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DIALOGUE WITH NON-CHRISTIANS:
DEALING WITH MUSLIMS – WHICH WAY?*

INTRODUCTION

Are we, as Christians, able to enter into dialogue with non-Christians, especially Muslims? Are Muslims able to dialogue with us? If yes, in which areas can we argue, share and even contest each other in a positive manner? While reflecting on this issue we must remember that purely religious and essential convictions for one's life cannot be forced on people. This is essential to keep in mind when one accepts the challenge of entering into real dialogue with others – for all believers and non-believers, Christians, non-Christians, agnostics, atheists etc. Michel Fédou SJ, the author of the article, entitled *The Church and other believers*, says that two documents of the Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate* and *Dignitatis Humanae*,

1. underline openness to what is true and holy in non-Christian religions;
2. lay stress on universal fraternity within these religions; and

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3. affirm religious freedom¹.

In their jointly authored book *Constants in Context. A Theology of Mission for Today*, two other writers, S. B. Bevans and R. P. Schroeder (both SVDs), highlight that in the inter-religious dialogue the element of proclamation cannot be substituted for by dialogue itself². It means that dialoguing Christians have to know and must be truly convinced about their religious values and principles. Nevertheless, at the same time as dialoguing, Christians must be aware that their partners (non-Christians) might be far from acknowledging the doctrinal statement that “salvation is available to all people of good will, and even in some way through their religions, but that such a grace ultimately comes solely through Jesus Christ”, or may not appreciate that the adage invented by St. Cyprian (ca. 205-258) *salus extra ecclesiam non est* (outside the church there is no salvation) is quite unacceptable for them³.

Interreligious dialogue might be exercised in various ways and by various methods. One possibility is that dialoguing persons take the advantage of “getting in first”, and put their ideas in the written form of essays, articles, books etc. By this approach to starting up a dialogue the involved individuals (authors) very often create antagonism and sometimes barriers that are psychologically impassable. An example of such a procedure is the book, *Jesus – a Prophet of Islam*, by Muhammad Àta ur-Rahim⁴. The author (Muhammad Àta ur-Rahim) studies certain issues of Christianity, but his effort at crossing the Muslim-Christian divide shows how such deliberations, presented in a written form, create thorny issues, and in many cases make for confusion and destroy the chances of a clear and constructive debate.

ÀTA UR-RAHIM’S SUBJECT MATTER

Going through the text of Àta ur-Rahim’s book I wish to pick out the most critical of its points and thus show the author’s way of thinking and his understanding of Christianity. Such an evaluation is important because while many fair-minded people are dreaming about a dialogue with non-Christian religions, a real dialogue will be a difficult test for committed Christians. I do not make elaborate comments on the issues brought to light by Àta ur-Rahim’s text. My critical apparatus is enclosed in a footnote section and I think it gives enough information to justify the positions taken in this paper.

¹ M. F é d o u, “The Church and other believers”, *Omnis Terra*, 63, no. 402 (2009), p. 414-415.

² S. B. B e v a n s, R. P. S c h r o e d e r, *Constants in Context. A Theology of Mission for Today*, Maryknoll: Orbis Book, 2004, p. 378.

³ Ibid., p. 379-380.

⁴ Muhammad À t a u r - R a h i m, *Jesus – a Prophet of Islam*, Karachi-2: Begum Aisha Bawany WAQF, n.d. Although no date of publication is given, the dates given at the end of the preface and introduction suggest that this book was published in 1977, and in Pakistan.

Since the author (Àta ur-Rahim) shows deep concern about the fact that Christians accept the divinity of Jesus and recognize the mystery of the Trinity, he clearly distances himself totally from the mystery of incarnation and the Christian content of faith. Apart from this, there are other matters he touches on in the book in an unpatterned way. These are issues he calls the “misunderstanding” by Christians of inspired Scripture (Revelation), the Muslim views about Jesus Himself and other historical figures, interpretations of history, and various aspects of theology.

TRINITY AND INCARNATION

In a few places in his book (e.g. pages 79, 101, 183) Àta ur-Rahim brings up objections to the Trinitarian notion of God and blames this doctrine in Christianity not only on Paul the Apostle but on paganism as well. His argument is very simple. Christians turned to pagan tribes and the encouragement, or inevitability, of inculturation allowed them to worship their own gods together with their new, Trinitarian, Christian God. But for Àta ur-Rahim, coming from his Muslim background, this Trinitarian system is nothing more than having another three gods (invented of course by Paul)⁵. No wonder that in one section of his book Àta ur-Rahim says “Christianity... mathematically absurd”. With regard to the issue of the Trinity and Incarnation (divinity of Jesus) he argues that the idea of Trinity is un-biblical⁶ and on

⁵ For Àta ur-Rahim Christianity remains a polytheistic religion in its innermost character. Bringing in the issue of cultural and religious adaptation, the author made comments right at the beginning of his book on the Christmas and Easter solemnities, which are of great value for Christians and of key importance. These feastsdays are reminiscent of the birth and of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Nothing is wrong with the fact that these calendar days were celebrated by the ancient cultures in their own way and that Christianity then embraced them, implanted into them its own essential beliefs and then made them into a quintessence of Christian cultural practice. This whole explanation is in fact a reference to what we today call inculturation, aspects of which the author stresses in the preface on page 5 and maintains that those who support that sort of process are individuals of an anti-Christ approach. On inculturation see Z. Z. K r u c z e k, *Inkulturacja jako wyzwanie w kontekście ewangelizacji w Papui Nowej Gwinei*, in: *Aktualne wyzwania dla nauk społecznych*, ed. J. Zimny, Ružomberok–Kijów–Sandomierz: Katolicki Uniwersytet w Ružomberku et al., 2006, pp. 10-33.

⁶ The baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan when the Bible says: “the Holy Spirit descended on him in visible form like a dove. A voice from heaven was heard to say: ‘You are my beloved Son. On you my favor rests’ ” (Lk 3:21) indicates something else than Àta ur-Rahim’s conclusions about it; Jesus’ statement “go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the name ‘of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’” (Mt 28:19) also shows that the Trinity has its roots in the Bible; thus is very biblical indeed. Here it is worth referring to terminology, the use of *Trinitas*, a word invented by Tertullian (155-222) in the second century. This word is only the Latin name for the faith system which – as it was said above – is very biblical. Therefore, any claim that this expression does not exist in the Bible has no purpose to it. And when talking about the issue of what is biblical and what is not we must underline that author is claiming that it is the word “*Trinitas*” which is un-

page 5 he claims that those responsible for the enforced implementation among Christians of the doctrine of Jesus' divinity were the Roman Emperors⁷.

SCRIPTURE AND REVELATION

According to Àta ur-Rahim an ancient document, *The Shepherd* of Hermas, was recognised by the Church as a truly "inspired" part of God's "revelation"⁸. He also refers to *The Gospel of Barnabas*⁹ and strongly recognizes it as an authentic Christian gospel and a good source for what early Christians believed. According to

biblical. But he uses the word *Divine Unity* and appreciates it very much. But this word in the context of his argumentation is un-biblical as well.

⁷ This statement is not historically correct. The Christian Roman rulers opted for the uniformity of Christian faith because any disunity within the state at that time was seen as political disunity. This was part of the common political mentality of those days. See W. H. C. F r e n d, *The Rise of Christianity*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984, p. 473-892. Contemporary Muslims show much the same attitudes with regard to their own faith and practices. In certain Muslim countries if somebody within the community does not stick to the faith of the community he/she must die. The best example of it is the news titled: Broadcast on CBS [...] circulated by e-mail in July 2009 (PNG), *Recent miracle in Egypt!*

⁸ *The Shepherd* of Hermas was for a while very popular, but was never acknowledged by the Church as a part of revelation. Though the author goes and claims just that on page 11, he does not back up this statement by giving any quotation or source. After careful study today's scholars admit that *The Shepherd* is a theological work which informs us about the sacramental life, discipline and practices of the first Christians. Cf. M. S h e e h a n, *Apologetics* (6th edition) and *Catholic Doctrine* (4th edition), Revised and Edited by Fr. P. M. Joseph, Wagga Wagga: The Saint Austin Press, 2001, (on Revelation see on p. 73-78; on *The Shepherd* of Hermas see on p. 86). Some basic knowledge (about what "Scripture" itself is) is necessary for anyone to be able to express a view on the status of "The Shepherd". For Christians 73 canonical books make up the set of what is officially to be recognised as inspired "Scripture". If Christians would like to accept all the writings on Jesus composed by many and various Christian authors of different times, the canon would become enormous in size. It is true that Christians today can read all kinds of books on Jesus, Mary, the apostles, patriarchs, etc.; including the story of Jesus in the Qur'an. But it must be understood that these texts are just ordinary books, full of fantasy and pure product of human mind.

⁹ The manuscript (*The Gospel of Barnabas*) was never considered truly "inspired" or part of God's revelation and Catholic Christians call such books as *The Gospel of Barnabas*, apocryphal writings. Christian-Protestants have another name for them and call them pseudepigrapha. Cf. P. M a n u k a, *Comments on Disagreement about the Contents of the Canon of the Old Testament*, Mi-cha-el CSMA, 4(1998), pp. 195-200; R. M u r p h y, *Background in the Bible: An Introduction to Scripture Study*, Ann Arbor: Servant Books 1978. Here are some titles of apocryphas: *Book of Adam and Eve*, *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, *Testament of the Patriarchs*, *Assumption of Moses*, *Sibylline Oracles*, *Gospel of James*, *Gospel of Thomas*, *Arabic Gospel of the Infancy*, *Gospel of Judas*, *History of Joseph the Carpenter*, *Acts of John*, *Acts of Paul*, *Acts of Peter*, and *Acts of Andrew*. Many survive only in fragments and in various later translations, Syriac, Coptic, Latin, Ethiopic, Slavic, Armenian, Georgian, and then Arabic and Persian.

him *The Gospel of Barnabas* is of the same character as are the “canonical” Gospels according to Mathew, Mark, Luke and John¹⁰. Reading *Jesus – a Prophet of Islam* one might get an impression that *The Gospel of Barnabas* is the only source for Christianity. Why does the author stand for this opinion? He explains his conviction on page 41 where he says that Barnabas (according to his view, the author of what was probably the pseudonymous *Gospel of Barnabas*) was the only disciple of Jesus who actually wrote, but then wrote nothing else except that “important” Gospel¹¹.

Following on from this track of deliberations the reader also learns of the claim of Āta ur-Rahim on pages 197-198 that the Gospels known to us today are of post-Nicean origin¹². Further on, on page 22, Āta ur-Rahim insists that the four Gospels accepted by Christians differ in their kind of language and style of presentation. This – according to him – might be a reason for a critical mind having doubts regarding Jesus and His mission¹³. He also insists that the “articles of faith” were part of the Scripture as well¹⁴.

¹⁰ In fact careful scholarship has shown that this “gospel” was written by someone who pretended he was Barnabas, the companion of Paul, so that people would pay more attention to what he wrote. On Barnabas and his *Gospel* see *The Universal Standard Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, Joseph Laffan Morse, ed., New York: Standard Reference Works Publishing Company Inc., 1956 and 1957, p. 678-679; *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, New York–Sydney: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967, p. 103.

¹¹ The truth concerning Jesus’ disciples is rather different and it is clear that two of them (John and Mathew, who assisted Jesus as His disciples) out of twelve were the authors of the Gospel. That is why Christian historians, with the aim of working with the truth, use Christian sources while talking about Jesus (i. e. four Gospels according to Mathew, Mark, Luke and John) and non-Christian sources as well (i. e. the non-believing Jewish historian, Josephus Flavius, 37–100?, the Roman historians Tacitus, 55–120, and Suetonius, 70–?, and finally a Roman Governor of Bithynia, Pliny the Younger, using excerpts of some of his letters to the Emperor Trajan in 112). On these non-Christian authors see: J. F l a v i u s, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, quoted after J. Watson, S. Jenkins, *Jesus then and now*, A Lion Book, 1987, p. 10-13; M. B a n a s z a k, *Historia Kościoła katolickiego* (1 starożytność), reprint, Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1989, p. 19; J. C o m b y, *Pour lire l’histoire de l’église*, vol. 1, Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1984.

¹² This argument is very cheap because, as it is known – and author admits that on page 110 – St. Jerome translated four Gospels into Latin *from their original language*, see A. Gramatica, “Legentibus S.,” in *Bibliorum Sacrorum iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam nova editio...*, A. Gramatica, ed., Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1953, pp. IX-XI; *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. VI, ed. Jan Walkusz, Lublin 1993, kol. 851-856. So, at what time did earlier, original texts of the Gospels arise? Is it possible that all those 4,000 variant copies of the Gospel (as author claims, and thus accepts) could have originated after the year 325 but before 419 (the death of Jerome)?

¹³ For us Christians such differences are the source and evidence for the Gospels’ credibility and their authenticity, and for everything what is said in them about Jesus’ life, miracles and teachings. This issue goes to an area of Synoptic Gospels according to Mathew, Luke and Mark, see W. J. H a r r i n g t o n, *Key to the Bible*, Canfield: Alba House Communications, 1974. This most probably reflects a typically Muslim approach to the inspiration of scriptu-

JESUS AND OTHER HISTORICAL FIGURES

In his study of historical figures Àta ur-Rahim fabricates objectionable theories. Using dubious and very scanty sources (e. g. apocrypha – pages 28-29) he comments on Jesus, John the Baptist and other important individuals. He argues that Joseph and Mary were helped by some Essenes to run off into Egypt in order to save the baby Jesus¹⁵. After some years, Jesus himself and an older person, John the Baptist, both became Essenes. Then when John died, Jesus took up the position as John's successor. Apart from his involvement with the Essenes, Jesus was supposedly engaged in political revolutionary movements. He himself "had between 2000 to 4000 armed followers". That is why the "Romans began an intensive search to find him" after Jesus cleansed the temple (Jn 2:14-15)¹⁶. In that context it is easy for the author to fabricate the idea that Jesus was not the founder of the Church¹⁷. Unbelievable and most shocking is the way Jesus is compared and treated as a man of the same category as Barabbas¹⁸. The same negative impact comes from chapter 5 of the

re(s): so-called word for word uniformity of various holy texts referring to the same event or figure, and the "verbal, literal" inspiration of any such text. Simply – for Christians, a strictly literal (word by word) interpretation of the Bible is not acceptable, much less a strictly literal, (letter by letter) sort of interpretation and inspiration. For Christians the question of the so-called *Sitz im Leben* (setting in life) of ancient texts and the method of analysing and adjusting our reading of them in recognition of their different literary forms are widely accepted interpretative approaches. I am more than sure that Muslims sooner or later will have to accept these methods as well for their own sacred texts, if not some similar ones, to help them undertake a historically sensitive hermeneutics of the as yet "unquestionable" Qur'an.

¹⁴ This is not true, as "articles of faith" they are nothing else than statements developing over the centuries regarding Christian faith as a whole, aimed at its better understanding. On these issues (articles of faith or fundamental articles of faith) we can find a solid explanation in *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. I, eds. F. Gryglewicz, R. Łukaszyc, Z. Sułowski, Lublin 1973, kol. 958-959.

¹⁵ The author does not say how the Essenes knew that little Jesus was so important.

¹⁶ Comments from pages 27, 30-31, 35 and 37 of the author's book demonstrate that we can talk a lot about Jesus, even he contradicts himself and claims that we do not know anything about Him. Additionally see for example E. Schillebeeckx, *Gerechtigheids en liefde: Genade en bevrijding*, Bloemendaal: Uitgeverij H. Nelissen B. V., 1977; W. K a s p e r, *Jesus der Christus*, Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1974; B e n e d i k t XVI, *Jesus von Nazareth*, Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007.

¹⁷ For the Christian what Jesus Himself said about it is what is important: "on this rock I will build my Church, and the jaws of death shall not prevail against it" (Mt 16:18). See also Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Caritas in veritate*, released June 29, 2009, 27.

¹⁸ This is complete nonsense and must come as a big surprise to all who know how gentle and peaceful Jesus was, whereas Barabbas was violent and a murderer. These statements and stories have no ground in solid literature, they are presented without the appropriate foot- or end-noting and can only remain as the pure speculations of some individual or individuals. They never can pretend to the quality of historical truth. There is no rationale for treating them seriously as such. No one equipped with common sense is able to accept such undocumented

book, where the author identifies Barnabas with the robber Barabbas. So for the author, Barabbas is like an alternative for Jesus, then also for Barnabas, and for how many more important figures would he be the alternative¹⁹? Thus the author continues all these stories on Jesus and presents the problem of his arrest, suffering and death in an almost comical way. According to him – Jesus was not arrested at all. In the darkness of Gethsemani Jesus was confused with Judas, and it was Judas whom the soldiers placed in detention. The next day Judas was sentenced and crucified²⁰. In order to confirm such views he recalls another apocryphal source *The Journeys of the Apostles*, and refers to an assortment of sectarian opinions in such matters²¹.

Very high in the scale of nonsense is the tale about Paul the Apostle's conversion. He (St. Paul) fell in love with a lady named Poppea who rejected him to become an Emperor's concubine. This event impacted tremendously on Paul. Following his rejection Paul began to hate his fellow Jews. He abandoned their religion and converted to Christianity. So, Paul's conversion is something akin to a mental case. Paul then engaged himself in the Christian mission and eventually became "responsible" for advocating the divinity of Jesus and for the Trinitarian idea – beliefs supposedly invented by him and adopted into Christian doctrine. Although the first Christians and their leaders were afraid of Paul, he was able to win their favor thanks to Barnabas who spoke on Paul's behalf and recommended him to the apostolic college or senior body²². Àta ur-Rahim goes on to attempt to bring into disrepute some other saintly Christian figures. On page 102 he calls St. Helena (died circa 330) a "political animal"²³. Another controversial account – almost in the

arguments, with the exception perhaps of the author of *Jesus – a Prophet of Islam*. Cf. on that matter Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Spe salvi*, November 30, 2007, 4.

¹⁹ And the statements on Barnabas are more deplorable when the readers learn that Barnabas in his final career became an arch-heretic. Where Àta ur-Rahim got such information it is not known. Official Christianity never recognised or treated Barnabas as a heretic.

²⁰ Could be that this story is made up only to prove that the quotation taken from the Qur'an (4:155) is right and the only source of reliable information, although the Qur'an as a book was composed more than 600 years after Jesus. This anecdote then helps the author to make the further statement that Jesus was never killed. He was kept alive, and he "laughed at those who believed that they crucified him" (pages 38-39).

²¹ These opinions are those of the Ebionites, Cerinthians, Basilidians, Carpocratians, Hypisistarians, Meletians who – as history records – were in trouble with the Church authority in regard to their teaching, convictions, interpretation of Christian doctrines, morality and discipline etc. On sects see *Sacramentum Mundi. An Encyclopedia of Theology*, vol. 6, eds. K. Rahner et al., London: Burns & Oates 1970, pp. 57-61.

²² Anyway, in this part of the book the author is more careful and uses words like perhaps, probably, etc.

²³ True, the phrase "a political animal" does not (in colloquial and fashionable English) constitute a charge that the person is "animalistic", but it emphasizes political aims in a way that is demeaning just the same. All Christian works respect Helena for her exemplary life. Even secular encyclopedias and dictionaries say that Helena was not just an ordinary woman, wife and mother. See *The Universal Standard Encyclopedia*, vol. 12, ed. Joseph Laffan Morse,

form of accusation – is that made against the Pope Eleutherius composed by Irenaeus (130-200). Āta ur-Rahim says that Irenaeus made a request to Pope Eleutherius “to stop the persecution of Christians who did not agree with the doctrine of the Pauline Church”²⁴. Almost in the same form he refers and uses for his own purpose the case of one unfortunate *lapsus linguae* (or perhaps, *lapsus calami*) of Pope Honorius I (625-638)²⁵.

With regard to Christian authors, Āta ur-Rahim ascribed to them some strange limitations or unfair virtues. One example is Origen (185-253). While it is true that he (Origen) caused problems for himself within the Church because of the very strict moral code he insisted on and his pioneering ideas, he never was an anti-Trinitarian²⁶. It is a different case with Arius (256-336), a priest in Alexandria who at one particular time began to preach unlikely things about Jesus Christ. Arius did not submit to the Church’s correction and that’s why he caused a lot of problems for centuries²⁷. Also a certain Donatus, a schismatic bishop of Carthage in 313-347, is

New York: Standard Reference Works Publishing Company Inc., 1956 and 1957, p. 4246; *The New World Encyclopedia*, Godalming: Color Library Books, 1988, p. 560.

²⁴ The story is presented without any footnotes and sources to back it up.

²⁵ This is how the whole story went. “The Emperor Heraclius wanted to have peace with the Monophysites (those who recognised one nature in Jesus). Meantime the Patriarch Sergius (610-638) found a theological gap in the teaching of Chalcedon concerning Christ’s will and action. He began to teach that in Jesus there existed only one will. The Emperor Heraclius was happy about the possibility of finding a solution to the long-running theological dispute and thus to reconcile the many schismatic Christians to himself, their political lord. Very soon two opposing groups were formed. One was that of the supporters of monothelitism (*mia theleia* – one will – in Jesus) and the another group said that there were two wills in Jesus, following – as Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (634–638) reminded them – the philosophical principle of Aristotle ‘action comes out of nature’. Since the disputes continued it was agreed to compromise and talk about “one acting Jesus Christ”. Pope Honorius I supported the idea because many Monophysites were in favor of such a teaching”. Z. Z. K r u c z e k, *The History of the Catholic Church from Her Beginnings up to the Western Reformation*, Fatima: (handout for students of Good Shepherd at Fatima, WHP, PNG), 2001, p. 108-109. So, it is easy to calculate that Pope Honorius I did not favor Monophysites and nor did he favor the Monothelites. When he accepted the terminology of “one acting Jesus Christ”, he was essentially right, because Jesus was just like that. And this recognition has nothing to do with monophysitism and monothelitism, but with the efforts to draft a form of words which would find common ground between two conflicting parties – find basic agreement on the essentials. Therefore, in the particular case of Pope Honorius I there is no room for the accusation that he acted in a way which somehow disproves papal infallibility.

²⁶ On Origen and his work see *Duden Lexikon*, vol. 2, Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut A. G., 1965, p. 1680; Orygenes *Przeciw Celsusowi*, ed. S. Kalinkowski, Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1986. Origen himself, the author of the work *Contra Celsum*, fought against heretics and against pagan philosophies.

²⁷ On the matter of Arianism see *Encyclopaedia Britannica. Micropedia*, vol. 1, 15th edition, Chicago et al.: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1977, p. 509-510; R. P. M c B r i e n, *Catholicism. Study Edition*, Minneapolis: Winston Press 1981, p. 614-615. Because of Arius’

a distinguished figure for Àta ur-Rahim. Unfortunately, the whole story about Donatus in the book *Jesus – a Prophet of Islam* is written in an upside-down way and is not true²⁸. Then on pages 102-103 and 106-110 are number of prejudices about various historical figures, such as Athanasius (ca. 295-373), or fantasies about people like Constantine the Great (ca. 273-337) or his sister Constantina²⁹.

For Christians it is not acceptable to toss orthodox writers into the same “bag” as others who represent a philosophy opposite to that which was progressively adopted by Christianity. Such a figure is Lucian from Samosata (ca. 125-195)³⁰. In chapter seven, the most extensive in the whole course of the book, the author studies various historical figures and denominational groupings from the 16th-19th centuries that caused problems for the Church by wanting to reform the Christian faith according to their own understanding. As an example is the name of Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) who liked to rebel against tradition in science, politics, and religion. In his writings he disputes things which had been official in doctrinal Christianity from the beginning of its existence.

Sometimes the author’s views on certain groups of people like those bishops taking part in the Council of Nicea in the year 325 and qualifies them equally disapprovingly: they were poor intellectuals although very pious; they did not know what was going on; only a few of them (the supporters of Arius) were outstanding personalities³¹.

failed teaching the Church authority had to intervene. And this was the only reason why Arius was punished. Saying that Arius was a candidate for the bishopric and was a rival to bishop Alexander of Alexandria and that he was disciplined for that, basically for political reasons, has no grounds at all.

²⁸ On Donatus and donatism see *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, New York–Sydney: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967, p. 1001-1003; In reality Donatus was a Christian from Numidia who at the beginning of the 4th century refused to recognise Caecilian as the officially appointed bishop. As a result he established his own church and made propaganda in his own favour. Donatus became a founder of a religious movement known as donatism which has been classified among the various rigorist movements in the Church, like the earlier montanism around the year 200. Because of its nature, donatism could not be recognised by the Church and is put in among the many sectarian movements of history.

²⁹ These parts of the book are not supplied with any solid sources such as the works of somebody who would have views on that matter similar to those of Àta ur-Rahim, except Sabina, bishop of Thrace, and A. P. Stanley, who are not academically prominent individuals. At least, significant encyclopedias do not mention their names.

³⁰ On Lucian see *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 8, New York–Sydney: McGraw-Hill Book Company 1967, p. 1058. He was an educated public figure in Roman society and an intellectual who can be highly respected for his thoughts and viewpoints, but it does not mean that he deserves the same treatment as Christian theologians.

³¹ As regards the first councils of the Church, particularly the Council of Nicea, historians are rather of the opinion that those who participated in the latter were well disposed intellectually, and highly respected Church dignitaries. C o m b y, op. cit., 67, 68, 69.

HISTORICAL FACTS

Touching on some historical facts on pages 106-112, the author insists that the Northern Africans embraced Islam freely. But in this section of the book Àta ur-Rahim suggests that he does indeed know the historical truth about the terrible injustices the Muslims imposed on the African Christians³². Wanting to be a man of correctness he brings his readers' attention to the time when Turkish Muslims were in charge of the government in Transylvania (central Europe) and when Christians then had a peaceful time under their rule³³. He also does not try to treat objectively any personality who in certain periods of history took part in religious crusades. The most characteristic crusades in the Middle Ages were those undertaken by Westerners against the Muslims. On pages 112-113 the author makes comments on that as well, but unfortunately, again he takes a one-sided view of it³⁴. The author also remarks on the casualties (persecutions) of those in favor of heresies, the issue of the Inquisition³⁵ and the ecclesiastical court system³⁶.

VARIOUS THEOLOGICAL MATTERS

In pages, 12, 68-73 and 198, the author repeats over and over in a chaotic way such issues as: Paul's teachings having some imaginary elements which then introduced unacceptable innovations into Christianity; Jesus not being crucified and therefore was not resurrected; Paul followed Christ, but not Jesus; Paul made Jesus

³² One of the ways for conversion of African Christians to Islam was by force through the system of land taxation. Muslim people were advantaged in this system and non-Muslims disadvantaged. This was a form of religious racism. Unfortunately, the same is happening today, or even worse. I guess the author does not want to hear such things brought up as he refers to his religious system in a manner opposite to the way in which history sees things. T. M a n t e u f f e l, *Historia powszechna, Średniowiecze*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2005, p. 60-75.

³³ Let us remember that to have a peaceful time does not mean exactly the same thing as having religious freedom. Cf. also Benedict XVI, *Papal Address at University of Regensburg: Faith, Reason and the University Memories and Reflections*, Regensburg, Germany, Sept. 12, 2006, typescript in possession of the author (Z.Z.K.).

³⁴ Everybody who diligently studies history knows that the main causers for the Frankish Crusades were the Muslims themselves. They invaded the Christian countries of the East very soon after the rise of their religion, and then imposed on Christians a list of restrictions that could in no way be escaped or avoided. The western rulers and leaders supposedly invented religious "crusades" – after the Muslim invasions. *The Church's Amazing History*, written and illustrated by a Team of Daughters of Saint Paul (USA), second revised edition, Saint Paul publications, 1993, p. 54-57.

³⁵ On the Inquisition see C. K o c h, *The Catholic Church. Journey, Wisdom, and Mission*, Winona: Saint Mary's Press, 1994, p. 167-168, 181, 207, 209, 250.

³⁶ Of course – according to Àta ur-Rahim – all these did not function accurately and the Catholics only deserve to be condemned for this.

GOD but he rejects not only his teaching but that of Moses as well; Jesus-God is an imaginary figure of worship; the idea of the divinity of Jesus and that of the Trinity developed only in the time of Paul; redemption as a mere brainwave and not a reality, and therefore original sin, crucifixion and resurrection have no validity; and finally he has some comments on the Last Supper.

Passing on the theological aspect of ecclesiology Àta ur-Rahim says that at the time of Arius there were two churches: a Pauline one and the church which was in opposition to Paul. These two churches Constantine the Great united and established the one Church³⁷. While referring to the same Church he strangely comments on the word *catholic* as an “epithet”, which of course it was, though one which has different meanings today³⁸.

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³⁷ The idea of two churches at the time of Arius is just a product of the fertile imagination of the author. The Father of Church historiography, Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-c. 340), who even gave shelter to Arius after he was condemned by the Council of Nicea in 325 (bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia was also a friend of Arius), never mentioned anything in his history about there being such two churches. M c B r i e n, op. cit., p. 614; B. A l t a n e r, A. S t u i b e r, *Patrologie. Leben, Schriften und Lehre der Kirchenväter*, Herder–Freiburg–Basel–Wien: Achte Auflage, 1978 (in Polish translation p. 307-317).

³⁸ The first who called the Christian Church *catholic* (in the Greek adjective form *katholikos*) was St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch at the turn of the 1st century. By doing this St. Ignatius stressed the character of the Church (*katholikos* in Greek means “universal”, as does “catholic” in non-religious, highly formal English, even today). By referring in such a way to that issue the author does not show respect for those who represent different views and beliefs, and uses of words, to his own. St. Ignatius’ *Letter to Smyrnians*, 8, 2.

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DIALOG RELIGIJNY:
CZY JEST ON MOŻLIWY Z MUŻULMANAMI
– W JAKIM WYMIARZE?

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Po drugim Soborze Watykańskim w nauczaniu Kościoła, kiedy mowa o relacjach zachodzących między chrześcijaństwem a religiami niechrześcijańskimi, otwarcie uwypukla się trzy elementy. Na pierwszym miejscu artykułuje się fakt, że w religiach tych na pewno istnieją – w większym lub mniejszym procencie – takie prawdy, które po części zawierają coś z prawdziwego objawienia. Dalej Kościół uznaje w tych religiach uniwersalne postawy braterskich więzi, jakie się w ich doktrynie ujawniają. I w końcu poprzez takie nastawienie Kościół promuje zasadę wolności religijnej.

W obecnej dobie wyłania się zagadnienie dialogu z mużulmanami. Nie jest to proste, bo wyznawcy tej religii zawsze mieli wielkie zastrzeżenia co do treści wiary chrześcijańskiej, interpretacji jej miejsca w życiu poszczególnych społeczności oraz co do sposobu praktycznej aplikacji swej religii w codziennej rzeczywistości z uwzględnieniem powyżej wymienionych trzech elementów. Jako przykład może posłużyć opracowanie Muhammada Āta ur-Rahim pt. *Jezus – Prorok Islamu*, opublikowane ponad 30 lat temu. W tekście tym autor prezentuje przedziwną interpretację chrześcijaństwa, przedstawia fantazyjne, jeśli już nie zabawne, historie nt. Jezusa, wielkich świętych i tym podobne. To wszystko na swój sposób szokuje, może nawet i denerwuje. W końcu powstaje pytanie: jak w takim kontekście zabiegać o dialog i z jakim nastawieniem do niego podchodzić?

Wiele doświadczeń dokonało się na tej płaszczyźnie w odniesieniu do tego zagadnienia. Różne są odczucia w tym względzie. Niemniej ludzie nauki, ludzie dobrej woli i mocno uduchowieni twierdzą, że niezależnie od tego, jaką mużulmanie przyjmują postawę w odniesieniu do doktryny chrześcijańskiej i jak rozumieją dialog, należy z nimi rozmawiać i usilnie się starać, by dialog ten miał prawo obywatelstwa w relacjach z nimi.

Możliwości, by taki dialog zachodził, zawsze istnieją. Dokonywać się on może na poziomie codziennych kontaktów sąsiedzkich, rozmaitej działalności podejmowanej dla dobra społeczności, wymiany poglądów teologicznych (zwłaszcza przez ekspertów) i doświadczenia religijnego właściwego dla wyznawców danej religii (przykładem – Jan Paweł II w spotkaniach z reprezentantami rozmaitych religii w Asyżu).

Bardzo wiele na temat praktycznej aplikacji dialogu w codziennych relacjach z mużulmanami mogą powiedzieć misjonarze i kapłani pracujący w takich krajach, gdzie obecni są wyznawcy Islamu. W tych społecznościach rozwiązaniem pozostaje jedynie dialog. Stąd wielu

czyni wysiłki, praktykując i trzymając się tego stylu, bo każdy wie, że jest on dla nich jedyną ostoją.

Słowa kluczowe: dialog między religiami, dialog z niechrześcijanami, muzułmanie i dialog.

Key words: interreligious dialogue, dialogue with non-Christians, muslims and dialogue.

DYSERTACJE DOKTORSKIE
NAPISANE W INSTYTUCIE HISTORII KOŚCIOŁA
KATOLICKIEGO UNIWERSYTETU LUBELSKIEGO
SFINALIZOWANE W ROKU AKADEMICKIM 2010/2011

Ks. Zenon C z u m a j, *Życie religijne w dekanacie kamieńczykowskim na Mazowszu w latach 1693-1819*. Promotor: ks. prof. dr hab. Anzelm Weiss. Recenzenci: ks. dr hab. Waldemar Graczyk (UKSW Warszawa), o. dr hab. Romuald Prejs OFMCap, prof. KUL.

Jednym z istotnych aspektów przeszłości chrześcijaństwa jest życie religijne w poszczególnych wspólnotach i określonych epokach, a więc to, co dla następnych pokoleń staje się duchowym dziedzictwem. Sięgając do literatury traktującej o historii Kościoła, często można zauważyć, że wiele opracowań na temat konkretnych jednostek administracyjnych skupia się na ich podstawach prawnych, uposażeniu i faktografii, tylko ubocznie wspominając o tym, co możemy nazwać kulturą duchową. Również w przypadku Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce problematyka życia religijnego nie należy do zbyt często podejmowanych w badaniach, zwłaszcza jeśli chodzi o czasy Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej, a jeśli już, to poruszane są różne aspekty szeroko pojętego życia religijnego, zwłaszcza funkcjonowanie takich instytucji, jak szpitale czy szkoły parafialne. Przedstawiając wyniki badań muszę zaznaczyć, że występujące w temacie sformułowanie „życie religijne” przyjmuję w wąskim znaczeniu, tzn. jako całokształt działań duszpasterskich, mających na celu pobudzenie wiernych do określonych praktyk religijnych i umożliwienie im korzystania z nich. Do przejawów religijności należą też określone postawy moralne, mające związek z nauczaniem kościelnym. Z tego powodu szkolnictwo i szpitalnictwo parafialne są o tyle wzmiankowane, o ile wiąże się to z przedstawionym rozumieniem życia religijnego.

Obszarem podjętych przeze mnie badań był dekanat kamieńczykowski, istniejący w latach 1693-1819. Obejmował on swymi granicami tereny położone na północny wschód od Warszawy w odległości 30-80 km. Został utworzony w ramach reformy