and institutions, free press, trade unions, redefinition of the family, abortion, population control, judicial reform, electoral reform, and sexual orientation. The situation is aggravated by the fact that much of this irresponsible clamoring is done by militant pressure groups, unrepresentative of public sentiment or national policy. These cultural intrusions are strengthened by the steady erosion of national sovereignty by international and regional alliances. Thus the sphere of internal matters beyond the purview of foreign powers steadily shrinks. The edges of that sphere become increasingly permeable to outside intervention. When the web of technological, military, and cultural dependence is spun with threads of gold in the form of grants and loans, what poverty-stricken or militarily vulnerable nation can resist? In valiant efforts to block these intrusions many Muslim groups reassert the primacy of their religious roots by going back to a pretechnetronic age. Extremist minority groups sometimes resort to violence in a desperate attempt to stay the infiltration of norms deemed abhorrent. In the case of Iran and Taliban Afghanistan, a total revolution casts out all Western influence and asserts the exclusivity of Muslim values. There is the possibility that other Muslim states may follow this revolutionary path, thus lending some validity to a forecast of clash.

An Emerging Pattern of Joint Action on Social Values

Islam has not articulated to the world in authoritative fashion its moral, ethical, and religious principles. These have been eclipsed by less than

acceptable behavior of some Muslim states. The unequivocal reassertion of those principles can erect a scaffold of moral values around both a weakening edifice of non-Islamic culture and Muslim behavior hiding behind the rhetoric of Qur'anic doctrine. In so doing it will enrich the whole of civilization. The Muslim value system is an all-embracing moral and aesthetic continuum. Its dominion is universal and it is unfettered by time, race, or space. Perhaps the destiny of Islam is not to convert individuals to the faith but to reinvigorate the moral and ethical universe of mankind, for the decline in moral values is not limited to the non-Western world. However lofty Islamic ideals may be, they have not yet found a society scrupulously practicing them. Muslim societies are rife with moral aberrations, some different from those of the West, but corrosive of Islam and world civilization nonetheless.

To forestall this corrosion, the social and political values of Islam must be clearly set forth and their relationship to the dominant majority culture must be established. In democratic societies, the active participation of Muslims in the political process must include voting, organization of interest groups, and election to public office. The maturation of this process takes about one generation. The first generation of Muslim immigrants is typically occupied with achieving economic security and lacks the self-confidence to play an active political role. The second generation, bolstered by citizenship of birth and intimately acquainted with the majority culture, is confident enough to become actively involved in shaping public policy. This is the situation which now prevails in the United States, Canada, Britain, and France.

Instead of Islam against the West or the West against Islam, Islam and the non-Islamic world should think of themselves as believing partners in the inner life united in strategies to delay if not prevent the morbidity of the universe of morals. The brief and inadequate foregoing analysis has shown that there is a sufficient parallelism of belief to nurture a program of joint action.

The effort to filter out contaminating influences of the West does not mean that Islam should isolate itself from cooperative endeavors with segments of Western culture. Thus far, the many dialogues on Christianity and Islam have tended to focus on theological and scriptural differences and similarities. Could we not add to such a dialogue a concentration on joint measures to deal with the horrendous social problems which confront us all? On social problems of an ethical nature there is remarkable concor-

dance between believing Christians and Muslims, as is further detailed later in this essay.

Virtually every social problem of our time—divorce, teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, violent crime in schools and on streets, spousal and child abuse, the horrendous spread of incurable sexually transmitted disease, childhood and adult sexual promiscuity—has its origins in the break-up of the family unit structured with two parents—father and mother. There is probably no social issue dearer to the hearts of Muslims and Christians than the sanctity of the family. A realization of this common concern is not new. In 1985 it was the subject of the Second Muslim-Christian Consultation held by the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research in Amman. There was total agreement by the thirty-four scholars of various Christian and Muslim modalities on this issue. There is great potential in common political action—as opposed to rhetorical inaction—by Muslims and Christians in defending the sanctity of the family as well as asserting other moral principles.

Two international conferences on critical social issues recently held are examples of the political potential of Christian-Muslim common cause in action. In September 1994 the third decennial United Nations Conference on Population and Development was held in Cairo.[33] It was attended by representatives of 178 U.N. members, 22 of which were Muslim states. Saudi Arabia was conspicuous by its absence. The Organization of the Islamic Conference, and six other Muslim regional entities were represented. The Vatican attempted to forge a united front with Islam to defeat abortion provisions in the program document adopted at the conference. In June of that year representatives of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Muslim World League, and the Muslim World Conference met in Rome with Vatican representatives. A joint communiqué was issued opposing the draft U.N. conference document whose "individualistic orientation" would lead to "the destruction of society . . . a state of moral collapse, of libertinism and the suppression of social values." The communiqué was endorsed by the Grand Imam of the Al-Azhar University in Cairo. This is as close to a pan-Islamic pronouncement as can be made by the loosely structured Islamic system which has no recognized central authority.

Ironically the nemesis of the Holy See at the Cairo conference was a Muslim woman, Dr. Nafis Sadik from Pakistan. A gynecologist, she met with the Pope prior to the conference in her capacity as secretary-general of

the conference to seek approval of a draft program of action. On the issues of abortion and birth control there was no meeting of the minds. Carl Bernstein and Marco Politi report that Dr. Sadik left the audience feeling that the pontiff was "hard-hearted . . . dogmatic, lacking in kindness."[34] While the Pope had Islamic doctrine on his side, he was not able to convince the key conference organizer who represented Western and perhaps even Muslim feminist views. At the conference a significant number of countries registered either orally or in published statements "reservations" on the conference program of action. Most of these dealt with the definition of family, abortion, and sexual preference. Almost all recorded the caveat that any action taken in their countries had to be consistent with the nation's culture and religious convictions. Most Muslim states specifically mentioned that all such action must conform with the Shari'ah. It is significant that all twenty-two Muslim states, all fifteen Latin American Catholic states, and other Catholic polities such as Austria and the Philippines recorded reservations on these issues. The representative of El Salvador reminded the Conference that Latin American countries are signatories to the American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San José). That pact states that life must be protected from the moment of conception. While these dissenting statements were not as lengthy or as detailed as the Holy See's reservation, they reflected its attitude. The most powerful Muslim statement came from Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan who called attention to "serious flaws" in the Conference report "striking at the heart of a great many cultural values . . . in the mosque and in the church." Quoting from the Qur'an she said that Islam [and therefore Pakistan] rejects abortion and does not compromise on the centrality of the traditional family as a "union sanctified by marriage" and built upon "a bedrock of conjugal unity." Moreover, the Conference "must not be viewed . . . [as] seeking to impose adultery, abortion, sex education and other such matters on individuals, societies and religions which have their own social ethos."

The fourth decennial World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 raised the same issues but in the context of empowerment of women rather than population control.[35] Thirty-two Muslim states were among the 189 U.N. members represented. Again Saudi Arabia chose not to attend. Only two Muslim regional entities, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, were represented. As in Cairo, all thirty-two Muslim countries filed reservations or interpretative statements as did fifteen Latin American Catholic countries and twenty-three other

states. The statement of the Holy See was again the longest and the most detailed. Most of the statements agreed on the traditional definition of family and on the sanctity of life. The statement of Brunei Darussalam was the most explicit in its stand against "sexual promiscuity, any form of sexual perversion or sexual behavior that is synonymous with homosexuality and lesbianism." It also reasserted the sanctity of the traditional family headed by a "registered union between a man and a woman." Benazir Bhutto in a stirring address described the tragic plight of women in the developing world and in combat situations such as Bosnia. She reminded the Conference of the true Qur'anic teachings on the equality of women and criticized the Conference platform as "disturbingly weak on the role of the traditional family." But her statement was not as strong or as compelling as her Cairo address.

The aggregation of Muslim and Christian interests at these meetings may have been more successful than is commonly thought. At the Beijing conference a petition was circulated requesting a reevaluation of the legal status of the Vatican in the United Nations.[36] The petition was initiated by ten nongovernmental organizations led by Catholics for a Free Choice. As a city-state, the Vatican is known as the Holy See and is a nonmember state permanent observer in the United Nations. The Holy See cannot vote in the General Assembly but is allowed to vote in U.N. special conferences. The petition, supported by more than a hundred organizations in other countries, arose from apprehension about the Holy See's active campaigning against a libertine social agenda at U.N. conferences. This attack against the Holy See would probably not have been mounted if its efforts had not posed a threat to the ideological dominance of social libertinism. Christian-Muslim concord at these two conferences paved the way for a new attitude of collaboration. In a meeting on October 7, 1997, with Italians in Badova, Italy, the secretary-general of the Muslim World League stated that Muslims and Christians stand together against atheism, immorality, social corruption, injustice, and discrimination and that they should work in partnership to combat these and other social ills.

Muslim and Catholic views on social issues (especially adultery, fornication, homosexuality, family, sacredness of life, drugs, alcohol, gambling) are close enough for Muslims to feel relatively comfortable with the social doctrines explicated in many papal encyclicals and other documents. Thus the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Christ would have to be put aside. These beliefs are explicitly dealt with in John Paul II's

latest encyclical, *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason) (1998). Otherwise its philosophical reasoning would not be unfamiliar to Muslims. Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (On Capital and Labor) (1891) and *Centesimus Annus* (The One Hundreth Year) (1991) issued by John Paul II to commemorate the centennial of *Rerum Novarum* acknowledge the profit motive of capitalism while admitting its contradictory unjust effects. Both documents affirm the absolute necessity of a mechanism for the distribution of profits to the total social order. This is a critical component of the concept of Islamic justice (*'adl*) which Mona Abu-Fadl aptly characterizes as the "goal and propellor of Muslim consciousness."[37] There are two constants in *'adl*—compassion (*ihsan*) and equality—which should tend toward a more equitable distribution of social goods through the mechanism of *zakat*. John XIII's *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth) (1963) and Paul VI's *Dignitatis Humanae* (Dignity of the Human Person) (1965) would be acceptable to the devout Muslim. Muslims found themselves in agreement with the papal encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (The Development of Peoples) (1967), which dealt with the development of poor nations.[38] This called for the ethical dimensions of development to be considered. It admonished that the aspiration of man is "*to do more, know more and have more* in order be more" [*hoc est, ut magis operentur, discant, possideant*, ut ideo pluris valeant] (emphasis added).

Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life) (1995), an encyclical of John Paul II with its emphasis on the sacredness of life and the "primacy of persons over things," evokes similar but not total acceptance. There is disagreement on contraception, abortion, and capital punishment. Islam allows contraception by any methods; Catholic teaching permits only the rhythm (natural) method. On abortion there is a dramatic contrast with Catholic doctrine which holds that life begins from the moment of conception and cannot be killed (*Evangelium Vitae*, 57–63). Muslim belief holds that the embryo is not a human personality until forty days after conception when an angel breathes a soul into it. (There is some disagreement as to whether the period is forty days or four months, but new analyses of the Hadith and embryogenesis support the forty days belief.[39]) While abortion is not forbidden during that forty-day period, it does not have popular acceptance, as the antiabortion statement made by Benazir Bhutto at the Cairo conference suggests.

Catholic and Muslim teachings on capital punishment are similar but not identical. Both start from the premise of the sacredness of human life and

prohibition against the killing of innocent persons. There are several vers-
es in the Qur'an against killing. For example, in verse 6:151 we find "Take
not life which Allah has made sacred, except by way of justice and law."
The same view is expressed in verses 17:33 and 25:68.

With respect to the death penalty, *Evangelium Vitae* clearly states that the
criminal offender should not be executed unless there is no other means of
defending society. "Today, however, as a result of steady improvements in
the organization of the penal system, such cases are rare, if not practically
nonexistent" (Section 56). Episcopal conferences have challenged the the-
ological assumptions that have supported the death penalty so that its use
has been virtually without exception though not absolutely forbidden.[40] In
Islam there is no significant move to abolish the death penalty. There can-
not be since it is prescribed in the Qur'an for premeditated murder (though
not for manslaughter). But its application is circumscribed by several other
Islamic principles. *Ihsan* is urged in several places in the Qur'an and in the
Hadith.[41] Although rarely invoked, forgiveness by the victim's family
vacates the death sentence. In some states, such as Saudi Arabia, the pay-
ment of blood money to the victim's family has the same effect. A meticu-
lous and elaborate system of appeals further softens the application.
Finally, the death penalty is to be applied only when no other penalty is
appropriate and when the social order would be seriously disturbed if it
were not applied.

There is another social issue of current notoriety on which Catholic and
Muslim views are even more closely aligned: protection of the environ-
ment. In Catholic thought respect for the integrity of creation is enjoined by
the seventh commandment. Man's dominion over living and inanimate
beings is limited by the moral obligation of stewardship in behalf of future
generations.[42] A more forceful articulation of concern for protecting our
natural environment can be found in sections 34.1–34.6 of the encyclical
letter of John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (On Concern for Social
Issues) issued in 1987 for the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum
Progressio*. The concept of stewardship and indenture to posterity is
expressed with comparable strength in Islam.[43] The similarity of Judaic,
Christian, and Muslim thought on this issue is analyzed in depth by Seyyid
Hossein Nasr.[44] Noting that (with some notable exceptions) the contempo-
rary Christian response to the environmental crisis is based on secular, sci-
entific premises, Nasr asserts that only "access to the Sacred . . . can enable
us to reassert the sacred quality of nature and therefore realize its ultimate

value beyond the merely utilitarian." Islam, in doctrine and ritual, is closely identified with the sacredness of nature. Nasr reminds us of the hadith which says, "God placed the Earth for Muslims as a mosque," and that prayer can be said in any undefiled space of "virgin nature" at times "astronomically determined [to] correspond to cosmic moments," thus emphasizing the "harmony of human life with the rythyms of nature." Perhaps the most succinct and definitive expression of the Muslim view is found in the well-authenticated hadith:

> The world is green and beautiful and God has appointed you as His stewards over it. He sees how you acquit yourselves.[45]

The critical global problem of protecting the environment has been dealt with by domestic regulation as well as by international agreements. It has now entered the domain of widespread public discussion. The rationale for this concern is not to be found exclusively in ecological and meteorological science. It resides just as firmly and has a much more ancient lineage in religious traditions. Like the issue of family integrity it is a sociobiological problem which interreligious political action could effectively address with authenticity of concern and without the impediment of theological disputation. This, the principal theme of the present essay, finds further corroboration in Nasr's conclusion. A comparative view of the religious understanding of nature, he asserts, "affords the possibility of religions enriching each other or certain religions recollecting aspects of their own heritage (now forgotten) through contact with a living tradition."

In almost every public policy which presents problems in American and world society, Islam has had an answer rooted in scripture, Hadith, or the experience of more than a millennium. To name a few: protection of the environment; primacy of the family in the social order; solidarity of the community (*ummah*); individual responsibility; concern for the victims of crime; self-restraint; modesty of dress and manner; abstention from addictive drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and gambling; equality of all races; a strict judicial process tempered by compassion; and submission to divine will. United political action on these social issues—united with Christian believers—should now be the great challenge of Islam.

The vexing problem is that of diffusion of Muslim values in the non-Muslim world. No universal authority comparable to the caliphate of another era or the Vatican of today exists. *Fatwa* proclaimed from various sources may not command universal obedience. There are structures which

may eventually fill this void in universal authority such as the Islamic Fiqh Academy, the Muslim World League, the European Islamic Council, and the American Muslim Council. Declarations, proclamations, dialogues, and commission reports are necessary first steps but are usually rhetorical flourishes quickly forgotten.

Articulation of Moral Values

The most effective force for the diffusion of Muslim values is the political and social influence of Muslim minorities living in non-Muslim states. Only recently has much systematic attention been given to the role of these minorities. The Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs was established at King Abdul Aziz University in 1976, and its excellent journal continues to be published in London. International seminars on minorities have been held in London in 1978, in Sherbrooke, in Canada in 1981, and in Perth, Australia in 1984. The latest symposium was convened in London in January 1995. Quite justifiably these events have focused on correcting false impressions of Islam and on enabling minorities to live in security and to preserve their faith. Attention has also been given to the special problems of postimmigrant generations maintaining their culture. This concern for Muslim minorities who constitute one-third of the world's Muslim population, and are an integral part of the Ummah is important. It can conceivably strengthen Muslim identity within each minority and may ultimately affect their treatment in the non-Muslim states where they live. Their position would be buttressed further if they were accorded some kind of formal representation in such institutions as the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Beyond these considerations, Muslim minorities can be agents for the diffusion of Muslim values in both Muslim and non-Muslim Western societies. As immigrants who have fled from both economic and social tribulations of their native lands, they are liberated from many of the less favorable behaviors of their birthplace. They also become aware of the social deficiencies of the new home, even though it provides unparalleled economic opportunity and personal liberty. Thus experiencing Islam from a liberated perspective, they can see its pristinity separated from the cultural modifiers which have distorted it elsewhere. If they resist the corrosive influence of their new home on their beliefs, they stand in a unique position to assert the moral basis of Islam. They can perform in reverse what Christian missionaries did in Muslim societies in past generations. Those

missionaries, unable to convert Muslims, directed their efforts to education, health, and welfare. Such institutions as the American University of Beirut established in 1866, the Catholic University of St. Joseph in Beirut, Robert College in Istanbul, American University of Cairo, Victoria College in Alexandria, and Foreman Christian College in Lahore are a few examples. The many political and educational leaders in the Middle East trained in those institutions, while not abandoning Islam, absorbed and diffused Western values. Some of those values were the same as Islamic values, hence reinforced Muslim beliefs and gave then renewed international validity.

Can we not hope, perhaps even assume, that in the future these roles will be reversed? Muslims can once again assume the role they played in the eleventh century and after as transmitters of the sciences and Muslim erudition to the West. Through Sicily, Spain, and Italy, the genius of Arab/Islamic civilization in all fields penetrated the membrane of Western civilization, lifting it to a higher level. The opportunity for comparable Islamic influence on Western civilization arises today. The form it will take is somewhat different. It may not be in the realm of technology, science, or even philosophy. It will be in assertion of political power in common cause for moral principles.

Positive action by Muslim groups can be taken at the following three levels:

1. The elucidation of Muslim positions on social and cultural issues as well as on terrorism must be vigorously undertaken. The inclusion of terrorism would be an opportunity to examine its antispiritual essence as well as the social and moral context which it aborts. The preparation of television programs by the American Muslim Council is a step in the right direction. But a dramatic action in the form of a crystal-clear declaration of values issued by a distinguished representative group is essential. Admittedly this would not be easy to achieve because of the many competing groups in Muslim countries as well as in Britain, France, Canada, and the United States purporting to speak for Islam. Here the actual fragmentation of the Muslim world within a semimythical universe of the Ummah serves Islam poorly. The Muslim World League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Al-Azhar University, the Islamic Society of North America, and the Islamic Council of Europe are the types of organizations which might be included. Such a declaration might also minimally reduce the hostility in which most Muslim minorities live, especially in Europe.

2. A second level is the issuance of a bipartite or even tripartite declaration of values of people of faith. There are two activities which can be viewed as models. The first is the Center for Jewish and Christian Values established in 1995 in Washington, D.C., as part of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews founded in 1983. Senator Daniel R. Coates (R., IN) and Senator Joseph I. Lieberman (D., CT) serve as honorary chairmen. The objectives of the Center include advocacy of "the sanctity of human life, the importance of the traditional family, the value of hard work, responsibility, honesty, loyalty, compassion and tolerance and the free expression of faith."[46] Senator Lieberman expressed the view that American Muslims share these concerns and that the Center plans to reach out to Muslims to "build a powerful alliance" to preserve these values. A second model is the 1994 declaration *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium* endorsed by nearly thirty church leaders and prominent laymen.[47] In both of these we find bipartite efforts to proclaim and support common social moral values. Regrettably Muslims are not included. Some evangelicals, because of millenarian views described earlier, might find it difficult to unite with Muslims whom they regard, rightly or wrongly, as antagonists of Israel. Some Muslims and Jews might find it awkward to express common values because of the Israeli factor. Yet the genealogical origins of these two faiths by Isaac and Ishmael, sons of Abraham, cannot be matched by any two religions. Their century-old peaceful coexistence was shattered only by the establishment of Israel.[48] A strong case can be made for theological similarities, and there is unanimity especially with orthodox Judaism on many social issues. The intrusion of the Arab-Israeli conflict was one of the factors tarnishing a 1979 conference of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic scholars held in conjunction with the American Academy of Religion.[49] In the intervening twenty years, progress has been made in Jewish-Muslim relations. But sensitivity remains. Perhaps it is not yet time to attempt a tripartite declaration, however desirable that would be. It might be more feasible to proceed incrementally with a bipartite effort building on the efforts at Cairo and Beijing and paving the way for ultimate Jewish inclusion.

3. The third level is organization of interest groups, mobilization of voters, and election of Muslims to political office. The American Muslim Council, for example, has pledged to register more than a million voters for various elections.

The advantages of Christian (especially Catholic) and Muslim collaboration have not gone unnoticed by some Muslim intellectuals. Perhaps the most intriguing proposal is that made by Mohammed Arkoun, professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Paris.[50] He deplores the "reciprocal exclusion of theological, ethical, and political systems" by the three monotheistic religions and the West's view of Islam as a homogeneous force rather than as the ideologically diverse and politically fragmented structure which it is. To complete the interreligious initiatives taken by Vatican Council II, Arkoun proposes the convening of a third Vatican Council. This new assembly would attempt "to articulate a new language of hope, a semantic order which would be compelling for all consciences of the twentieth century." Such a Council would have "cultural, intellectual, and institutional resources, the moral credit, the channels of transmission, and the historical and symbolic capital which are required today in any intervention on behalf of humanity." The third Council must not, however, set Christianity in a position of theological superiority. It "would be fulfilling an historical mission capable of giving hope to all men and women if it based its intervention on the explicit renunciation of all theological privilege, replacing it with a final recognition and integration of the plurality of human articulations of meaning." Arkoun readily admits that his proposal is Utopian. Several impediments (which he does not address) may here be ventured. Since each of the three Abrahamic faiths claims either exclusive authenticity or supercessional validity, a trilateral renunciation of such claims seems unlikely. Nor would such a repudiation find encouragement in the view of Cardinal Arinze that "one religion is not as good as another."[51] The generating impulse in Arkoun's stratagem would come from the Vatican via the well-established and authoritative institution of a Vatican Council. But the convening of a Vatican Council is an epochal event. From the first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 to Vatican II in 1962—a span of 1,637 years—only seventeen ecumenical councils were convened. The time span between six councils was a century or more. When Vatican I was convened in 1869, it was 324 years after the preceding Council of Trent and it was to be 93 years before Vatican II. This is not to suggest that the convening of a third Vatican Council would be governed by the spacing of previous Councils. Contemporary transportation and communications facilities render such a timetable almost irrelevant. Moreover, the millennium jubilee, a favorite project of John Paul II, might be an appropriate occasion for a third Council thirty-eight years after

Vatican II. One of a group of five planning the jubilee is Cardinal Arinze. Such an event would probably not be limited to Muslim-Christian relations. *Nostra Aetate* dealt with Judaism as well. Indeed in its English translation, fifty-eight lines were devoted to Judaism and eighteen to Islam. Nevertheless it is Islam which projects the greatest challenge in the form of competitive evangelization. Relations with Judaism are largely issues of atonement, explanation, and apology for the past; there is no indication of future antagonism.

In this essay, we propose that the initiative on behalf of common cause come from Muslim sources working in close collaboration with non-Muslim interest groups and institutions. Neither proposal would be easy to implement. Given the absence of an effective global ecclesial structure in Islam and the two thousand-year-old highly effective, clearly defined hierarchical nature of Roman Catholicism, Arkoun's proposal may be more feasible. His suggestion focuses on discussion deepening mutual understanding and respect for both faiths moving from dialogue to an "era of thought founded on the historical solidarity and integration of all peoples." He stops short of assessing the commonality of views on the social issues threatening the whole of civilization. Nor does he plot a joint campaign of action for the promotion of Christian-Muslim morality. In this respect, the Arkoun proposal differs from the present essay which advocates the kind of cooperative politico-diplomatic activity initiated at the Cairo and Beijing conferences.

Notwithstanding these observations, Arkoun's approach is significant. It is illustrative of the enormous potential of Muslim intellectuals recovering the universality and the all-embracing aesthetic and moral continuum of the Qur'an. Within that sphere of understanding, Islam and Christianity are partners rather than competitors. It assumes the present superior effectiveness of the Catholic ecclesial structure (but not its theology). It assigns that structure the initiative in a joint exploration of commonalties. While not specifying common political action on specific social issues, it does not rule out such action. Nor does Arkoun eliminate the possibility of the eventual emergence of an authoritative Muslim global structure giving political reality to the concept of Ummah. Implicit in his plan is the realization that each faith can strengthen the other. If this point of view is widely shared by other Muslim intellectuals there may be a glimmer of new hope for both Islam and the West.

In his uncommonly perceptive and candid essay, Cardinal Arinze calls for "joint promotion of moral values, development, justice and peace."[52] He asserts that an interreligious effort to face the problems of all societies is obligatory. He cites as examples the World Council on Religion and Peace that held its first world assembly in Kyoto in 1970 and the Cairo Conference on Population and Development, which is analyzed elsewhere in the present article. Thus he fulfills the call to action in common cause proclaimed thirty-four years earlier in *Nostra Aetate*.

Islam's Fourteenth Centennial Year: Problems and Prospects

We are concerned here with the elucidation and transmission of Islamic ideals of the Qur'an, the Hadith, and the Sunnah. As with all religions and ideologies, reality does not always match ideals. Contemporary transgressions from Islamic beliefs cannot be ignored. Tribal warfare and drug trafficking in Afghanistan, child labor and linguistic warfare in Pakistan, hostage-taking, assassination, and terrorism of horrendous proportions are but a few. It is the association of Islam with terrorism which rivets our attention. This is inevitable and justifiable when the perpetrators invoke Islam generally or a specific Islamic precept or institution (such as jihad) to justify their action. Such cloaking of responsibility hides what may be a truly un-Islamic motive, a false interpretation of Islam, or the status of the perpetrators as a fanatical fringe group unrepresentative of Islam. They may be denounced by the larger Muslim community or (as in the case of Osama bin Laden) be deprived of citizenship in their native country. But this linkage is unfair when generalized to apply to the whole Ummah.

Why is it that departures from scriptural ideals in the Muslim world are identified with Islam and similar transgressions in the non-Muslim world stand apart from their religious contexts? In the Christian world scriptural ideals are deeply engrained in the psyche. They obscure and even overwhelm transgressions. Thus neither Irish, Serbs, or Germans are labeled as Christians. In Islam scriptural ideals are even more indelibly marked in the Muslim psyche. But they are virtually unknown to the non-Muslim mind. It is the behavior, the actions of Muslims and Muslim states which are well known. The behavior overwhelms the high doctrine and distorts the ideal beyond recognition. To counteract the impressions twisted by behavior, it is all the more essential to emphasize Islamic ideals, to relate them to com-

parable non-Islamic doctrine and to the pressing universal social problems of our age.

The optimistic possibilities of the future of Islam and the West are emphasized here deliberately as a counterbalance to the negative portrayals of Islam and to the notion that Islam will harm the West. But we do not live in a world of fantasy. There are enormous problems facing Islam—problems which, if not resolved, may lead to a decline rather than a renaissance of Islamic prestige and influence in the world. It is cruel irony that Islam is free of colonial domination and some of its segments are endowed with a degree of wealth at the same time that it is plagued and fragmented by intra-Islamic conflict, sporadic violence by minority groups, and dependence upon the technetronic largesse of the non-Muslim world. An effective joint action in common cause cannot be achieved in the context of these obstacles. Lebanon and the Palestinian problem must be stabilized, and enmities between Muslim states and between Shiite and Sunni modalities must be sedated. Persistent efforts condemning terrorism (for example, the Arab League's drafting a code aimed at fighting terrorism) help resolve these problems. The Islamic Fiqh Academy and the Muslim World League do remarkable work in bringing unity and cohesion to the solution of Muslim problems world-wide.

We cannot ignore other problems which beset the Muslim world and cast a cloud over the optimistic tone of this essay. The overwhelming majority of Muslims live in abject poverty. This is especially true for some 20 million refugees (*muhajirin*) and true in most instances for both Islamic states and the minorities. The poverty of Muslim nations is aggravated by high rates of natural population increase. Iraq, Libya, Syria, Niger, Pakistan, Jordan, and Iran, for example, have a natural increase rate of 3 to 3.7 percent—the highest in the world. Muslims live in a kaleidoscopic array of political systems ranging from the secular republican polity of Turkey, the *pancasila* ideology of Indonesia, the Arabic Socialist Mass State of Libya, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the distinctive polity of Saudi Arabia. There is no agreement on what constitutes an Islamic state. The character of the Ummah is essentially spiritual. In the real world, the nation-state is the dominant political authority. The slowly emerging pattern of pan-Islamic structures is weakened by intra-Islamic tensions, especially those generated by Iraq and Iran.

The *volte-face* suggested in this essay—an appraisal of the potential for Islam influencing the West in common cause rather than clash—is nothing

new. It has been characteristic of Muslim–non-Muslim relations for 1,419 years. But it was sedated if not snuffed out during two centuries of colonialism. This is an opportune time for Islam to play an active, positive role by transfusing its values into a somewhat moribund moral universe.[53] The Muslim world must also reject the specious unilinear concept of "Westernization." The Islamic world is an example of the circularity of cultural change and of the permeability of civilizational boundaries. It has, after all, been one of the foremost sources for the radiation and reception of values, and the transmission and translation of values from one culture to another, in the history of the world. Probably no other civilization, neither Greek, Roman, or Persian, has had global experience in all five processes of cultursl change: radiation, receptivity, transmission, translation, and preservation.

Militant actions by minority Muslim groups may increase and expand spatially as they seek what they perceive as their legitimate rights in Kashmir, Albania, Kosovo, Chechnya, Bosnia, and elsewhere. However legitimate these activities may be, they will tarnish the global respectability of Islam. It is an obligation of Muslims to alert the Western world to the legitimacy of these claims. If these claims are resolved and the specter of terrorism fades a new globally-triumphant recovery of Muslim identity linked with spiritual growth and political influence could very well be the result.

The most optimistic scenario for the Muslim world lies in the differentials, in pietistic dynamism which now exist between Islam and the non-Muslim world. The Muslim value system appears to be more pristine, more intact than the doctrines of Christianity, which are increasingly being relegated to the realm of myth or fanaticism. Murad (Wilfried) Hofmann, former German ambassador to Algeria and Morocco and a Muslim convert, writes that "Europe has become so de-Christianized that it has become fashionable to present oneself as atheist or agnostic. God has virtually disappeared from the public realm."[54] Wolfhart Pannenberg of the University of Munich foresees the possibility that "in the early part of the third millennium only the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, on the one hand, and evangelical Protestantism, on the other, will survive as ecclesial entities."[55] He doubts if a Christian culture can endure without the support of ecclesial structures. In consequence, zeal and intensity of piety may be diminishing. Islam, on the other hand, is in a dynamic, effervescent stage of development even though Islamic behavior in Muslim societies may not

be consistent with Qur'anic values. We cannot predict how long these conditions may last or whether they may be reversed, i.e., Islam in decline and non-Islam in the ascendancy. But at this moment in history the dynamics and clearly defined values of Islam have the theoretical potential for resuscitating the world's moral decline. This can be done only if the image projected by Islam on the global screen and the actions of Muslims on the world stage are compatible with Islamic principles of peace, justice, and reverence for life. Civilization is confronted with a threat not only to Islamic values but to the values of all who believe in the inner life. The tacit dimension of the spirit is under siege. If Islam can link its value system with similar values of the non-Islamic world and in common cause influence society, it will have fulfilled its Qur'anic destiny.

Notes

1. The official Latin text of *Nostra Aetate (Vatican II Declaration, October 28, 1965)* has been variously rendered into English. This translation is from *The Documents of Vatican II in a New and Definitive Translation*, edited by Walter M. Abbott, S. J. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 663. Although I prefer the Flannery translation for its overall stylistic elegance, the Abbott translation is used here because its phrase "let them make common cause of safeguarding and fostering" (*communiter tueantur et promoveant*) better expresses the theme of this essay. This phase has also been translated as "together maintain and promote" (Tanner) and "together preserve and promote" (Flannery). See Norman P. Tanner, S.J., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (London and Washington, D.C.: Sheed and Ward and Georgetown University Press, 1990), 969–970, and Austin Flannery, O.P., ed., *Documents of Vatican II* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1975), 739–740.

2. Jack G. Shaheen, *Arab and Muslim Stereotyping in American Popular Culture*, Occasional Paper Series (Washington, D.C.: Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, 1997). See also his *The TV Arab* (Bowling Green, Oh.: Bowling Green State University, Popular Press, 1984); and Edmund Ghareeb, ed., *Split Vision: The Portrayal of Arabs in the American Media* (Washington, D.C.: American-Arab Affairs Council, 1983).

3. The linking of the color green to Islam arises from the Muslim belief that green banners were carried in Mohammed's flight (Hijrah) from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E.— the year from which the Muslim calendar begins.

4. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72(3) (Summer 1993): 22–49 and his *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). The civilizational clash paradigm has been widely criticized. See especially Ralph Braibanti, *The Nature and Structure of the Islamic World* (Chicago, IL: International Policy and Strategy Institute, 1995), 13–22; John Gray, "Global Utopias and Clashing Civilizations: Misunderstanding the Present," *International Affairs* 74(1) (January 1998): 149–164; Giandomenico Picco, "A Dialogue of Civilizations," *The Japan Times*, October 10, 1998.

5. 'Alya 'Ali Izetbegovich, *Islam Between East and West* (Indianapolis, In.: American Trust Publications, 1993).

6. *Dod's Parliamentary Companion 1998*, 179th edition (London: Vacher Dod Publishing, 1998).

7. The discrepancy between the 59 Muslim states that are members of the United Nations and the 55 members of the O.I.C. is accounted for by the fact that 4 U.N. member states (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guyana)

are observer rather than member states of the O.I.C. The fifth O.I.C. observer state is the Turkish Muslim Community of Cyprus, which is not a U.N. member.

8. Mohamed Nimer, *The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States 1998, Patterns of Discrimination* [*April 1997-April 1998*] (Washington, D.C.: Council on American-Islamic Relations, 1998). The report states that all incidents were substantiated and that 300 cases were excluded because of insufficient evidence.

9. The latest report is U. S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism – 1997*, Publication 10535 (Washington, D.C.: Author , April, 1998).

10. Amos Perlmutter, "Containment Strategy for the Islamic Holy War," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 4, 1984; Yossef Bodansky, *Target America: Terrorism in the U.S. Today* (New York: S.P.I. Books, 1993); and three articles by Steven Emerson—"Islamic Terror: From Midwest to Mideast," "Friends of Hamas in the White House," and "How to Fight Terrorism," published in *The Wall Street Journal* on August 28, 1995, March 13, 1996, and August 24, 1998, respectively. See three Muslim responses to the Emerson articles in letters to the editor, "Don't Condemn Islam over Fanatics," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 2, 1998.

11. The spiritual dimension of the pilgrimage is sensitively explored by a convert to Islam who made the pilgrimage several times : Michael Wolfe, *The Hadj: An American's Pilgrimage to Mecca* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1993); Michael Wolfe, ed., *One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing About the Muslim Pilgrimage* (New York: The Grove Press, 1997). The political significance of the Hajj is discussed in David E. Long, *The Hajj Today* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979).

12. His Holiness, John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 91–143. See also a critique by Richard John Neuhaus, *First Things*, no. 49 (January 1995), 81–85. For further discussion of John Paul II's attitude toward Islam see George Hunston Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II: Origins of His Thought and Actions* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1981), 328 ff; Ted Szulc, *Pope John Paul II* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 425–431.

13. Grace Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelists on the Road to Nuclear War* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1986).

14. El Hassan bin Talal, *Christianity in the Arab World* (London: Arabesque Int., 1995).

15. 'Izz Al-din Ibrahim, *Islamic-Christian Dialogue (An Islamic View)*, CSIC Papers No. 5 (Birmingham, U.K.: Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Selly Oak Colleges, June 1996).

16. Moncure D. Conway, *My Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1906), 166, 249–250.

17. *First Things*, no. 28 (February 1993), 72.

18. Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (New York: Viking, 1989); see a critique by Ali Mazrui, *The Satanic Verses or a Satanic Novel: The Moral Dilemmas of the Rushdie Affairs* (Greenpoint, N.Y.: The Committee of Muslim Scholars and Leaders of North America, 1990).

19. James A. Bill and John Alden Williams, "Shi'i Islam and Roman Catholicism: An Ecclesial and Political Analysis," in Karl C. Ellis, O.S.A., *The Vatican, Islam, and the Middle East* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 69–107.

20. Henri Corbin, *En Islam Iranian* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

21. Mary Louise Gude, *Louis Massignon: The Crucible of Compassion* (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 76.

22. On natural law, see, inter alia, John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press and New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Charles Grove Haines, *The Revival of Natural Law Concepts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930), 278–306; A. D. D'Entrèves, *Natural Law: An Introduction to Legal Philosophy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1994); Carl F. H. Henry, "Natural Law and Nihilistic Culture," *First Things*, no. 49 (January 1995): 54–60; Hadley Arkes, *The Return of George Sutherland: Restoring a Jurisprudence of Natural Rights* (Princeton, N.J.:

Princeton University Press, 1994). See also his *First Things: An Inquiry into the First Principles of Morals and Justice* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986).

23.   Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 238, 265, quotations at 240, 250, 251. See also his "Biological Basis of Morality," *The Atlantic Monthly* 281(4) (April 1998): 53–70.

24.   Saint Thomas Aquinas, *The Treatise on Law. [Being Summa Theologiae I-II, QQ90 Through 97]*, edited with Introduction, Latin Text, Translation and Commentary by R. J. Henle, S. J. (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 149.

25.   *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Città del Vaticano: Editrice Vaticana, 1994), 473–480. Quotation from Encyclical of Leo XIII, *Libertas Praestantissimum* (*Liberty, the Highest of Natural Endowments*), (1888) cited in *Catechism*, 474.

26.   F. A. Hayek, *The Rule of Law* (Menlo Park, Ca.: Institute of Humane Studies, 1975), 22–29.

27.   Carl F. Henry, "Natural Law and a Nihilistic Culture," *First Things* (January 1995): 54–60.

28.   This attitude in France is often labelled *Americanophobie*. Duverger's statement appeared in an interview in *L'Express*, March 5, 1964. The original is: "*Il faut le dire, il faut l'écrire, il n'y a q'un danger proche pour l'Europe, c'est la civilisation americaine.*"

29.   Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, *The Radical Alternative* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), 158, 161.

30.   Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967).

31.   Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *The Myth of Independence* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1969).

32.   *Arab News* (Jeddah), December 27, 1995.

33.   *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (New York: United Nations, 1995), 178–182. For a critique of the Cairo Conference see George Weigel, "What Happened at Cairo," *First Things*, no. 50 (February 1995): 24–32.

34.   Carl Bernstein and Marco Politi, *His Holiness, John Paul II and the History of Our Time* (New York: Penguin, 1966), 519–524, quotation at 521.

35.   *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (New York: United Nations, 1996), 191–197. See also Cindy Wooden, "Vatican Quiet on Final Document in Beijing," *National Catholic Reporter* 31(41) (September 22, 1995): 13.

36.   Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Incongruous Vatican Status at U.N. Questioned by Women, Other Groups," *National Catholic Reporter* 32(2): 21.

37.   Mona Abu-Fadl, "Community, Justice, and Jihad: Elements of the Muslim Historical Consciousness," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 4(1): 13–30.

38.   Mohamed Said Al-Attar, "Nous Saluons ce Grand Texte Historique," *Développement et Civilisations* 30 (June 1967): 18–25. For analysis of *Populorum Progressio*, see Ralph Braibanti, "Inducement of Political Administrative Development," in Ralph Braibanti, ed., *Political and Administrative Development* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1969), 3–107, esp. 34–37, n. 88.

39.   Abdul Majeed A. Zindani, Mustafa A. Ahmed, and Joe Leigh Simpson, "Embryogenesis and Human Development in the First Forty Days," in Zindani et. al., *Human Development as Described in the Qur'an and Sunnah: Correlation with Modern Embryology* (Bridgeview, Il.: Islamic Academy for Scientific Research, 1994), 114–126.

40.   Judith A. Dwyer and Elizabeth L. Montgomery, eds., *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought* (Collegeville, Mi.: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 111.

41.   These mitigating provisions are prescribed in the Qur'an in several places. See 2:178 and 5:45. Perhaps the clearest expression of *ihsan* is found in 42:40 which says: "The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree) but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah."

42.   *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2415–18, 2456. Much of this doctrine is derived from *Centesimus Annus*, 37–38.

43. See esp. S. Waqar Ahmad Husaini, *Islamic Environmental Systems Engineering* (London: Macmillan, 1980), and Fazlun Khalid and Jeanne O'Brien, eds., *Islam and Ecology* (London: Cassell, 1992).

44. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), quotations at 271, 280, 288.

45. *Sahih Muslim*, Book 35, hadith 6606. This hadith is referenced in Ali Ahmed, "Islam and Modern Transformation of Environmental Thoughts," *American Muslim Quarterly* 2(1): 131.

46. *The AMC* [American Muslim Council] *Report* 6(1): 2–3.

47. This is an outstanding example of transcending theological differences in an effort to unite in common cause on social issues. A subsequent expansion of this endeavor includes the text of the Declaration: Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, eds., *Evangelical and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millenium* (Dallas, Tx.: World Publishing, 1995).

48. The extensive literature on this theme is well represented by Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1994).

49. Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi, ed., *Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths* (Washington, D.C.: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1982).

50. Mohammed Arkoun, "Is Islam Threatened by Christianity?," translated from the French by John Bowden, *Cross Currents* 45(4): 469–478, quotations at 474-6.

51. Francis Cardinal Arinze, *Meeting Other Believers* (Leominster, England: Gracewing, Fowler Wright Books, 1997), 37.

52. Ibid., 29–30.

53. There is some evidence that American Muslims are beginning to appreciate the potential of their role in reinvigorating American morality with Muslim values. See, for example, an editorial titled "An Opportunity to Enhance Human Dignity," deploring public "nonchalance" in the Clinton impeachment affair and urging American Muslims "to render their moral and civic duty to contribute toward realigning the American Vision to its straight path." *Islamic Horizons* (November/December 1998).

54. Murad Hofmann, "Promoting Islam and Uplifting Muslims," *Islamic Horizons* (September/October 1998): 18–20, quotation at 18.

55. Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Christianity and the West: Ambiguous Past, Uncertain Future," *First Things* (December 1994): 18–23, quotation at 23.