TURKISH RESPONSE TO THE CHRISTIAN CALL FOR DIALOGUE

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ABSTRACT

After the Second Vatican Council, which took place in 1962-1965, the Catholic Church reached out to both co-religionists and non-Christians. As the second largest religion in the world (after Christianity), the Muslim world began to react to this call for dialogue. Without a worldwide religious authority, Muslim scholars and communities have tried to understand and respond to this call for dialogue in their own way. Turkey, as one of the most influential and modern Muslim majority states, joined the discussion about interreligious dialogue, especially with Christians. Very diverse in culture, religion, and thought, Turkish scholars' discussions and critiques of the dialogue requested by the Christian world have clearly contributed to interreligious dialogue on a global scale in the last decades. This dissertation examines the development of interreligious dialogue in Turkey and the works of prominent and widely recognized Turkish theologians as a response to the Christian call for dialogue. It explores the problems, challenges, and future of the perception of interreligious dialogue in the Turkish context, in particular, the views of three influential Turkish scholars: Abdurrahman Küçük, Mahmut Aydın, and Davut Aydüz. The conclusion proposes the Turkish Model for interreligious dialogue.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AK Party	Justice and Development Party
GYV	Journalists and Writers Foundations
ISAV	İslami İlimler Araştırma Vakfı
KADIP	Intercultural Dialogue Platform
MHP	National Movement Party
PCID	Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
PRA	Presidency of Religious Affairs of Turkey
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
T.C.	Republic of Turkey
U.S.	United States
E.U.	European Union
WCC	World Council of Churches

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

As social beings, people need each other at every moment of their lives. In the twenty-first century, mass media and technology have turned the world into a global village. Globalization underlines and stresses global consciousness and dialogue. In this era, humanity needs to learn the importance of coexistence and the dignity entailed in being human. For this purpose, a significant attempt has been made by Christians to rebuild their relationships with different Christian groups and members of other religions.

Even though dialogue among people of different religious traditions has continued throughout history in the form of individual relationships such as friendships, neighborly relations or business connections, formal and planned interfaith/interreligious dialogue started and became a worldwide movement in the second half of the twentieth century. The role of the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches cannot be denied in this movement, along with the help of technology and modernity. Christian calls for dialogue have been answered by scholars and institutions in a variety of ways, from rejection by those who consider the call a new Christian plot, to eagerness by those who consider the call honest.

After the Second Vatican Council, which took place in 1962-1965, the Catholic Church reached out to both co-religionists and non-Christians. As the second largest religion in the world (after Christianity), the Muslim world began to react to this call for dialogue. Without a worldwide religious authority, every Muslim scholar and community have tried to understand and respond to this call for dialogue in their own way. Turkey, as

one of the most influential and modern Muslim majority states, also joined the discussion about interreligious dialogue, especially with Christians. Being very diverse in culture, religion and thought, Turkish scholars' discussions and critiques of interreligious dialogue requested by the Christian world have clearly contributed to interreligious dialogue on a global scale in the last decades.

From this preliminary overview, the present dissertation investigates the Turkish response to the Christian call for dialogue by examining the development of interreligious dialogue in Turkey and analyzing the works of prominent and widely recognized Turkish theologians as a response to Christian dialogue. Moreover, it explores the problems, challenges and future of the perception of interreligious dialogue in the Turkish context.

As the title implies, the dissertation investigates two poles: "Christian Dialogue" and "Turkish Response." These two poles are not mutually exclusive, but rather are inclusive in pursuing the proposed goal of the dissertation.

Christian Dialogue

In the Christian context, globalization's undeniable effect allowed Christians to challenge the existing world faiths as a reality that they must understand. Until the twenty-first century, with a few exceptions, history is full of examples of Christian enmity and hostility toward religious other on both intellectual and social levels. The axiom "Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus" (there is no salvation outside the Church), which was stated and discussed by prominent Church fathers and theologians for centuries, represents this exclusive approach clearly.[1] This attitude dramatically changed, especially

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[1] The axiom was formulated by Cyprian and Origen. See John Bowker, "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus (est),"

after Vatican II. There were many reasons behind this shift, of which technological developments that facilitate interaction with the world, effects of colonization, immigration from the East, appearance of different philosophical thoughts and globalization are only a few. Moreover, from a theological perspective, prominent Catholic theologians such as Louis Massignon and Karl Rahner developed more positive and inclusive theologies toward non-Christians. These developments challenged classic, exclusive Christian motivations, and led to more tolerant approaches, such as inclusiveness and pluralism. The modern-day development of dialogue toward other religions by the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) occurred during the course of Vatican II, from 1962 to 1965, convened by Pope John XXIII. Two significant documents in which non-Christians are mentioned using inclusive language – *Lumen Gentium* and *Nostra Aetate* – will be special focus of this dissertation. Even though during the second half of the twentieth century there were many fluctuations in the Catholic attitude toward non-Christians, we must consider these documents as representing a shift in eras for Catholics, from an age of monologue to an age of dialogue. As many studies have shown, the popes after the Second Vatican Council have placed special interest on interreligious dialogue with people of other faiths and issued many official documents regarding such dialogue. Alongside the Church's official documents, there are also many Catholic theologians who have developed and discussed a Catholic stance toward non-Catholics, such as John Hick, Leonard Swidler, Hans Küng and Paul Knitter. In order to describe and define the

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Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2000); Helen Conrad-O'Briain, "extra ecclesiam nulla salus," *Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Christian call for dialogue, this dissertation includes a brief review of these developments in Catholicism.

Similar to the RCC, the World Council of Churches (WCC) started to engage in dialogue with other faiths in the 1960s.[2] However, the WCC's stance differs from the RCC's in terms of its classification of two different kinds of dialogue: interreligious and interfaith dialogue. Interreligious dialogue refers to dialogue among the denominations of Christianity while interfaith dialogue refers to dialogue among people of different faiths, and avoids any mention of these religions being as authentic as Christianity. For non-Catholic Christians, these developments opened a new age of dialogue and understanding people of different faiths. WCC and its affirmation of interfaith dialogue is also very important for understanding the Turkish response properly.

Turkish Response

Given that the Christian population of Turkey is only around 170,000,[3] one might think the issue of interreligious dialogue is not significant for academic research.

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[2] Douglas Pratt, "The World Council of Churches in Dialogue with Muslims: Retrospect and Prospect," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 20:1 (2009), pp. 21-42.

[3] According to the USA International Religious Freedom Report for 2012, in Turkey there are 90,000 Armenian Orthodox Christians (an estimated 60,000 citizens and an estimated 30,000 undocumented immigrants from Armenia); 25,000 Roman Catholics (mostly recent immigrants from Africa and the Philippines); 20,000 Syrian Orthodox (Syriac) Christians; 15,000 Russian Orthodox Christians (mostly recent immigrants from Russia who hold residence permits); 5,000 Jehovah's Witnesses; 7,000 members of other Protestant denominations; 3,000 Iraqi Chaldean Christians; and up to 2,500 Greek Orthodox Christians. See more at http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper.

However, considering the following points and the ongoing discussions/studies in Turkey, the importance of this dissertation's subject is apparent.

a. The cultural heritage of Turkey provides a very broad sense of the issue of dialogue. Turkish, or in other words, Anatolian culture, is very rich and is composed of many different traditions, ethnicities and religions. The concept of hospitality is deeply ingrained in the culture and visible in daily life of the citizens of the Republic of Turkey, as in other cultures. In respect to dialogue, Anatolian or Turkish culture encourages people to think about the issue of interreligious dialogue and to pave the way for further discussions and suggestions.

b. The geographical location of Turkey, which can be compared to a bridge between the East and the West, also pushes it to invest in dialogue. In the southeast, Turkey is surrounded by Muslim-majority countries such as Syria, Iraq and Iran (which, as a Shiʻa-majority country, can open doors to intrareligious dialogue); in the northeast and west it is bordered by Christian-majority countries such as Georgia, Armenia, Bulgaria, and Greece. As a Muslim country among these diverse religious territories, Turkish Muslims pay special attention to the question of coexistence and interreligious dialogue.

c. The historical background of Turkey, which seems to be one of the most significant reasons, promotes discussion about interreligious dialogue in Turkey. Whether in the Ottoman or Seljuk era, Christians were a significant group within the state, and had substantial freedom in comparison to Muslim minorities in Christendom. The Islamic term *dhimmi* designated certain rights to non-Muslims in an Islamic state. This arrangement was developed in the Ottoman Empire under

the millet system. All these developments that occurred over centuries have made the challenges of interreligious dialogue in Turkey a popular subject.

d. Globalization as technological development, immigration and travel, on the one hand, and modernity as philosophical, artistic and psychological perception of "the other," on the other hand, have a significant role in bringing the issue of dialogue to the agenda of Muslim thinkers.

e. Tourism's effect must be given special attention. There is a positive correlation between the increasing number of tourists in Turkey and the positive perceptions of Turkish people toward interreligious dialogue. In the year of 2014, around 35 million tourists visited Turkey.[4] Comparing this number to Turkey's population of 76 million, it is amazing. This tourism ensures the positive development of the concept of "other" in Turkey.

f. Turkey's bid for membership in the European Union is another significant factor that makes the ongoing discussions more sensitive. The terms of Turkish entrance and integration into Europe have gained special attention of scholars. In 2005, negotiations with the EU started and as of 2013 many chapters have been opened and fulfilled by the Turkish government. These reform attempts have been observed tentatively and appreciated by most of the Turkish community. Turkish membership in the EU is also debated among scholars of religions in terms of cohabitation with and integration into a Christian-majority union. The subject of

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[4] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism General Directorate of Investment and Enterprises Department of Research and Evaluation, *Border Statistics,* June 2013, 9. According to these statistics 34,910,098 foreigners visited Turkey in 2013.

interreligious dialogue also has been discussed in terms of Turks' ability to join a Christian-majority union without losing national and religious values.

g. Especially in the last decade, Turkey's foreign relations policies have changed dramatically from a negative/isolated approach to a friendlier attitude. Turkey started to base its relations with neighbors on a "zero problems" principle.[5] For example, following agreements between the governments, travel between Turkey and Georgia became passport-free in 2012.[6] Thus Turkish people can travel to a Christian country – and Christians to a Muslim country – more easily, and have the chance to experience a different religious tradition and culture. This development is also another significant factor, which brings the issue of dialogue to the attention of Turkish academia.

h. Turkey's developing role as a regional power requires a proper, in-depth analysis of its neighbors' cultures, religions and traditions. This requires finding positive links between Turkish and regional cultures, along with ways to hold dialogue with people of different regional cultures and ideologies.

i. Another significant factor is missionary activity in Turkey. Nationalists frequently pay attention to missionary works by referencing the destructive role of missionaries in the fall of the Ottoman Empire. According to nationalists, there are tremendous numbers of missionaries in Turkey who spread their propaganda very effectively, especially by focusing on Turkey's sensitive minorities such as

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[5] For the official declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about "zero problems with neighbors" see http://www.mfa.gov.tr/policy-of-zero-problems-with-our-neighbors.en.mfa.

[6] Diba Nigar Göksel, "Turkey and Georgia: Zero-Problems?," *On Wider Europe* (June 2013): 1.

Kurds and Alevis. According to this nationalist approach, dialogue is another name for missionary work and should be treated carefully. Therefore, rejectionist writings about the nature of the Christian call for dialogue constitute an important portion of Turkish publications on dialogue. Interreligious dialogue and its relationship with missions hence becoms a serious question.

j.   Almost 5 million Turks live outside Turkey, mainly in Europe, and remain in contact with Turkey.[7] Their problems of interreligious marriages and relationships also make the issue significant to Turkish academia. In terms of Turks who live outside Turkey, the subject of interreligious dialogue has begun to be a serious issue.

k.   Especially in the last decade, Turkey has also started to discuss diverse religious sects such as the question of Alevis and Bektashis, in workshops organized by the government, various institutions, and think-tanks.[8] This shows a push to accept their respective diversities. Religious ethnic groups have been able to more freely express their diverse opinions by broadcasting their own TV and radio channels, and publishing their own newspapers. They also have organized many meetings to deal with their place in the Turkish public. The problem of living together and intrareligious dialogue has appeared in these meetings. The final declarations and suggestions of these meetings have shown the importance of intrareligious dialogue to the Muslim community.

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[7] http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-expatriate-turkish-citizens.en.mfa. According to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, around 4 million live in Western European countries, 300,000 in North America, 200,000 in the Middle East and 150,000 in Australia.

[8] T.C. Devlet Bakanlığı, *Alevi Çalıştayları Nihai Rapor* (Ankara, 2010).

l. Turkish Christian religious groups also have been active in the last decades in their relationship with Muslims. Their presence in dialogue meetings, whether academic conferences or social meetings such as *iftar dinners*, Ramadan celebrations and Noel/Easter celebrations, has intensified over time. In this way, the issue of interreligious dialogue is presented as the only way to create peaceful existence in Turkey. Therefore, the nature of Turkish Christian-Turkish Muslim dialogue is open for contributions and discussions.

m. Some unfortunate incidents in the last decades about the murdering of priests and Christian missionaries in Turkey has brought the idea of religious tolerance as a remedy for radical religious hatred.[9] Interreligious dialogue is among the most influential ideas that supporters of dialogue usually offer in this respect. So, in their writings about Muslim-Christian dialogue they aim to remove such extreme views and actions.

Because of the above mentioned factors, the issue of interreligious dialogue has a growing place in the Turkish intellectual environment and among the public as well. This dissertation will shed light on the nature of interreligious dialogue, its implications, and its different perceptions, as well as Turkish people's prejudices, and offer suggestions for more applicable and acceptable interaction in terms of Christian-Muslim dialogue.

A Brief Historical Survey of Interreligious Dialogue in Turkey

Even though dialogue was started, discussed and questioned extensively in the Christian world in the 1960s, and two popes visited Turkey (Paul VI in 1967 and John

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[9] For instance, John Eibner, "Turkey's Christians under Siege," *Middle East Quarterly* 18:2 (2011): 41-52.

Paul II in 1979), Turkey's serious engagement with dialogue began in the 1980s. The issue of interreligious dialogue became a very popular subject after the 1990s, with the issues of Turkey's membership to the European Union, Fethullah Gülen's works, and increasing missionary activities in Turkey. One of the first serious meetings on dialogue was held in Ankara. In 1990, Ankara University, in collaboration with Pontifical Gregorian University, hosted an important international academic conference on dialogue, and published a series of papers in a book entitled *Religions, Cultures and Tolerance: Past and Present*. Two years later, in 1992, another academic conference called Asrımızda Hıristiyan Müslüman Münasebetleri (Christian Muslim Relations in the Present Century) was held in Istanbul by İslami İlimler Araştırma Vakfı (ISAV), and interreligious dialogue was seriously discussed by Muslim theologians. The Presidency of Religious Affairs of Turkey (PRA, T.C. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı) first touched on the issue of interreligious dialogue in the First Religion Shura held in Ankara in 1993. Interreligious dialogue became one of the distinctive subjects discussed in the Second Religious Shura held in Ankara in 1998. In parallel to these developments, Fethullah Gülen's contributions to dialogue have widened the influence and reputation of dialogue. After 2000, many symposiums and conferences have been organized by universities and NGOs, and many publications made by theologians, historians, philosophers and journalists about the necessity, problems and future of interreligious dialogue. In today's Turkey, the issue is still among the most widely discussed subjects in both academic and popular circles.

Previous Studies on Interreligious Dialogue in Turkey

There are some academic works that address ongoing discussions about dialogue

among scholars, the press and institutions in Turkey. However, these studies are very limited and superficial works that lack the ability to present the real nature and problems of Turkish perceptions on interreligious dialogue. Among them is Emine Battal's master's dissertation titled "Türkiye'deki Dinlerarası Diyalog Çalışmaları" (Interreligious Activities in Turkey), in which she examines governmental and nongovernmental approaches to interreligious dialogue in Turkey. Even though its title proposes an all-encompassing analysis on interreligious activities in Turkey, she limits herself to "dialogue views of some intellectuals and academicians, who have done some research on the issue." She does not analyze scholars' understandings individually, but superficially cites their opinions under three categories: Supportive, Opposite and Cautious views. Even though this simple categorization is helpful, it does not allow for a nuanced understanding of academics' distinctive responses to dialogue. The other part of her dissertation basically examines some interfaith activities that have been carried out in Turkey. Therefore, in terms of the main focus of the dissertation, even though it suggests a good start, it does not fully grasp the issue since it proposes a comprehensive Turkish response to the Christian call for dialogue.

Mustafa Yiğitoğlu's master's dissertation "Türkiye'de İkinci Vatikan Sonrası Müslüman-Hıristiyan İlişkileri" (Muslim-Christian Relations in Turkey after Vatican II) can be considered another pioneering study since the title claims to examine Muslim-Christian dialogue in Turkey after Vatican II. Unlike Battal's comprehensive work, it generally examines interfaith activities undertaken in Turkey chronologically and does not make categorizations or include analytical discussion. It helps readers grasp the idea of interfaith activities in Turkey; however, it does not present any Turkish response to the

Christian world on an intellectual level.

The other important work is Mustafa Bahadır's master's dissertation "Türkiye'de Farklı Dini Gruplar Arasında Dinlerarası Diyalog" (Interreligious Dialogue between Different Religious Groups). This work categorizes religious groups as supporters, opposers and cautious types as well. In this work, the author only provides quotations and does not discuss or analyze people's opinions in detail. Thus, his work does not give the reader a complete sense of the Turkish response to the Christian call for dialogue.

Another important work, carried out by Öznur Aksoy, is titled "2000-2005 Yılları Arasında Türk Basınında Dinlerarası Diyalog Tartışmaları" (Arguments on Dialogue in the Turkish Media in 2000-2005). In her master's thesis, Aksoy examines Turkish newspapers, webpages and journalists' works on dialogue under three major headings: negative, positive and cautious. Since the work focuses only on the writings of the columnists and limits itself to their opinions, it provides an idea about discussions in the Turkish media. Besides these works, there are also other works which can be considered as significant studies.[10]

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[10] Mehmet Alıcı, "Understanding 'The Other:' Attitudes Towards Interreligious Dialogue in Turkey," *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 17 (2008), 237-251; Ali İsra Güngör, "Forty Years After Nostra Aetate: Reflections on Interreligious Dialogue in Turkey," *Islamochristiana* 32 (2006): 99-115; Cafer Sadık Yaran, "Non-Exclusivist Attitudes Towards the Other Religions in Recent Turkish Theology and Philosophy of Religion," in *Change and Essence: Dialectical Relations Between Change and Continuity in the Turkish Intellectual Tradition*, ed. Sinasi Gündüz and Cafer Sadık Yaran (Washington, DC, Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), 2005); Bayram Sevinç, "Dinler Arası Diyalogda Yerli Söylem İnşası." *Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 38 (2010): 81-112.

Therefore, I can state that there has been no extensive research on Turkish academics' response to Christian dialogue. In fact, there is one essay by Ali İsra Güngör titled "Türkiye'de Dinlerarası Diyalog Üzerine Yapılan Çalışmalar" (The Works That Have Been Done on Interreligious Dialogue in Turkey). This essay can rightly be considered another pioneering work in the sense that it introduces the major works of Turkish academics on interreligious dialogue, but it limits its analysis to the books of some academicians. In addition, at the end of the essay he lists titles of the books and articles on dialogue written in Turkish without examining them. Since the article deals with a limited number of books and does not address the great variety of opinions of the Turkish scholars, it cannot provide a comprehensive idea of the Turkish response to Christian dialogue. Thus, I can say that the essay carries a specific purpose of calling for and necessitating further comprehensive research of the issue.

Herein lies the significance of the present dissertation as an extensive research study dealing with the historical development of dialogue, different perceptions of dialogue and contemporary issues concerning dialogue in Turkey in order to identify and understand the Turkish Muslim response to the Christian world.

The Scope of the Study

This dissertation covers the studies done in Turkey on interreligious dialogue, especially after 1965, as responses to the Christian call for dialogue. After presenting a historical survey of the studies on interreligious dialogue and dialogue activities in Turkey, it will examine definitions of interreligious dialogue proposed by some scholars. Their usage of the terms in their studies will be scrutinized to show their perceptions of

dialogue and their problems in understanding it. Even though many scholars define the term "dialogue" and "interreligious dialogue" according to seemingly objective definitions, such as from a dictionary, they frequently do not use these concepts according to their dictionary meanings as they write. This causes misperceptions among readers and the formation of many opposing views.

The ambiguous perception of dialogue due to its incorrect presentation can be considered the primary problem regarding dialogue in the Turkish context. There are a large number of different, opposing and negative images attached to the term dialogue in Turkish academia and the Turkish press. Meanings such as "discussion," "controversy," "mission," "Christian imperialism" and "crusaders" are all related to the term, turning it into a multifaceted concept. Therefore, showing the vague usage of the term dialogue is beneficial in aiming to show an objective picture of it. The views of the three influential scholars who study interreligious dialogue will be analyzed as case studies. These three scholars – Prof. Dr. Abdurrahman Küçük, Prof. Dr. Mahmut Aydın and Prof. Dr. Davut Aydüz – are Muslims, Turkish citizens, theologians and academicians. In sum, this dissertation examines prominent Turkish works on dialogue in order to identify and understand the perception of dialogue and the role of interreligious dialogue in contemporary Turkey in terms of its relationship with Christianity.

The ideas of Abdurrahman Küçük are analyzed first as representative of rejectionists' views. Küçük, emeritus professor from Ankara University and head of the Association of Historians of Religions of Turkey, has been writing academic works about dialogue and its relationship with missionaries for around twenty years. In his works, and in many of his students' studies, the relationship between dialogue and missionary

activities has been the focus. They see interreligious dialogue as a great threat to Turkey's internal unity. The leading representatives of this response, beside Küçük, are Prof. Mustafa Erdem, Prof. Ali İsra Güngör and Prof. Baki Adam.

Mahmut Aydın's pluralist perception of dialogue and his response to the Christian call for dialogue are explored. Aydın currently teaches in Ondokuz Mayıs University in Turkey, having completed his doctoral program at Birmingham University in the United Kingdom. His doctoral dissertation was on post-Vatican II developments in the Catholic Church teaching on non-Christian religions in general, and Islam in particular. Alongside this major work, Aydın has written many books and articles on dialogue over more than fifteen years, and has been advising many of his students to study dialogue. Unlike other academicians, Aydın attempts to construct a theological foundation for Muslim-Christian dialogue. Besides Mahmut Aydın, Prof. Kenan Gürsoy, Prof. Bülent Şenay, Prof. Niyazi Öktem and Prof. Ömer Faruk Harman can be considered significant individual contributors to dialogue from a theological, philosophical, sociological and spiritual perspective.

Davut Aydüz's works are the last case to be explored as representative of positive views on dialogue. Aydüz is a professor of Tafsīr (Exegesis of the Qur'an) at the Faculty of Theology in Sakarya University. His opinions characterize Fethullah Gülen and his movement's attitude towards dialogue. This trend sees interreligious dialogue as a good chance to recreate bridges with Christians in order to meet on a common basis. It is a known fact that the Gülen movement's response to dialogue has opened a new era of interreligious dialogue in Turkey. Prof. Davut Aydüz's, Prof. İbrahim Canan's and Prof. Suat Yıldırım's works can all be considered representative of the Gülen movement's

academic response to the interreligious dialogue call of Christians.

By inspecting these three scholars' works as case studies, this dissertation aims to identify their common perceptions of dialogue and common points of critique about dialogue, as well as their suggestions and misperceptions. Following these studies, this dissertation will present suggestions for more applicable and acceptable interreligious dialogue.

Summary of the Problem and Hypothesis

This dissertation hypothesizes that in the history of Muslim-Christian relations, interreligious relations have been practiced in four natural ways: through theological, political, moral/social and mystical relations. These four natural types of interreligious relations have significantly affected Turkish Muslims ever since the idea of interreligious dialogue was first presented to them by Christians. I believe that since many people think of interreligious dialogue as one dimensional concept without including different forms, they tend to either totally reject or accept it.

The first type of natural relationship between Muslims and Christians was theological. Interreligious relations on theological issues appeared in the Qur'an, in the Prophet Muhammad's relations with Christians, and later in Muslim scholars' debates (public or written) with Christian theologians and religious personalities. The main goal of this theological relationship was to overcome or persuade the other. This relationship is certainly not dialogue in the contemporary sense. In the contemporary perceptions of interreligious dialogue, theological debates of the past take significant place.

Besides theological relations, political relations have also developed between

states and institutions. The main goal of political relations was to show the political power of one over the other. Since Muslim lands were powerful for a long time, and because of the verses in the Qur'an regarding non-Muslims, Muslims' treatment of their non-Muslim citizens with tolerance was conceived as a sign of the power of Islam and the Muslim state. However, when the Muslims weakened after destructive wars against the Western world, any tolerance or call for dialogue from Western Christians was understood as symbolic of the power and arrogance of Christians. Therefore, the call for dialogue by Christians was treated cautiously. The issue of sincerity is significant here. In contemporary perceptions of interreligious dialogue, the abovementioned facts are psychologically significant in Muslims' minds.

Moral/ethical/social relationships have developed in the daily and business life of Muslims with their non-Muslim neighbors. Since these relationships happen at the grassroots level as personal relations, their accompanying sincerity has played an important role throughout history. Generally, neighborhood relations present a positive sense of the other, as we see from intermarriages, business activities, proverbs and stories of Muslims and Christians. Because of this, in contemporary interreligious dialogue activities, promoters of dialogue do not face difficulties in finding a common basis or common action in order to fight against afflictions such as poverty, wars, and immorality.

Mystical/spiritual relationships have also developed throughout the history of Muslim-Christian relations. This kind of relation has been most widespread among Muslim Sufis and Christian sages and mystics. Basically, according to mystics, God's ultimate love for humanity and its unbounded power and presence encompasses all kinds of thoughts and desires to know and to worship him. Muslim mystics such as Jalal ad-Din

Muhammad Rumi (d.1273), al-Hallaj (d.922), and Yunus Emre (d.1321), and Christian mystics such as Saint Francis of Assisi (d.1226) and Louis Massignon (d.1962) have long been mentioning God's ultimate love for humanity and making the call for people to come together as an expression of love for God. In terms of dialogical relationship, spiritual/mystical dialogue has been accepted by spiritual leaders of different religious traditions. Among contemporary perceptions of interreligious dialogue, promoters of dialogue also find a common basis in the spiritual points of different religions to pave the way for strong dialogical relations.

Theological, political, moral/ethical and spiritual types of relationships were not mutually exclusive throughout the history of Christian-Muslim relations; rather, they were strongly related to each other. These interrelated relationships have a significant effect on contemporary perceptions regarding the accurate nature of interreligious dialogue. The foremost problem appears to be confusing and mixing these four perceptions when reading and writing about the Christian call for dialogue in the Turkish context. Because of the lack of distinction between types of relations in contemporary views of dialogue, dialogue is either totally rejected or totally accepted. This incorrect apprehension and representation of interreligious dialogue therefore creates inevitable and almost insurmountable difficulties.

In order to remove such difficulties, this dissertation aims to indicate the real rejection and acceptance points according to the four types of perceptions. In this way, complete rejection can be avoided and means of applicable interreligious dialogue can be discovered.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1 explores the term "interreligious dialogue" in Christian context by focusing on its origin and development in the Roman Catholic Church and World Council of Churches.

Chapter 2 examines and identifies the term "interreligious dialogue" in the Turkish context. The development of the term since 1965, modern discourse, and contemporary theories of interreligious dialogue in Turkey will be presented in four basic categories: governmental, organizational, educational and individual.

Chapter 3 presents and assesses the perceptions of the three prominent Muslim Turkish academicians. This chapter emphasizes their distinctive points of consideration about dialogue within their general Islamic worldview as representing three major trends regarding to dialogue in Turkey. Their perspectives are analyzed in detail on the basis of the hypothesis.

The dissertation concludes with a general summary that leads to the Turkish Model for Interreligious Dialogue and suggestions for an applicable interreligious dialogue model and further research.

CHAPTER 2: DIALOGUE IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES SINCE 1965

The term Interreligious Dialogue

Definition and Implication of Interreligious Dialogue

Dialogue comes from the Old French *dialoge,* via Latin from Greek "dialogos," from *dialegesthai* "converse with," from *dia* "through" and *legein* "speak." The term is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as: "a conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play, or film" and "a discussion between two or more people or groups, especially one directed towards exploration of a particular subject or resolution of a problem." "Dialogue" as a verb is defined as "to take part in a conversation or discussion to resolve a problem" and "to provide (a film or play) with a dialogue."[11] In addition to this general definition, Leonard Swidler gives remarkable views on the origin of the term. According to him "logos" also means *thinking* as in the term "theology," which means *thinking about* or *study of* god. Similarly, dialogue also could be understood as *thinking together* in order to have a more developed understanding about any issue.[12]

After giving some dictionary meanings of dialogue, I can touch on definitions by scholars of religion. Needless to say, there are many definitions by contemporary scholars. So, in order to not exceed the boundaries of the dissertation, I will only note three of them. Leonard Swidler defines dialogue as "a conversation between two or more

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[11] *The New Oxford Illustrated Dictionary,* vol. 1 (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1980), 460. Also see http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/dialogue?q=dialogue accessed on 05.15.2014

[12] Leonard Swidler, "Humankind from the Age of Monologue to the Age of Global Dialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 47:3 (2012), 465.

persons with different views, the primary purpose of which is for each participant to learn from the other so that he or she can change and grow."[13] By stating a cosmic dance of the universe, Swidler also points out the fact that everything in the universe is naturally in dialogue. In this respect he states that "the very essence of our humanity is dialogical and fulfilled human life is the highest expression of the cosmic dance of dialogue."[14] Louis Jacobs gives a longer definition of dialogue: "discussions and conversations between two parties holding different views on some matters of high significance but who believe that it is fruitful for them to talk to one another and thus come fairly to understand why the other sincerely holds to his opinion, as well as to assist one another in the furtherance of the aims they have in common."[15] Last, Charles Kimball defines interfaith dialogue as "a conversation in which two or more parties seek to express their views accurately and to listen respectfully to their counterparts."[16]

Cardinal Francis Arinze stresses what is not interreligious dialogue: it is not parallel or rival statements between followers of other religions; it is not mutual information or academic study of religious traditions; it is not an effort for uniting religions into one, nor an attempt to hammer out a lowest common denominator that would be acceptable by all; it is not the same as the proposal of one's religion to others with the hope that they may accept it. Arinze states that even though proposing one's

[13] Leonard Swidler, *After the Absolute* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 3.

[14] Swidler, "Understanding Dialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 43:2 (2008), 9-24.

[15] Louis, Jacobs, "Dialogue," in *A Concise Companion to the Jewish Religion* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1999), http://www.oxfordreference.com.libproxy.temple.edu/.

[16] Charles A. Kimball, "Muslim-Christian Dialogue," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2009), http://www.oxfordreference.com.libproxy.temple.edu/

religion to others is not opposed to interreligious dialogue, it is not dialogue per se.[17] Rather, "interreligious dialogue is the meeting of heart and mind between followers of various religions. It is communication between two believers at the religious level. It is a walking together towards truth and a working together in projects of common concern....It is a religious partnership without hidden agendas or motives."[18]

Arinze also emphasizes that interreligious dialogue requires respect, listening, sincerity, openness, and willingness to receive one another and work together. On the religious level, it asks each side to leave himself or herself open to the action of God for "a deeper conversion of the individual toward the will of God for that person." Moreover, it provides an environment where each participant retains his or her religious identity and practices of faith while presenting these virtues to others.[19]

According to these definitions, one of the most significant features of dialogue is mutual learning and mutual teaching. Scholars such as Swidler and John Cobb stress that the primary purpose of dialogue is mutual learning. In this respect it is important to make a difference between dialogue and debate, negotiation or discussion. Although through dialogue participants want to learn from others, the other kinds of relations are based on teaching or defeating others. Therefore, dialogue must include a common understanding that no one side has a monopoly on the truth on any given subject.[20]

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[17] Francis A. Arinze, "The Church and Interreligious Dialogue," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture,* 4:1 (Winter 2001): 156-57.

[18] Arinze, "The Church and Interreligious Dialogue," 157-58.

[19] Arinze, "The Church and Interreligious Dialogue," 158.

[20] Swidler, *Understanding Dialogue*.

In dialogue, each person must be willing to be as compassionate as possible in order to feel and understand the other participants' perspectives on the issue. This type of situation encourages change because everyone gets very different prospectives through engaging dialogue on any issue. Otherwise, it would not be possible to talk about any level of learning. Keeping these views in consideration, it is important to state that in the process of dialogue participants ordinarily learn and then change accordingly. However, one may not conceive this change as a risk, since education or learning is the way of maturity and being a more perfect human. Even though the risk of converting or giving up previous opinions seems disturbing at first sight, one can also see that this is widely appreciated by many scholars of religion. Even from the Vatican documents one may find positive references to this side of dialogue. It says "doctrinal discussion requires perceptiveness, both in honestly setting out one's own opinion and in recognizing the truth everywhere, even if the truth demolishes one so that one is forced to reconsider one's own position."[21] In order to grasp fuller truth, one may give up his/her current thoughts.

Interreligious dialogue is a dialogue on religious subjects by persons who acknowledge one another as part of different religious traditions and groups. In Christian Salenson's words "Dialogue presupposes a going out from one's own self in order to reach the other. It can be understood as an exodus toward the other."[22] Thus, interreligious dialogue can be conceptualized as one of the fundamental concepts that

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[21] Leonard Swidler, What is Dialogue? http://institute.jesdialogue.org/fileadmin/bizcourse/Dialogue.pdf accessed 14.05.2014.

[22] Christian Salenson, "Dialogue with Islam," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 47:2 (2012), 215.

underline the importance of being human and living together. There are several motives behind the contemporary dialogue movement. In Kimball's words, these motivations are "desires to foster understanding, to stimulate communication, to correct stereotypes, to work on specific problems of mutual concern, to explore similarities and differences, and to facilitate means of witness and cooperation. The pragmatic need for better understanding and cooperation among adherents in the world's two largest communities of faith—Christianity and Islam—is particularly acute."[23]

Historical Development of Dialogue in Christian Context

The term dialogue is not easily accepted by some contemporary people. It has a very old and challenged history. In the past, when people encountered each other the main aim was to persuade, to defeat, to teach, to convert, or to learn the other's weakness in order to deal with others easily. The basic opinion about this view was that "I have the authority," "my religion is the best," "my rights are absolute rights" and "my rights are static and so don't change." In the context of Christian-Muslim relations, misconceptions, projudices and exclusivist attitude throughout history toward each other is clear.[24] Islam appeared as the most challenged religious traditions, with its claim to be last religion of God, to Christianity, when Christian majority lands from Middle East to North Africa were conquered by Muslim rulers, and Muslim society gained scientific and military superiority on Christiandom. In parallel to these developments, growing misconceptions

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[23] Kimball, "Muslim-Christian Dialogue."

[24] For helpful analysis see Carl W. Ernst, *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World,* Chapel Hill: University of California Press, 2004; İbrahim Kalın, "Roots of Misconception: Euro-American Perceptions of Islam Before and After September 11," in *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition*, edited by Joseph E. B. Lumbard, (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2009), 149-193.

and projudicies were seen in the intellectual setting of Christians. One of the most striking examples would be the image of Prophet Muhammad in the writings. He was mostly portrayed as the Anti-Christ, pursue of world pleasures, merciless to his enemies, magician, psychopath. Some works portayed his dead body was eaten by pigs or baptized secretly before his death.[25] When the Europe has regained its military and scientific superiority on Muslims the prejudices and misconceptions helped to justify colonialism. Similarly, Muslims were developing a reactionary language against the West.[26]

Besides these facts, there has been a major intellectual shift about understanding the structure of reality during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the West. Before this major shift happened in the West, mutability, simplicity and monologue were the main characteristics of Western minds. The later intellectual developments paved the way for mutuality, relationality and dialogue as being the new understanding toward truth and reality. This important shift has a crucial effect on "our understanding of what it means to be human and our systematic reflection on that meaning."[27] In John Hick's words, there has been a major Copernican revolution in mankind's understanding about reality. Until Copernicus, the medieval scientist, the general opinion about the world was that it was the center of the universe and the Sun turned around the world. Copernicus showed that the sun, not the Earth, is the center.[28] Thus the old thought about reality was that my right

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[25] Kalın, "Roots of Misconception: Euro-American Perceptions of Islam Before and After September 11," 154-55

[26] Ernst, *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World,* 8.

[27] Swidler, *After the Absolute,* p. 6.

[28] Gavin D'Costa, "John Hick's Copernican Revolution: Ten Years After," *New Blackfriars* 65:769-770 (July 1984), 323.

was the center of my relations with others, since I had the only "right" and it was static. When communication developed and people started to come closer to each other, they understood that they did not have the only "right" and had only a very small percentage of reality. And reality is not static but dynamic. Our opinion about reality is also very limited even though it may be right. Since reality is much greater than my imagination, it is impossible to reach it by my own point of view, which is based on the fact that, in Swidler's words, "nobody knows everything about anything."[29] In order to grasp the fuller information about anything, then, I have to be in dialogue with others who have conceived different parts of it. By doing this, I develop my own understanding of what is real. Thus looking at the reality we see that, in Swidler's words, all statements about reality are now seen to be related to the historical context, intentionality, perspective and interpretation of the speaker, and in that sense no longer "absolute."[30]

In the contemporary world, it is very common that whenever we learn something new about physics or astronomy we say we definitely have so little knowledge about the universe or material beings. However, when it comes to the most complicated, most comprehensive scholarly discipline, theology or religion, people usually assert they have absolute, total information about reality. This is really an interesting attitude, mostly, in my opinion, from the fear of religion losing their identity and is a reflection of ignorance and totalitarianism. However, contemporary developments show the fact that all knowledge is interpreted knowledge. If a person believes that some scriptures are totally

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[29] Swidler, "Nobody Knows Everything about Anything! the Cosmic Dance of Dialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 45:2 (2010), 175-77.

[30] Swidler, *After the Absolute,* 6-11.

from God, any interpretation of them has limitations, even if the person with the belief is the Pope or other spiritual leader.

Many factors have appeared in the last centuries that contribute to the world becoming a global village. People in the past spent much and sometimes all of their lives in their homeland. And they did not have many chances to go or be informed about people in other parts of the world. The culture, information, religion, music and tradition they encountered were partial, regional and isolated from those of other distant people. Even wars and fighting were limited to a geographical and cultural area. However, nowadays, even when we are sitting in our homes, we can be contacted or be informed about people of other continents very easily. We now mention global economy, global warming and global wars. Because of transportation people born in one area of the world can get educated, live and travel in the far remote places. This great development has highly affected people's perception of others since they can easily make contact. During the past era of divergence, it was easy to live in isolation. However, our contemporary age is the age of convergence and thus we are forced to live in the same world.[31] Therefore, the modern world now faces two major choices. People must learn the greatness of learning from others or they will challenge others which pushes toward another world war. The title of the book edited by Leonard Swidler *Death or Dialogue?: From the Age of Monologue to the Age of Dialogue*[32] vividly captures this important point.

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[31] Swidler, , "Humankind from the Age of Monologue to the Age of Global Dialogue," 468-71.

[32] Swidler, et al. *Death or Dialogue?: From the Age of Monologue to the Age of Dialogue,* Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990.

Therefore, it will be meaningful to state Pope Paul VI's demand for dialogue in the modern world as a choice for peace. In 1964 his first encyclical, *Humanae Personae Dignitatem,* stresses dialogue: "dialogue is demanded nowadays… is demanded by the dynamic course of action which is changing the face of modern society. It is demanded by the pluralism of society and by maturity man has reached in this day and age."[33]

On the modern discourse of Dialogue in the Roman Catholic Church

Interreligious dialogue, which started in a Roman Catholic context after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), was the subject of many official documents and scholarly studies.[34] Because the main goal of the dissertation is the Turkish response to the Christian call for dialogue, I will basically attempt to specify the Christian call for dialogue in the context of the Roman Catholic Church. And since so many scholarly works have been done on interreligious dialogue in the Roman Catholic context, after briefly touching on historical developments, I will summarize the Church's stance by referencing the work of Cardinal Francis Arinze, a Nigerian RCC cardinal who served as president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue from 8 April 1984 to 1 October 2002. It is possible to find the basic reasons, motivations and understanding of interreligious dialogue according to the Roman Catholic Church in his article "The Church and Interreligious Dialogue." In the article, Arinze emphasizes that mission, proclamation and dialogue are not opposites; rather, they are complementary parts of the

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[33] Ecclesiam suam, no 78, cited in Swidler, *After the Absolute*, 4.

[34] The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue has published all the official documents that have been published in the course of 42 years after the Second Vatican Council. Francesco Gioia (ed.), *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church from the Second Vatican Council to John Paul II (1963-2005),* Boston: Pauline Books, 2006.

Church. He states that through dialogue, misconceptions and misunderstandings will be removed and people will be able to understand and present each other in an accurate way, which is also a proper environment for witnessing about Christ.

Pre-Second Vatican Council

The long history of an exclusivist attitude of Christians to others can be summarized by the early Christian fathers' formula: "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus" (there is no salvation outside the church), usually supported by the statement in the Gospel of Mark "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This Church-centered understanding of salvation has been shaken by new developments after the discovery of the New World and new ways to India and China, where Christian missionaries started to observe that indigenous people also have a good ethical and spiritual way of life embedded in their religions. However, the main reasons that influenced the positive RCC attitude toward others were the development of secularism in the West, which occurred after bloody religious wars between Catholics and Protestants in the eighteenth and nineteenth century; the two world wars in which the Holocaust appeared as one of the tragic events of human history; and technological developments. Moreover, the development of formal interreligious dialogue is also related to the Christian missionary movement. People new to Christianity were asking missionaries about why there were so many divisions in the Church while they were all talking about Jesus. They figured out that "What Christians had in common was far more important than the differences that divided them."[35]

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[35] Barbara Brown Zikmund, "Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Religion and Social Justice*, ed. Michael D. Palmer and Stanley M. Burgess (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012),

Therefore, interreligious dialogue appeared as a result of Christian ecumenism. Prophetic voices within the Catholic Church, which asked for more tolerance and understanding toward others, also were important factors. Louis Massignon and Karl Rahner can be considered two of the most important of these.

Massignon, an important French orientalist and spiritualist, had close links with Muslims. His special interest in Sufism and the role of Abraham as a common ancestor for Islam and Christianity led him to an inclusive approach concerning Muslims. By pointing to the common religious ancestors he wanted to show a historical link between sons of Ishmael and Isaac and indicated how he perceived a place for Muslims in the covenant between God and Abraham. Moreover, he also considered the monotheistic features of the three religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). According to this view Judaism is the religion of hope, Christianity is the religion of love and Islam is the religion of faith. For Massignon, Christians should respect the Qur'an and appreciate it as a religious and mystical source that affirms Jesus as prophet, and Mary as a virgin and holy person. Even though Massignon was not presented as one of the members of the Second Vatican Council, we observe his influence in the documents accepted in the Council, where Muslims are appreciated for respecting Abraham, having faith in one God and respecting Jesus and Mary.[36]

The other prominent scholar I should mention is Karl Rahner, considered by many theologians one of the most influential Catholic thinkers in the twentieth century. One of the official theologians of the Second Vatican Council, he influenced decisions of the

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[36] Christian S. Krokus, "Louis Massignon's Influence on the Teaching of Vatican II on Muslims and Islam," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 23:3 (2012), 329–345.

Council concerning people of other religions. We observe that Rahner started to express his views concerning non-Christians through conferences entitled "Christianity and non-Christian Religions" in 1961 and continued his works after the Council.

In terms of non-Christians Rahner follows a simple logic. According to him if God really desires the redemption of all people, then revelation and grace must exist in the non-Christian religions. Thus for Rahner, the other religions had to be positively included in God's plan of salvation. This is very well understood from his important concept of "Anonymous Christians," which can be traced to the very early Christian understanding of the person who lived according to the ethics of Christ but was not aware of it.[37]

We observe that Rahner's main goal is to break down the negative attitude of Catholics toward others by pointing to God's love for all people. Thus, Rahner represents a very inclusive attitude toward non-Christians. Religious inclusivism basically means accepting one's faith or truth as the only and total truth, yet considering other people's truths correct as long as they do not contradict one's faith. So others' faith and truth are only limited truths. Even though others do not consider and accept the one's truth, they anonymously accept it.

The Second Vatican Council and Developments after the Council

The Second Vatican Council, gathered with the call of Pope John XXIII, and usually accepted as an ecumenical council, stands as a "watershed" in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in its relations with non-Christians. After the death of John

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[37] Jeannine H. Fletcher, "Rahner and Religious Diversity," in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner*, edited by Declan Marmion & Mary E. Hines (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 235-48.

XXIII during the council, Paul VI came to office. The council published numerous documents defining the church's current position on a number of issues. Among them were some that directly and indirectly paved the way for the engagement of the RCC in interreligious dialogue. The ones that explain and discuss dialogue are

1. The Declaration on the Church's Relation to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*).[38]

2. The Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*)[39] which stresses the dignity and freedom of human beings along with deserved respect.

3. Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church (*Ad Gentes*).[40]

4. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*).[41]

These documents are based on faith-conviction, a spiritual vision about human rights, and they show the Catholic Church's attitude toward other world religions. Each of the documents looks at the issue of non-Christians in a different perspective. There is a general tendency to focus on God and his people on earth, meaning all people. For instance, the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church (*Ad Gentes*) states, "But it pleased God to call men to share His life, not just singly, apart from any mutual bond, but rather to mold them into a people in which His sons, once scattered abroad might be

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[38] PCID, *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church from the Second Vatican Council to John Paul II (1963-2005)* (Boston: Pauline, 2006), 43-46.

[39] PCID, *Interreligious Dialogue,* 50-52.

[40] PCID, *Interreligious Dialogue,* 53-61.

[41] PCID, *Interreligious Dialogue,* 47-49.

gathered together (cf. John 11:52)."[42] In this respect, it is observed that corresponding to this unity is a sign for a faith centered on the one God who revealed himself to Abraham. The oneness of God thus underlies the call to unity among all nations and races, and that oneness appropriately comes to fullest expression in oneness of belief and practice. The Catholic Church presents itself as a symbol of the unity God desires for human beings. The fact that there are a variety of religions should be understood as a variety of languages, cultures or philosophical worldviews. Catholic theology, however, is privileged because within this particular time, God chose to reveal himself by speaking "directly" to the religious receptors of a particular people, namely Christians.[43]

The Catholic Church, therefore, perceives itself associated to the other religions in a series of concentric unities. In this respect Dogmatic Constitution on the Church states:

> All men are called to belong to the new people of God… though there are many nations there is but one people of God, which takes its citizens from every race, making them citizens of a kingdom which is of a heavenly rather than of an earthly nature.[44]

Also, it says that:

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[42] *Ad Gentes,* 3, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html accessed on 14.05.2014.

[43] William Reiser, "Roman Catholic Understanding of Religious Tolerance in Modern Times: The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II)," in *Religious Tolerance in World Religions*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Bruce Chilton (West Conshohocken, Pa.: Templeton, 2008), 153-173.

[44] *Lumen Gentium,* 13, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html accessed on 14.05.2014.

But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place amongst these there are the Muslims, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind. Nor is God far distant from those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God, for it is He who gives to all men life and breath and all things, and as Saviour wills that all men be saved. Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. As it is seen in the above mentioned document, salvation can be understood as an entrance into the afterlife in union with God and possible for people of other religious traditions by only considering their righteousness and goodness.[45]

In the Declaration on the Church's Relation to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*), we find more specific references to interreligious dialogue. The document states that all humankind is God's people and spread all around the world by God's permission. It says: "One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth."[46] After mentioning this common human feature, the document asks important questions that always come to mind such as "What is man? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what is sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate

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[45] *Lumen Gentium,* 16.

[46] *Nostra Eateta,* 1.

inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?"[47] By asking these questions it points to the principles for assessing the religious tradition's significance. Moreover, the document starts with Hinduism and Buddhism by stating their meaningful and insightful answer to these questions. For instance, "Thus in Hinduism, men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry."[48]

When it comes to Muslims, though not stating Islam, it found many similarities.

The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all – powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote

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[47] *Nostra Eateta,* 1.

[48] *Nostra Eateta,* 2.

together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

In terms of Judaism it states that it has very long historical ties and will always keep its ties with Judaism, by sharing a spiritual heritage. It says

Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ – Abraham's sons according to faith – are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles. Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, Our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one in Himself.

We can conclude from these assessments that even though the Catholic Church does not accept other religions with the same validity as Christianity, nevertheless people of these religions can reach everlasting salvation. The Second Vatican Council did not consider other religions as equal. We observe that the Church considers the existence of non-Christians as God's demand, and God works among members of sother religious traditions through the Holy Spirit. So, the Church instead of rejecting religions altogether

transformed its attitude to accept what is right in them and to connect with them on a common basis. Also, the overall attitude of the Catholic Church in the documents of the Council toward other religious traditions is based on respect in order to build bridges for peace.[49] So, in short, the Council did not celebrate religious diversity in the world, but simply affirmed it.

In this respect William Reiser makes remarkable statements:

"Vatican II presented an understanding of divine revelation that was personal and relational. Revelation consists not so much of propositions but of God communicating or sharing God's own self with human beings. Yet, a personal, relational approach to revelation implies a personal and relational understanding of truth, and only a personal and relational understanding of truth can serve as the theological basis of genuine religious tolerance. Vatican II may not be the Catholic Church's last word about the relation of the church to the other religions, but the council showed itself remarkably sensitive to the presence and action of the Spirit beyond the church's spiritual and doctrinal boundaries."[50]

As a result of the Second Vatican Council, the Secretariat for Non-Christians was founded in 1964 by Pope Paul VI. Its goal was to promote friendship and collaboration between the church and people of other religions. In 1988 its name changed to Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID). The tasks of the council were determined as "(1) to promote mutual understanding, respect and collaboration between Catholics and

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[49] Reiser, *Roman Catholic Understanding of Religious Tolerance in Modern Times,* 153-73.

[50] Reiser*, Roman Catholic Understanding of Religious Tolerance in Modern Times*, 166.

the followers of other religious traditions; (2) to encourage the study of religions; (3) to promote the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue."[51]

PCID has played a significant role in the promotion of interreligious dialogue. It has organized meetings with other religious traditions, promoted knowledge about others among Catholic Christians, and laid the foundations for dialogue in a Catholic context. It also was effective in spreading dialogue in the local church level. A significant achievement of this organization was Prayer in Assisi, where local churches and other religious communities gathered for common prayer for world peace.[52] In the intervening years further documents have emerged, such as the milestone document Attitude of the Church Toward Followers of Other Religions (1984),[53] Dialogue and Proclamation (1991)[54] and Dominus Iesus (2000).[55] These documents helped interreligious dialogue to

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http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_pro_20051996_en.html, accessed on 14.05. 2014

[52] Zago Marcello, "Mission and Interreligious Dialogue." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 22:3 (1998), Religion and Philosophy Collection, EBSCOhost (accessed June 15, 2014).

[53] Published by the Secretariat for Non-Christians (May 10, 1984). The full text can be found in "The Attitude of the Church toward Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission," *The Furrow* 36:7 (July 1985): 453-57.

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http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html accessed on 14.05. 2014

[55]

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html accessed on 14.05. 2014

be understood between the Church's missionary characteristics and pluralism in the world. The balance is set up so that even though the Church is the only true and perfect way to God, other religions keep some lights from God because the Holy Spirit leads them and Christians should work toward understanding people better in order to discover what is good within their religion and help them to fulfill their religion with Christ. So, we observe that the documents in the Second Vatican Council and after the council turned from a Christocentric view to a theocentric view.

Roman Catholic Church's stance on Interreligious Dialogue

As I mentioned above, the article of Cardinal Francis Arinze draws a very clear picture of interreligious dialogue in a Roman Catholic context, which also will be helpful in the course of the dissertation. Arinze states that dialogue occurs in many areas with many different forms. In terms of interreligious dialogue he sets forth four types: dialogue of life, dialogue of social engagement, dialogue of theological exchange and dialogue of religious experience.[56]

Arinze also discusses the reasons for interreligious dialogue in two basic categories: social and religious. Social reasons are plurality in the world, travel, migration and communication. They can push Christians and other religions to learn from each other and enrich themselves: "From Christianity the other religions can receive inspiration to reach for universality, to engage in social work, and to show greater esteem for women. From other religions and cultures, Christianity can receive symbols, rites and cultural patterns that help her express her faith in language and cult patterns more

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[56] Arinze, *The Church and Interreligious Dialogue*, 158-59.

congenial to each people."[57] The second and primary reason for the Catholic Church's engagement in dialogue is for theological reasons, and the fact that God is the creator of people and the final end of each human being. Christ is in the center for the redemption for all people. The Holy Spirit moves the human soul in its search for God toward contact with the Church.[58]

The Church is motivated by these factors when it engages in dialogue with other religions and adopts positive attitudes toward other religions, where the Church sees human souls looking for God.[59] Arinze stresses that the Church should engage in interreligious dialogue as part of its evangelizing mission: "The Second Vatican Council exhorts Catholics prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions and in witness of Christian faith and life, to acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these other believers, as well as the values in their society and culture."[60] Hence, through engaging in interreligious dialogue the Church discovers the working of God in other religions and aims to fulfill in Christ the positive elements in other religions.[61]

After stating that dialogue is part of the total mission of the Church, Arinze explains it as follows: "The mission of the Church is a complex reality and is accomplished in such elements as lives of witness to Christ without words, social service,

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[57] Arinze, *The Church and Interreligious Dialogue*, 160.

[58] Arinze, *The Church and Interreligious Dialogue*, 161-62.

[59] Arinze, *The Church and Interreligious Dialogue*, 162.

[60] Arinze, *The Church and Interreligious Dialogue*, 164.

[61] Arinze, *The Church and Interreligious Dialogue*, 164-65.

human promotion and liberation, proclamation of Jesus Christ, conversion, liturgical life, prayer, contemplation, active apostolate, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. It is in this integrated whole that dialogue finds its place."[62] He understands Pope John Paul II's statement, "interreligious dialogue is a part of the Church's evangelizing mission"[63] at the same time. Sothe Church fosters dialogue with members of other religions while it also encourages Christians to continue missionary work. Arinze stresses that proclamation and dialogue are complementary even though they are not on the same level. In this respect he says: "Interreligious dialogue encourages friendly relations between believers in differing religions. It helps to knock down, or at least to reduce, prejudices, exclusiveness and intolerance. All this is also in favor of proclamation."[64]

On the Modern Discourse of Dialogue in the World Council of Churches

Before mentioning post-1950s developments, it will be helpful to describe the main developments in the World Council of Churches. The question of dialogue started with Christians' relations with people of other faiths in the scope of missionary work and evangelization. It can be said that non-Catholic interest in dialogue with people of other faiths is largely rooted in the Ecumenical Movement, which was stimulated by the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh. This Conference can be thought of as one of the earliest meetings of non-Catholics on people of other faiths in relation to Christians.[65] Even though the main goal was to develop missionary works, the question of

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[62] Arinze, *The Church and Interreligious Dialogue*, 166.

[63] *Redemptoris Missio*, 55. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html accessed on 14.05.2014

[64] Arinze, *The Church and Interreligious Dialogue*, 176.

[65] Mahmut Aydın, *Monologdan Diyalog* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu, 2001), 179.

understanding other religions became an important point of discussion at this conference. It paved the way for developing comparative religion and exploring other faiths.

At the next international missionary conference, in Jerusalem in 1928, theologians discussed other religions in the face of the rising secularism in the East and West, the concept of universal religion and the urgency of Christian missions. The other important development at this conference, according to Wesley Ariarajah, is that it "affirmed 'values' in other religions and called Christians to join hands with all believers to confront the growing impact of secular culture."[66] Therefore, it can be said that technological, sociological and political development in the West forced non-Catholic Christians to think and perceive positive elements in other religions. Even though some positive ideas appeared during the conferences organized by the WCC, the general tendency was the uniqueness of Christianity. Needless to say, two of the foremost thinkers of this idea at that time were Hendrik Kraemer and Karl Barth.

Another important step was held in 1938 at the third international missionary conference, in Tambaram in India. In Tambaram many theologians such as A. G. Hogg, H. H. Farmer and T. C. Chao considered God's witness among the nations and did not find Kraemer and other exclusivists applicable to that fact. However, these controversies on God's revelation among people did not become a subject to agree fully on.[67]

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[66] S. Wesley Ariarajah, "Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement article on Interfaith Dialogue," http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/interreligious-trust-and-respect/ecumenical-dictionary-interfaith-dialogue   accessed   on 13.05.2014

[67] Ariarajah, "Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement article on Interfaith Dialogue."

The World Council of Churches was formed in Amsterdam in 1948, and one of the warmest subjects, as in previous international missionary conferences by the International Missionary Council (IMC), was Christians' relations with non-Christians. One of the strategies they followed was to set up a number of study centers around the world to consider contemporary problems. Another was to initiate long-term joint study on "the word of God and the Living Faiths of Man."[68]

In 1961 at the New Delhi Assembly, WCC did ask its churches in the newly founded countries to work with the people of other faiths on common good, nation-building and understanding. The concept of dialogue appeared in order to determine the way of speaking about Christian relations with people of other religions. In 1964 the East Asia Christian Conference Assembly in Bangkok published a statement on dialogue that can be considered an important step for the WCC attitude toward other faiths. The statement was entitled "Christian Encounter with Men of Other Beliefs." In 1967 at the WCC conference in Kndy, Sri Lanka, with the involvement of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians (an important step for intra-religious dialogue among Christians), many important discussions took place.[69] Kenneth Cragg, who advocated dialogue, seriously debated the exclusivist interpretation of Christianity toward others. The Kandy meeting confirmed the concept of dialogue as the most appropriate approach to interfaith

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[68] http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd38-02.html accessed on 13.05.2014.

[69] "Christian Encounter with Men of Other Beliefs," *Ecumenical Review* 16:4 (July 1964): 451–55; http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/interreligious-trust-and-respect/ecumenical-dictionary-interfaith-dialogue accessed on 13.05.2014

relations.

In 1970 the first multi-dialogue conference convened under the WCC in Ajaltoun, Lebanon, with the involvement of many Hindu, Muslim and Christian participants. At the 1971 meeting in Addis Ababa, the Sub-unit on "Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies" with Stanley Samartha as director was founded.[70] The establishment of this sub-unit shows how the church relationship with people of other faiths is important for WCC members and its enormous effects on the development of dialogue in practice and thought. According to WCC discussions in the conferences, dialogue is understood as one's encounter with people who live by different faith traditions in an atmosphere of mutual trust. According to this it does not mean that it is necessary to leave one's religion or that it is appropriate to have a hidden agenda for converting others or even finding mistakes in others' faith; rather it is about finding a common basis on humanitarian values. Development of approaches about dialogue is as varied as living for common good or spiritual discoveries and theological similarities. In the Nairobi assembly, the WCC invited five persons from other faiths to discuss "seeking community." There, the term dialogue and its implication for people were discussed. Many Christians were afraid of a kind of syncretism; others were afraid of losing the uniqueness of Christianity. In Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 1977 the theme was Dialogue in Community. In the meeting it was confirmed that dialogue is neither a betrayal of mission nor a secret weapon of proselytism. It formulated the Guidelines on Dialogue, which was adopted by WCC and in 1979 was sent to churches for study and action. Thus the tension between mission and dialogue has been discussed at many conferences and assemblies. Thus it can be said that

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[70] http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/cd38-07.html accessed on 13.05.2014

with the acceptance of the Guidelines on Dialogue the role and importance of dialogue was accepted by the majority of WCC members. The Guidelines on Dialogue, similar to *Nostra Aetate* in the Catholic Church, was accepted by many theologians as a historic turn, a landmark in the development of dialogue in the WCC. However, its theological and missionary role has continued.

In 1991 the Sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies was abolished and a new office was created, the Office on Interreligious Relations and Dialogue. Here the term dialogue was dropped interestingly. Instead the term "relations" catches our attention. In 1998, after the WCC eighth assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, the Office on Interreligious Relations increased its cooperation with other units of WCC such as education, health and international relations. It has also developed its relations with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue of the Catholic Church. Many issues such as interfaith prayer and interfaith marriage were discussed and many publications have appeared.

Today, many interfaith activities are happening in the WCC churches with other faith members at many levels. At the academic level many scholars come to discuss and understand the differences and commonalties between the religions and the challenges to develop their relations. Spiritual dialogue happens among many people who emphasize prayer and meditation. For instance, Zen and Benedictine monasteries exchange their monks to develop a much deeper understanding about each other.

These developments have shown the way WCC members are becoming aware of the challenges of modernism, globalization and the dynamism of reality. Becoming

absolute, isolation and promoting clash can no longer be considered good for the peace of humanity. Aware of these facts, members of WCC strove to reach a better understanding of people in their context of the Christian world. It seems that, in Ariarajah's words, "interfaith dialogue will summon the church to seek a new self-understanding in its relation to other religions. It requires it to look for deeper resources to deal with the reality of plurality and its calls the church to new approaches to mission and witness."[71]

Besides the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, in order to present rich resources and understanding concerning interreligious dialogue in the Christian context, it will be helpful to present principles for interreligious dialogue according to the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A (NCC-USA). Barbara Brown Zikmund presents the six marks of faithful interfaith dialogue in the "Interfaith Relations Policy Statement" of the NCC-USA:[72]

> 1. All relationship begins with meeting. As people meet and form relationships with men and women of other religious traditions, the encounter may bring back bitter memories. Yet, people must not "disengage from trying to build bridges of understanding and cooperation throughout the human family."

> 2. True relationship involves risk. When people approach others with an open heart, they may be hurt. When people encounter others with an open mind, they may have to change positions or give up certainty, but they also may gain new insights.

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[71] Araiarajah, "Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement article on Interfaith Dialogue."

[72] Barbara Brown Zikmund, "Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Religion and Social Justice,* ed. Michael D. Palmer and Stanley M. Burgess (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), 339, also http://www.ncccusa.org/interfaith/ifr.html accessed on 14.05.2014.

3. True relationship respects the other's identity. When people meet others as they are, in their particular hopes, ideas, struggles and joys, there are new possibilities.

4. True relationship is based on integrity. When people meet others, everyone must accept their right to determine and define their own identity. Interreligious dialogue does not ask anyone to betray their religious commitments.

5. True relationship is rooted in accountability and respect. When people approach others in humility, not arrogance, they are able to discover and cultivate mutual accountability.

6. True relationship offers an opportunity to serve. When people embrace the dialogue of action, they are able to find opportunities through advocacy, education, direct services, and community development to respond to the realities of a world in need.

Similar to NCC-USA, four principles for dialogue were declared by the British Council of Churches in 1981:[73]

1. Dialogue begins when people meet each other.

2. Dialogue depends upon mutual understanding and mutual trust.

3. Dialogue makes it possible to share in service to the community.

4. Dialogue becomes the medium of authentic witness.

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[73] Zikmund, "Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue," 338.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored interreligious dialogue within the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches. I observed that within both the RCC and the WCC, interreligious dialogue is developed within different types of motivations.

The issue of dialogue is developed within the scope of missionary activity and ecumenism. Moreover, I articulated that the two major branches of contemporary Christianity have been encouraging their followers to engage in dialogue with non-Christians in order to demolish prejudices and misunderstandings, and to explore their commonalities. However, the commonalities are generally understood to be rays from the truth of God. The two major branches of Christianity also request Christians to witness and then proclaim the message of Jesus to non-Christians in order to fulfill the truths in these religions.

However, I noticed that besides this basic motivation, there are also strong theological, social, moral and spiritual foundations. Each motivation is highly stressed and profoundly encourages Christians to engage dialogue with non-Christians. Lastly, I observed that any hidden agenda, ill-intention is strictly rejected and sincerity is always desired in the Christian call for dialogue.

CHAPTER 3: DIALOGUE IN TURKEY SINCE 1965

Interreligious dialogue in the Turkish context covers a very broad area. It is clear that dialogue engages and is also influenced individually and socially by many fields, such as education, religion, media, politics, official institutions, and of course NGOs.

Historical Background

The experience of living together with Christians in the lands of Anatolia extends more than 900 years (if we exclude the Battle of Manzikert (C.E.1071), the starting point of Turkish entrance into Anatolia. It offers us a very broad and abundant source that can be used in the Turkish people's understanding and reaction to dialogue. Indeed, Turkish Muslims and non-Muslims, especially Christians, have been sharing experiences in neighborly relations and official relations as well. Neighborly relations occur at a grassroots level and are more friendly and sincere if we put aside exceptional negative problems;[74] official relations were the subject of Islamic Law and state regulations. We can go deeper and contrast relations in both levels where religion plays a crucial role. The two levels are not mutually exclusive, but strongly interrelated in many aspects.[75]

Neighborly relations, based on universal values and trust, occurred in Anatolia in a peaceful way. Taking into consideration the rich demographic situation of Anatolia – Muslims, Orthodox, Armenians, Syrians and Jews – we can observe that people were creating peaceful collaborations in every level of daily relations such as education,

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[74] For instance Yonca Anzerlioğlu, "The Revolts of Nestorian Christians Against the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey," *Muslim World* 100 (2010), 45-59.

[75] Osman Cilacı, "Müslüman-Hristiyan Diyaloğu ve Ülkemizde İslamın Hoşgörüsü." *Diyanet İlmi Dergi* 33:3 (1997), 75–86.

business, marriage, religious celebrations and scholarly writing. Especially in the writings of travelers and historians and Sharia court records we can find convincing instances of mostly positive relations under both Anatolian Seljuk and Ottoman rule. Behind these relations were many cultural, sociopolitical and religious factors – Sufism, Islamic law, and so on – but one may easily state that the most important is religion. There are many references to co-existence in the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet and the early Muslim communities as well.

Furthermore, Islamic Turkish tradition of hospitality and the sacredness of the guest influenced development of positive relations. For instance, *komşu hakkı tanrı hakkıdır* (the right of the neighbor is the right of the God) and *ev alma komşu al* (instead of getting house, get the neighbor) are good proverbs that explain the importance of neighborhood in Turkish culture.[76] In terms of an Islamic basis one may find many references in the Qur'an especially regarding the issue: "There is no compulsion in religion,"[77] "you will most certainly find that the nearest of them in affection to the believers (the Muslims) are those who say: "We are Christians,"[78] "do not argue with those who were given the Book save in the best way."[79] The *hadith* and *sirah* also give striking instances regarding neighborly relations.[80] Non-Muslims' status in the early

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[76] Nesrin Feyzioğlu, "Mûrâd-Nâme'de Yer Alan Türk Atasözleri," *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 12:2 (2008), 357, 360.

[77] Qur'an 2:256.

[78] Qur'an 5:85.

[79] Qur'an 29:46.

[80] In the third chapter when examining three professors' perceptions of dialogue the instances will be discussed also.

Islamic era was also strong ground where Anatolian Muslims experienced positive relations. After taking into consideration these positive examples and heritage, one can understand the Turkish Muslim experience of positive, multireligious relations.[81]

We can see this coexistence at the administrative level also. While Anatolian Seljuk and Ottomans kept their distinctive administration systems, non-Muslims were able to live according to their religious laws and practices. Mehmet Şeker reports that Anatolian people considered the conquest of Anatolia by Turks as punishment of the Byzantines for oppressive treatment of their citizens and ongoing clashes between Christian groups.[82] Byzantine's policy to unite denominations such as Armenians and Syrians under an Orthodox understanding made these groups enemies of Byzantium. These Christian churches had more freedom after Turkish conquest.[83] In sum, after the Turkish conquest of the lands of Anatolia, Turks were settled to different parts, which took around two hundred years. These Turks integrated into cities and villages of Christians and started to live together with them.[84] For instance, in city of Bursa, alongside Muslim villages such as Karaman and Hamitler, there were also Christian villages such as Apolyont, Zeytinbağı and Kurşunlu. Some villages, such as Yenice-i Müslim, Yenice-i Kair, Sölöz-i Müslim and Sölöz-i Kafir, had the same name even with

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[81] Komisyon, *Komşuluk: İnsani Sorumluluk*, Ankara: DİB, 2011.

[82] Mehmet Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi* (Ankara: DİB yayınları, 2001), 11.

[83] Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*, 11; Osman Çetin, "Anadolu'da Birlikte Yaşama Tecrübesi: Selçuklu-Osmanlı Örneği," in *Kutlu Doğum 2008: İslam Medeniyetinde Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi,* (Ankara: DİB, 2009), 161

[84] Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*, 13.

different religious traditions.[85] Çetin reports that according to a 1898-99 map there were 47,478 Muslim, 6,374 Armenian, 4,917 Orthodox, 2,794 Jewish, 161 Protestant, and 1,305 people from other faith groups in the city of Bursa, showing rich ethnic and religious structure of an Ottoman city. For him, other Ottoman cities also were keeping similar demography.[86]

Seljuk Era

In the book "*Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*" by Mehmet Şeker, we can find striking examples regarding coexistence under Seljuk rule. He reports that under Kaykhusraw I in the year 1196, a crowded Christian community was brought to the Akşehir region and separated into groups of five thousand. After recording the names of the settlers, he provided villages, homes, farming tools, orchard and field crops and exempted them from taxes for five years. They could return to their homes if they wanted to after the five years. When observing people's welfare under Seljuk rule, many Christians moved to the Seljuk state.[87] When considering this instance, one can argue that Seljuk rule aimed to increase its people's efficiency and loyalty to the state by providing an unoffending environment. This resulted in an atmosphere of peace and trust and mutual, healthy and warm relationships among the people. The policies of Seljuks and Ottomans in this way also provided welfare for the citizens. Instead of oppressing citizens to get benefit from them, the rules chose to be tolerant and present an efficient administration to get benefit from them. Therefore, the economic cost of the

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[85] Çetin, "Anadolu'da Birlikte Yaşama Tecrübesi: Selçuklu-Osmanlı Örneği," 156.

[86] Çetin, "Anadolu'da Birlikte Yaşama Tecrübesi: Selçuklu-Osmanlı Örneği," 158.

[87] Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*, 15; Also see Çetin, "Anadolu'da Birlikte Yaşama Tecrübesi: Selçuklu-Osmanlı Örneği,"162.

tolerance of the administration must be considered.

During the war between Seljuks and Mongols, Syrian and Armenian groups helped Seljuk rulers.[88] At the funeral of Suleiman bin Qutalmish and Kilij Arslan I, Christians as well as Muslims grieved. The positive treatment by Turkish rulers caused some rumors among the Muslim community that they were baptized or had secretly become Christians.[89]

İsmail Çiftçioğlu in his article regarding the marriage of Seljuk sultans with Christian women states that the marriages also helped their tolerant policy toward Christians. The marriages were mostly for political reasons, such as enthronement of Sultans or warding off threats from the Byzantines and Crusaders, but this fact does not force one to consider it the only factor.[90] And, regardless of the motives, it is remarkable that they were willing to intermarry with Christians. Even though it is not common to Muslim tradition, in addition to interreligious marriage between Muslim men and Christian women, in some instances Muslim women married Christian men.[91] Moreover, he states that Christian wife and daughter of the Bey of Alanya province were able to practice their religion freely in the palace. Şeker considers these instances significant examples of the culture of living together under Turkish Seljuk rule.[92]

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[88] Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*, 17.

[89] Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*, 18.

[90] İsmail Çiftçioğlu, "Anadolu Selçuklu Sultanlarının Gayrimüslim Kadınlarla Evlilikleri," *Zeitschrift für die Welt der Türken Journal of World of Turks*, 5:1 (2013), 7-25. Çiftçioğlu lists the marriages and discusses them separately

[91] Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*, 18.

[92] Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*, 19.

Christians celebrated near Muslims after victory in war and stood beside Muslims when a Sultan or Muslim scholar or sheikh died.[93] The tradition of respecting and visiting tombs of saints in Christianity and Islam let members of the two religions understand each other when they observed that they had similar feelings regarding sacred places.[94] Moreover, in the khans and caravansaries, people from every religion and status could be accommodated and find shelter. Along with food and travel help, there were temples side by side.[95]

Christian-Muslim relations in the writings of Sufi poets and masters also draw our attention. For instance, the concept of *tersa*, used for Christians, gains the meaning *dost* (best friend) in the words of Yunus Emre, an influential Turkish Sufi and poet who lived in the Seljuk time.[96] A similar significant personality of religious tolerance is Rumi. His followers consisted of people from different religions, denominations and *tariqats*. He had friendly relations with them and visited their churches, monasteries and synagogues. Şeker reports a striking incident about Rumi. When a Jewish rabbi asked him whether his religion or Rumi's religion was better, Rumi replied that the rabbi's religion was better. After hearing this, the rabbi became Muslim. At his funeral, Jews, Christians, Turks and Arabs were present.[97] The Sufi influence on non-Muslims in a positive way is also seen

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[93] Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*, 20.

[94] Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*, 20.

[95] Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*, 22.

[96] Mehmen Şeker "Milletimizin Anadolu'da Birarada Yaşama Tecrübesi," in *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı* (Ankara: DİB, 2006), 116-18.

[97] Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*, 26-27.

in the arts of non-Muslims.[98] Considering these instances one may conclude that positive relations occurred powerfully in Sufi circles.

Anatolian Seljuk rule over non-Muslims was basically on the traditional *dhimmi* system. Accordingly, Christians, also considered People of the Book, were free to stay in their religion, after giving the *jizya* and *kharāj taxes,* but exempted from the *zakat* Muslims paid. They were partly autonomous in having their own religious judges, and were exempted from military services and participating in wars. They nevertheless had some restrictions such as not building a house higher than Muslims, humiliating or dressing fancier than Muslims ringing church bells. One should also note that the *dhimma* rules were practiced at diverse levels in different times and places.[99] Considering the situation of non-Muslims in the Seljuk and Ottoman times, one may easily conceive that their situation was far better than that of Muslims in Christian states at the same periods.

Ottoman Era

Christians under Ottoman rule were not in a significantly different position because the Ottoman Empire was not a totally new and isolated Muslim state but the continuation of the Anatolia Seljuk State, which was a Turkish Muslim state. Although in major points Ottomans followed the general political and traditional treatment of non-Muslims by the Seljuk, they created and developed new systems in the empire. The Christians' situation in the Ottoman state was settled in a more systematic way than Seljukian rule, by developing the millet system, which began under Sultan Mehmed after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. According to this system every religious

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[98] Şeker, *Türkiye Selçukluları ve Osmanlıda Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi*, 30.

[99] Ronald L. Nettler, "Dhimmī," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*.

community was considered a "millet," meaning a community, nationality, or religion. It refers to the distinct legal courts relating to private law under which religious communities were permitted to regulate themselves. So, each millet was headed by its leaders and could have its own religious judges, schools, and organizations.[100] The Ottoman Millet system is generally considered the last and most developed version of religious-cultural pluralism in the Islamic context.[101]

Moreover, the Ottoman government did not interfere with these courts in cases not involving Muslims, and the head of the millet represented and was responsible for his community to the Sultan. Every millet had the right to regulate its own laws within the loyalty to the state. In the Ottoman Empire, Jews, Armenian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox and Syrian Orthodox churches were the greatest millets after the Muslim millets. After the Tanzimat (1939-1976), the term millet has been used to refer to the nation in order to define certain rights of the religious minorities in the state. Since the Ottoman Empire was a Muslim Empire, Muslims (which consist of many different nations such as Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Balkans, ...), were the most privileged millet in the system. Some theological fractions of Islamic sects such as Alevi, Bektashi, and Shia were also considered in the Muslim millet.[102]

Without considering their nations, the majority of Orthodox Christians were called the "Millet-i Rum." The word, which comes from Roman Empire, was also

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[100] Ali Bardakoğlu, *Religion and Society: New Perspectives from Turkey* (Ankara: DİB, 2006), 48-49.

[101] Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, *A Culture of Peaceful Coexistence* (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2004), 17.

[102] Neşet Toku, "Kültürel Çoğulculuğun İlk Örneği: Osmanlı Millet Sistemi," in *Din ve Dünya Barışı*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniv yayınları, 2008), 344.

understood as the lands of the Rum (sometimes described as Anatolia as for Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi). Orthodox Christians were represented by the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul. Other Christian groups such as Armenians and Syrian Orthodox millets also were among the biggest and separated millets. The following case summarizes how the Christian community was integrated with Muslims. During the construction of the famous sixteenth-century Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul, there were 3,523 workers, 1,810 (51%) non-Muslims and 1713 (49%) Muslims.[103]

Jews, headed by Hahambaşı, had great freedom in their legislation and autonomy. Ottomans' accepting Jews and locating them in Ottoman lands, especially Izmir and Thessaloniki (in Turkish Selanik), cannot be erased from Turkish minds as an example of Ottoman religious tolerance. These cities were considered two of the most flourishing Jewish, settled cities in the premodern era, at a time when Jews in other parts of the world were struggling to attain their religious and traditional basic rights.

Since the Ottoman Empire was a land of many national and religious communities, Western nationalism deeply affected the Ottoman's millet system. Tanzimat Fermanı (1839) and Islahat Fermanı (1856) were two significant decrees by Ottoman Sultans for reformation in the nineteenth century, with pressure from the West and modernity. By these decrees, the millet system lost its function and assuring equality of all nations and religions was accepted and guaranteed by the sultan. However, the change was provoked mostly by external powers to create problems in the Ottoman state.

In short, we can say that the millet system of the Ottoman Empire showed hospitality toward non-Muslim minorities. However, it did not mean fully free, as

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[103] Çetin, "Anadolu'da Birlikte Yaşama Tecrübesi: Selçuklu-Osmanlı Örneği," 165.

understood in citizenship in the twenty-first century. People were classified by their religious affiliation and treated accordingly. In the modern mindset it means inferiority of non-Muslims. However, if we look at the premodern period we see how free non-Muslims were compared to their co-religionists in other parts of the world. For instance, in Spain Jews were forced to be baptized or leave the country; even if they accepted baptism, they were not considered fully Christians until four or five generations had passed.

Republic of Turkey

The Republic of Turkey was founded after World War I, when the six-century old powerful Ottoman Empire collapsed. The new administration certainly certainly believed that if Turkey become laic like Europe, the state would reach the level of Europe. Therefore, Turkey adopted secularism as a state system that considers every citizen equal without distinction of race, religion, sect, or gender. Before the state every individual has equal opportunities and freedom. Freedom of conscience and religion was confirmed in the Constitution of Turkey. which has been changed in 1924, 1937, 1961 and 1982. Turkey also acknowledged the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1954.[104]

However, very strict laicism/secularism, as a reaction to the Ottoman religious administration system, also brought certain restrictions on religious life. For instance, teaching the Qur'an in public or private schools was prohibited and the traditional adhan (Muslims' call for prayer) in Arabic was banned (forced to be recited in Turkish). Many books that advocate Islam, such as *Risale-i Nur*s by Said Nursi, were banned until 1950 when one-party era ended after Adnan Menderes' Democrat Party won the first mult-

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[104] Bardakoğlu, *Religion and Society*, 50, 78-79.

party general elections. The Democrat Party had brought partial freedom to citizens, but the government was overthrown by a military coup in 1961 and the prime minister was sentenced to death.

Administrative oppression on the devoted Muslim community, which continued for decades, was partly relieved after Turgut Özal, another significant political figure, became prime minister in 1983. His positive and tolerant administration toward religious people made it possible for religious groups to practice their views and engage in collaborations with other groups and communities.

Özal died in 1993, but his reforms pave the ways for more democratic Turkey. We observe this positive development after the 1990s, where a growing number of events and writings of Turkish scholars about interreligious dialogue appear. Özal's administration can be considered a turning point for interreligious dialogue also, at both the official and NGO level. It is clear that parallel to political developments and expansion of freedom for religious people and groups, there have been positive developments among the governmental (at PRA, elementary and higher education) and nongovernmental institutions and groups.[105] After this short historical survey, I can explore the terms related to interreligious dialogue in modern Turkey.

Since the scope of the chapter is so broad, I will examine dialogue in contemporary Turkey in five subchapters. After articulating the concepts generally used in the setting of interreligious dialogue in Turkish context, I will explore interreligious

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[105] Emre Ünlücayaklı o reaches a similar conclusion in his doctoral dissertation. See Emre Ünlücayaklı, "The Official Discourse on Religion in post-1980 Turkey: The Official Boundaries of the Religious Field," National Belonging and Heritage, (McGill University, 2012), 218.

dialogue in the documents and history of the PRA, the official religious institution of Turkey. After presenting PRA's reaction to the Christian call for dialogue, I examine dialogue within the declarations and events of other organizations. Since it is impossible to mention all the elementsof dialogue, I will explore dialogue basically on two levels: events organized by universities that are on a more official level; and NGOs. I will give only three instances in both levels. Dialogue in public school textbooks will also be touched on.

In the last subchapter, I examine in depth dialogue in the writings of individual scholars. These scholars represent a very broad understanding and perception of Christianity, from religious and community leaders, political figures, academicians, and secularist/Kemalists. Since the main feature of the dissertation is to handle the issue in as much detail as possible, instead of mentioning general characteristics of the scholars' perceptions of dialogue, I mention their views individually, ableit briefly. In this way, the reader may have a sense of how different and diverse discussions are among different fields of study and how distinctly scholars look at dialogue according to their perspectives. Dialogue in Turkish media and the internet should also be examined. I will briefly mention it because many writers I discuss are also public figures who write in journals and on the internet.

On the terms related to dialogue in Turkish

Diyalog

Diyalog enters into Turkish from French word "dialogue," which means bilateral

talking.[106] It also means conversation of two or more people in, say, a play, novel, or story, a work based on talk, agreement, accommodate or strive in this way.[107] *The Ottoman-Turkish Lugat* defines dialogue as "a conversation of people on specific subjects."[108] Although the term is generally used according to its dictionary meaning, in many occasions it is mixed with terms such as relations (in all levels), discussion, debate, challenge, Islamic proclamation-*tablig*, conversation, monologue and dialectics.

Hoşgörü, Müsamaha, Tolerans

Hoşgörü is a Turkish origin word usually used with dialogue besides diyalog. According to the *Büyük Türkçe Sözlük* (Extended Türkish Dictionary) of the Türk Dil Kurumu (Türkish Language Institution), *hoşgörü* means "situation of perceiving everything good as much as possible." The second meaning is "the attitude of perceiving as good others' expression of their thoughts and convictions and living accordingly." *Hoşgörü* is considered as synonymous to tolerance (Latin) and müsamaha (Arabic) in the *Büyük Türkçe Sözlük*,[109] PRA's *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Diyanet Encyclopedia of

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[106] Anreas Tietze, *Tarihi ve Etimolojik Türkiye Türkçesi Lugatı*, (İstanbul: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschten, 2002), 632.

[107] Türk Dil Kurumu, *Türkçe Sözlük* (Ankara: TDK, 2010), 683. The definition can be found online at http://www.tdk.gov.tr accessed on 14.05.2014; See also *Türkçe Sözlük* (Ankara: Dil Derneği, 2005), 507; Kemal Demiray, *Büyük Türkçe Sözlük* (Ankara: Star Gazetesi, 1988), 242.

[108]*Osmanlı Türkçe Lugat* (İstanbul: Yeni Asya, 2001), 247.

[109] *Türk Dil Kurumu, Türkçe Sözlük,* 1112. Also the definition can be found at http://www.tdk.gov.tr accessed on 14.05.2014. See also Türkçe Sözlük (Ankara: Dil Derneği, 2005), 876; Demiray, *Büyük Türkçe Sözlük,* 409.

Islam)[110] and *Osmanlı-Türkçe Ansiklopedik Sözlük* (Ottoman-Turkish Encyclopedic Dictionary).[111]

The article on *müsamaha* in the *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedik* states that its origin means "treating gently, ignoring mistakes." Müsamaha means "acknowledging the responsibilities of people with ease, freely accepting their mistakes and faults which are not harmful for the structure of society, their expression of thoughts, their faiths and their practices." The root of *müsamaha*, which means 'generous' and 'chivalry,' keeps these positive connotations. It is underlined that the word *tolerans* (tolerance) is used synomymously with *müsamaha*, yet *tolerans* indicates more negative inclinations and does not keep the sincerity and good wishes in *hoşgörü* and *müsamaha*. Tolerans usually implies perseverance, compromise, endurance, and so on. So, the article stresses that while *hoşgörü* and *müsamaha* have positive connotations, but tolerance negative ones.[112]

Ta'aruf, Aman and Tawalli

The Qur'anic term *ta'aruf*,[113] which basically means "learn," is also suggested by some scholars instead of the term dialogue.[114] For instance, Mahmut Aydın argues that

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[110] *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 32, p. 71.

[111] Ferit Devellioğlu, ed., *Osmanlı-Türkçe Ansiklopedik Sözlük*, 11th edition (Ankara: Ayda, 1993), 738.

[112] *Diyanet Islam Ansiklopedisi*, v. 32, p. 71.

[113] Qur'an 49:13: "O humankind! Surely We have created you from a single (pair of) male and female, and made you into tribes and families so that you may know one another (and so build mutuality and cooperative relationships, not so that you may take pride in your differences of race or social rank, or breed enmities). Surely the noblest, most honorable of you in God's sight is the one best in piety, righteousness, and reverence for God. Surely God is All-Knowing, All-Aware."

[114] Mahmut Aydın, *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar* (Ankara: Pınar Yayınları, 2008),

the word fulfills individual theologians' understanding of dialogue, learning from others and accepting them as they are.[115] Bülent Şenay also proposes two Islamic terms *aman* (security, trust, surrender) and *tawalli* (making someone a friend). After stating that Islamic civilization, unlike Christian civilization, truly let a pluralistic society exist, he points out the two Islamic terms influential for setting this system.[116] However, since the two terms presuppose superiority of Muslim cilivization and indicate the weakness of others, it does not reach the goal desired in interreligious dialogue: mutual learning.

Tablig and Irshad

Tablig and *Irshad* are the two significant Islamic terms usually used in Turkey instead of *dawa*, for referring to Islamic proclamations. *Tablig* literally means "to announce, to inform, to notify" and *irshad* "to show the right path and to notice."[117] Both are commonly used with dialogue to create relationship between the Islamic duty of calling people to the way of God and dialogue.

"Dinlerarası Diyalog" or "Din Mensupları arası Diyalog"?

In the context of the Roman Catholic Church the term "interreligious dialogue" has been used for a dialogical relationship between members of different religious traditions. The World Council of Churches prefers the term "interfaith dialogue."

The term "interreligious dialogue" or "interfaith dialogue" is usually translated

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292; Ali Can, *Diyaloğun Kur'ani Temelleri* (İstanbul: Işık, 2012), 269.

[115] Aydın, *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar*, 292.

[116] Bülent Şenay, "Quo Vadis Dialog: 'Redemptoris Missio' Değil 'Eman' ve 'Tevellâ'," *III. Din Şûrası: Tebliğ ve Müzakereleri* (Ankara: DİB, 2005), 796-811. Aman is used for non-Muslims who want to enter a Muslim country or surrender to a Muslim army. And tawalli means making someone as friend.

[117] www.tdk.gov.tr

into Turkish as *dinlerarası diyalog*, "inter-religions dialogue." This improper translation indicates a dialogue among religious dogmas and theologies, instead of people. The proper usage of the term, which is also a correct translation, is *din mensupları arası diyalog*, "dialogue among followers of religions." However, since this term is much longer, although many scholars acknowledge the mistranslation, they nevertheless prefer it with its general usage.[118] In order to solve this problem we see some attempts by Turkish scholars. For instance, Mustafa Köylü suggests the term *dinlerarası işbirliği* (inter-religions collaborations).[119] However, since "collaboration" does not include all the meanings of "dialogue" and is not widely-used by Christian counterparts, it is also not favored. The other suggestion is *insani diyalog* ("humane dialogue") from Mehmet Bayrakdar.[120] According to him, dialogue, whether on religions or culture or politics, is made between people. So, humane dialogue is "living together and mutual understanding and natural communication with others, as a result of being social."[121] However, the term does not cover the meaning of "religion" and mostly connotes humanism, so, it is not a generally accepted term. Another basic reason is that Bayrakdar does not suggest this term for contributing to ongoing dialogue movement, but rejects the movement and

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[118] Davut Aydüz, Mahmut Aydın and Abdurrahman Küçük among them.

[119] Mustafa Köylü, *Dinler Arası Diyalog,* 2nd edition (Istanbul: İnsan, 2007). The public textbooks I explore below also use this concept referring to interreligious dialogue.

[120] Mehmet Bayrakdar, "Dinlerarası Diyaloğa Karşı İnsani Diyalog," *İslami Araştırmalar* 20:3 (2007): 309-15.

[121] Bayrakdar, "Dinlerarası Diyaloğa Karşı İnsani Diyalog," 311. According to him, there are three principles of humane dialogue: respect, justice and personal identity.

suggests this term for creating an alternative mindset.[122]

At this point, we observe that these suggestions are not influential in academia and public, and therefore misunderstandings rooted in the translation continue. I would like to advocate two significant terms, already used in rare instances by some intellectuals, for the usage of interreligious and also intrareligious dialogue. I propose the Turkish word *dindar*, a religious, pious and devout person. Since the participants in dialogue should have a religious conviction and be able to represent their religion, term *dindar* seems to be one of the possible terms for "religious." So, if I translate interreligious dialogue as *dindarlararası diyalog,* I mean dialogue among people who are religious.[123] Even though the translation takes criticism that it excludes non-religious adherents of religions, at least in the context of Turkey this translation will be more helpful in terms of impacting more positive image of dialogue.

There is no consensus among Turkish scholars for intrareligious dialogue either. The term *mezheplerarası diyalog* ("interdenominations dialogue")[124] is the most common usage. However, similar to *dinlerarası diyalog,* itindicates dialogue among dogmas/theologies of denominations rather than members of denominations, so it creates

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[122] His views about dialogue are explored in detail below.

[123] Mahmut Aydın considers this translation incosistent because it only denotes religious people, yet all followers of religions are not always religious. See, "Diyalog Dinlerin Mensupları Arasında Olur," *Türk Yurdu Dergisi* 209 (2005), 45. Nevzat Kösoğlu also rejects this translation pointing out the similar reasons. See Kösoğlu, Dinler Arası Diyalog Üzerine, *Türk Yurdu Dergisi* 209 (2005), 51.

[124] Lütfi Doğan, "Farklı Dinler Ve Çeşitli Yorumlar ve Mezhepler Arası Diyalog,"*II. Din Şurası Tebliğ ve Müzakereleri, 23-27 Kasım 1998,* v.2 (Ankara: DIB 2003), 229-33.

ambiguity. An alternative preferred by some scholars is *din-içi diyalog*[125] (in-religion dialogue) or *iç-diyalog*.[126] This term indicates dialogue within a religion, and therefore is pointless. It also does not represent appropriately what intrareligious dialogue means. Instead of these inappropriate terms, I advocate a Turkish term *dindaş,* "people who belong to the same religion."[127] So, if I translate intrareligious dialogue as *dindaşlararası diyalog,* I mean dialogue among followers of the same religion. Furthermore, because the term refers to people instead of theologies or denominations it aptly can be used for intr-religious dialogue.

In short, *dindarlararası diyalog* and "*dindaşlararası diyalog* fulfill adequate translations of "interreligious" and "intrareligious" dialogue and are also easy to use.

Islam-Christian or Muslim-Christian Dialogue?

Another ongoing discussion regarding the nature of the term dialogue is whether dialogue occurs among people or religious dogmas. In this context, rejectionists usually criticize use of Islam-Christian dialogue, which indicates dialogue between theologies. Dialogue is then understood as an attempt to create a new religion out of two religions. Also, it is criticized that, to have dialogue between religions, believers must make radical interpretations that would harm the core religious values and dogmas. Therefore, many cautious scholars prefer "Muslim-Christian dialogue" to present a clearer picture regarding the nature of dialogue, which means learning and understanding that occur

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[125] Mahmut Aydın uses this term in his analysis of PRA's engagement dialogue with Turkish Alevis. See *Star Gazetesi*, 06.12.2011, 4.

[126] Yıldırım, "İç Diyalog Tartışmaları Durulurken," *Yeni Ümit* 40 (1998), accessed October 28, 2013. http://www.yeniumit.com.tr/konular/detay/ic-diyalog-tartismalari-durulurken.

[127] www.tdk.gov.tr accessed on 14.02. 2014.

between members of religions regarding each other.[128]

Abrahamic Religions?

The concept of "Abrahamic Religions"[129] (Turkish: İbrahimi Dinler) was developed by Louis Massignon to remind Muslims, Christians and Jews about their common holy personality Abraham and his core message, sincere faith in God. However, the term is also subject to many criticisms by Turkish scholars: it is not an Islamic term, it does not represent any religious classification in Islam, Abraham's religion was Islam, Abraham instead of the prophet Muhammad was the focus, Islam is the desired religion to bring unity to the other religions, which are deformed and no longer true religions of God – that is, Islam and Christianity and Judaism do not represent the religion of Abraham.[130] So, the term is usually rejected because it is taken from its dialogical context and adopted into an Islamic context.

It is striking that the critics do not make the same argument for other classifications by scholars, such as *ilahi dinler* (divine religions) and *semavi dinler* (celestial religions).[131] Both terms refer to Islam, Christianity and Judaism as having

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[128] Suat Yıldırım, Müslümanlarla Hristiyanlar Arası Diyalog Demek Daha Doğru, Türk Yurdu 25:209 (2005), 57.

[129] We can see the term in PRA documents. For instance see the final declaration of The Fourth Eurasian Islamic Shura, handled on 25-28 July 2000.

[130] See *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı,* 68-69; Özcan Hıdır, "İbrahimî Dinler ve Diyalog," *Altınoluk* 171 (2000), http://dergi.altinoluk.com/index.php?sayfa=yillar&MakaleNo=d171s052m1; Mehmet Bayrakdar, "Kur'an ve Sünnetin Dinlerarası Diyaloğa Alet Edilmesi," *İslami Araştırmalar* 20:3 (2007): 305-6

[131] M. Saim Yeprem's article can be considered an example for the use of the term *ilahi dinler* in an affirmative way. Yeprem states that since every community is sent a messenger, the original message of

divine roots, although Christianity and Judaism are believed by Muslims to be deformed during history. These concepts indicate that in essence, all three religions were of heavenly origin and keep the same spirit.

One should consider that users of the term Abrahamic religions have a similar intention: all three religions keep the same spirit in their distinctive understanding of Abraham, his submission to God with his whole heart and spirit. Abraham as the common personality for the three religious traditions plays a similar role as *ilahi dinler* (divine religions). Yet, one should not confuse this classification in the understanding of a role model for Muslim in a distinctive Islamic context. And also it must be remembered that neither Christians nor Jews want to abandon their distinctive understanding when they use the term.

Dialogue in the History and Documents of the Presidency of Religious Affairs

Responses to the Christian institutional call for dialogue were generally from individual academicians, imams or local associations, none representing the majority of Muslim umma. In Turkey, however, the Presidency of Religious, founded in 1924 after the abolishment of the caliphate, is a state institution that plays an important role in

divine religions (he does not specify which religions are divine religion)s, besides Islam keep core elements from the true religion of God. Every divine religion keeps four basic qualities: divine revelation, reasonable followers, free will, and happiness of people. Moreover, religions keep commonalities in five major points for achieving peace and tranquility in this world and hereafter; to protect: human self, possession, reason, generation and religion. He also stresses that it is not acceptable to state there is clash among members of religions by looking on some negative personal interpretations of religion. For him the common goal of all divine religions is providing world peace. See M. Saim Yeprem, "İlahi Dinlerin Katkısı," in *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı*, 22-29.

uniting Turkish Muslims. At least in religious fatwa it is accepted as authority by the majority of Sunni Muslims in Turkey. Thus PRA can be an effective, institutional place for serious dialogue activities.[132]

The PRA is the highest religious official institution in Turkey, and can be considered a response to the Vatican or World Council of Churches. However, PRA did not achieve and equip itself with sufficient institutional form to relate on an equal level of partnership with Vatican officials in the process of dialogue. Therefore, in the next years, PRA also should be eager to organize dialogue activities such as joint staff meetings, seminars, publications and jointly sponsored projects.[133]

While PRA has been attending dialogue meetings between the Roman Catholic Church and other Muslim organizations, such as the one in Libya in 1976, one may state that there is consensus among Turkish scholars that dialogue became a significant issue for PRA in the 1990s. Since there have not been materials and studies on the issue, at first it was approached cautiously by PRA.[134] For instance, the Vatican's celebration message

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[132] For more information see Bardakoğlu, *Religion and Society: New Perspectives from Turkey* (Ankara: DİB, 2006), 24-29.

[133] Ali Murat Yel, "Dialogue of the Two Institutions: The Vatican and the PRA" *Muslim World* 98 (2008): 341. Hakan Olgun's article "Diyanet'in Dinlerarası Diyalog Algısı," *Milel ve Nihal* 6:2 (2009): 265-86 also gives information about development and perception of interreligious dialogue in the context of the PRA.

[134] Ramazan Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog: Din Görevlileri Üzerine Sosyolojik Bir Araştırma*, 2nd edition (Ankara: Berikan, 2012), 55, regarding the attitude of PRA officers toward interreligious dialogue, gives detailed information about development of dialogue within PRA. The official website (http://www.avrasya-is.org/ and

http://www2.diyanet.gov.tr/dinisleriyuksekkurulu/Sayfalar/DinSuralari1.aspx) of the shura organization provides the documents of the religious shuras. I also reference Uçar's book since he makes long quotations

in 1968 for Ramadan was not responded to by PRA. This cautious attitude continued until the end of the 1980s.[135]

Interreligious dialogue meeting in Libya (1976)

In 1976, with the initiative of the Libyan government, Christian-Muslim dialogue organization was handled in Tripoli. This meeting can be considered the first official interreligious dialogue event that a delegation from Turkey attended, headed by the president of PRA.[136] Ali Arslan Aydın, author of *İslam-Hıristiyan Diyalogu ve İslamın Zaferi* (Islam-Christian Dialogue and the Victory of Islam) gives detailed information on the event. The book also can be considered one of the earliest books to discuss the issue of Muslim-Christian dialogue.

The title of the first part of the book indicates dialogue between the two religions, yet its second part presupposes Islam overcomes Christianity, which draws a reverse picture of dialogue. Aydın gives comprehensive material about the meeting, yet gives quotations mostly from Muslim scholars and their stress on Christian acceptance of the prophethood of Muhammad. He does not focus on Christians' statements, yet gives some that point out the necessity for Christians to accept Muhammad as a prophet. The book also supports collaboration against the common enemy materialism and communism.[137]

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of them. Moreover, Uçar gives the full text of the information notes of PRA regarding dialogue, not found on its website anymore.

[135] Yıldırım, "Dinler Ve Barış Sempozyumundan Geriye Kalan," *Yeni Ümit* 64 (2004), accessed October 28, 2013, http://www.yeniumit.com.tr/konular/detay/dinler-ve-baris-sempozyumundan-geriye-kalan.

[136] Olgun, Diyanet'in Dinlerarası Diyalog Algısı, 267-67.

[137] Ali Arslan Aydın, *İslam-Hıristiyan Diyalogu ve İslam'ın Zaferi* (Ankara: İslama Çağrı Cemiyeti Yayınları, 1984), 13. It is also possible to find similar views in his article "Hıristiyan Sömürgeciliği

Moreover, the beginning pages of the book contain Qur'an 3:64 and 3:19, the verses usually interpreted as dialogue verses. He states that Islam is the religion that laid the foundations of dialogue. Without references, Aydin claims that the Qur'an encourages Muslims to "engage dialogue with others with a better way."[138] Moreover, he states that collaboration with the People of the Book who express that they believe in one God, in the hereafter and in spirituality, became a necessity in order to fight against the common enemies of Materialism and Zionism.[139] He also touches on the general convictions among Turkish scholars[140] that the People of the Cross understood that they could not defeat Muslims with the Crusades and so developed different methods of colonialism, missionary efforts and culture imperialism.[141]

Aydın also states that the first issue discussed in the framework of the meeting was to stop the clash among followers of religions. The second was the danger of nuclear weapons, and the third was prevention of racism and keeping youths away from the ideology of atheism.[142] It is remarkable that the issues discussed were about social turmoil, which would be a convincing fact that the first aim of interreligious dialogue is creating a peaceful environment in the earth, unlike some allegations by rejectionists that

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Misyonerliği ve Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri," *Diyanet Dergisi* 15:5-6 (1976), 339-352.

[138] Aydın, *İslam-Hıristiyan Diyalogu ve İslam'ın Zaferi*, 9.

[139] Aydın, *İslam-Hıristiyan Diyalogu ve İslam'ın Zaferi*, 13.

[140] One of the well-known representatives of this thought is Abdurrahman Küçük. His views regarding this will be examined in detailed in the third chapter.

[141] Aydın, *İslam-Hıristiyan Diyalogu ve İslam'ın Zaferi*, 12.

[142] Aydın, *İslam-Hıristiyan Diyalogu ve İslam'ın Zaferi*, 19.

it is ideology oriented and serious issues are not discussed in meetings.[143]

Aydın lists the names of the Turkish delegation: Lütfi Doğan (head of PRA), Ali Arslan Aydın, Mehmet Hatipoğlu, Salih Tuğ, Yusuf Ziya Kavakçı, Osman Saraç, Mustafa Runyun, Hudayi Bayık, Abdulkadir Özkan, Derbentoğlu, Erol Ali Sallar, Pelit Okan, Nuri Day Takim, Akuniral Eral, and Tibas Ucuz.[144]

Dialogue in the Documents of PRA

Even though there were some developments similar to the Libya meeting, where the PRA attended as an observer before 1990s, the term dialogue enters official PRA documents for the first time in the First Religion Shura, 1-5 November 1993. In the eleventh article of the final declaration of the Shura it is stated that "officials who practice *irshad/tablig* and PRA should be more active; PRA also should engage with the outside environment and make contact and engage dialogue with different service groups, sects and religions".[145] Thus it is clear that dialogue was understood as part of *tablig/irshad* for the officers of the PRA. In order to reach out with the message of Islam, the PRA asked its religious officers to engage in more relations with members of other religions, denominations and groups, which paved the way both for interreligious and intrareligious dialogue in the Turkish Islamic context.

We can see stronger points on dialogue in the third article of the final declaration of the Second Eurasian Islamic Shura (Council), 21-24 October 1996: "we support dialogue environment based on principles of peace and *hoşgörü*/tolerance with members

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[143] One of the forerunner of this views is Mehmet Bayraktar. I explore his views below.

[144] Aydın, *İslam-Hıristiyan Diyalogu ve İslam'ın Zaferi*, 43.

[145] http://www2.diyanet.gov.tr/dinisleriyuksekkurulu/Sayfalar/DinSurasi.aspx accessed 17.04.2014.

of all religions and we affirm that every member of religions has the right and freedom to convey the message of their religions."[146]

When the issue became popular among Turkish Muslims, in order to answer questions regarding dialogue, the decree of the Higher Board of Religious Affairs dated 13.03.1997 number 20 stated that PRA approaches positively the idea of interreligious dialogue since it aims to let Islam be served for all people instead of isolation from the non-Muslim world.[147] Later on the Third Eurasian Islamic Shura (Council), 25-29 May 1998, also touched on the significance of dialogue. The twelfth article of the final declaration reiterates that PRA supports the dialogue environment based on the principles of peace and *hoşgörü*/tolerance.[148]

The issue of dialogue became the first topic of the Second Religion Council, 23-27 October 1998 and was discussed very broadly. Besides Muslim scholars,[149]

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[146] Because the final declarations are not provided in English, I translated the parts I used for the dissertation. *II.Avrasya İslam Şurası* (Ankara: DİB, 1998), 304-5. Also see, Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog*, 55 and Olgun, *Diyanet'in Dinlerarası Diyalog Algısı,* 272-274; http://www.avrasya-is.org/eski/dosyalar/toplanti_yayinlari/120_20071129045224_td.doc

[147] Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog*, 55.

[148] Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalo*, 56.

[149] Muslim scholars present were: Şerfettin Gölcük (Dinlerarası Diyalogla İlgili Başkanlık Görüşü), Mehmet Aydın (Diyalog Açısından İlahi Dinlerin Birbirlerine Yaklaşımı), Hüsnü E. Bodur (Dini Çoğulculuk Ve Sosyal Dayanışma), A.Z. Al-Abidin (Çoğulculuk Ve Bir Arada Yaşama), Rıza Zelyut (Çoğulculuk Ve Bir Arada Yaşama), Mehmet S. Aydın (İnsan Hakları: Niçin İslami Bir Yaklaşım), Süleyman Recebi (İslamda İnsan Hakları), Şaban Kuzgun (İslam-Hıristiyan Diyalogunun Geleceği), Mahmut Aydın (Müslüman-Hıristiyan Diyalogunun Geleceği), Süleyman Ateş (İlahi Dinlerin Ruh Birliği), İsmail Yakıt (Ateizme Karşı Dinlerin İşbirliği Zarureti Mümkün Müdür?), Necati Öner (Din Hürriyeti),

Christian[150] and Jewish[151] religious leaders also attended the meeting and gave speeches on dialogue. Şerafettin Gölcük explained the view of the PRA on interreligious dialogue in his opening speech to the session. The PRA, in order to share the teachings and beauties of Islam with all people and learn common beauties of all religions, is open for every sincere and good-intentioned dialogue.[152] Therefore we see that the PRA considers dialogue in terms of two basic elements: showing the beauties of Islam and learning

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Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu (İbrahim Dinine Güncel Yaklaşım), Niyazi Öktem (Dinlearası Hoşgörüsüzüğün Nedenleri Bağlamında Muhafazakarın Irkçı Tutum Ve Diğer Dinleri İyi Tanımak),Zeki Terzi (Sosyal Barışın Temini İçin Din Adamlarının Rolü), Süleyman Uludağ (Sosyal Barışı Sağlamada Dinin Ve Din Adamının Rolü), Abdurrahman Küçük (Dinlerarası Diyaloga Niçin İhtiyaç Vardır), Ali Osman Koçkuzu (Dinlerarası Diyaloga Açısından Garbiyyat Çalışmaları Veya Kitabi Dinlere Kendi Klasik Dilleriyle Vakıf Müslüman İlim Adamları Yetiştirme Meselesi), Abdulhakim Yüce (Dinlerarası Diyalogda Tasavvufun Rolü), Mehmet Şeker (Türkiye Selçuklularında Bir Arada Yaşama Tecrübesi), Lütfi Doğan (Farklı Dinler Ve Çeşitli Yorumlar Ve Mezhepler Arası Diyalog), Ömer Faruk Harman (Dinler ve Bir Arada Yaşama), Ahmet Kemal Abudlmegd (Dinler Ve Herkesle Birlikte Yaşamak), Nabil Bedr (Dinler Ve Bir Arada Yaşama), Sadık Eraslan (Müslümanlarla Hıristiyanlar Arasında Diyalog), Abdullah Ayan (Dinler Arası Diyaloğun Önemi), Faruk Ermemiş (Dinler Arası Diyalğun İlahi Dinlerdeki Dayanağı), Kazım Güleçyüz (Bediüzzaman Said Nursi'nin Görüşleri Işığında Müslüman-Hıhrisritan Diyaloğu "Ortak Kelime"De Buluşmak), M. Erdoğan Sürat (Semabi Dinlerde Dini Musiki Esasları), Murat O. Karrıyev (Dini Aydınlatma Ve Dini Eğitim), H. Amidhan (Dini Cemaatler Arasındaki Uyumun Geliştirilmesi: Endonezya Örneği), İbrahim Berk (Sömürgeciliğin Üçlü Sacayağı: Misyonerlik, Oryantalizm Ve Reformizm).

[150] Cardinal Francis Arinze (Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Hoşgörü), Christian W. Troll (Dinlerarası Diyalog Üzerine Katolik Öğretisi Son Resmi Dökümanların, Özellikle Hıristiyan-Müslüman İlişkileri İtibariyle Analizi), Bartelemous (Dinlerarası Diyalog Ve Hoşgörü), Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata (İnanç Ve Akıl).

[151] Rav İshak Haleva (Dünya Barışı Kültüründe Dinler Arası Diyalog Ve Hoşgörü Öğesi).

[152] *II. Din Şurası Tebliğ ve Müzakereleri,* 6.

commonalities among other religions.

Gölcük identified that the following points should be taken into consideration when engaging dialogue: participants should work on further projects that would contribute to world peace; every religion should be presented as it is and radical interpretations should be avoided; religions should be experienced as closely as possible and prejudices be removed; participants should meet with oppressed people and work for more rights for them; analysis should be made regarding negative experiences of history; participants should develop their relationships; hidden, sneaky and political agendas should be removed and a general secretary of interreligious dialogue established.[153]

The shura was subject to a very broad area of focus concerning dialogue. Subjects including theological, social, spiritual, political, international, historical, and denominational dimension were discussed by the experts. The 26th-38th articles of the final declaration were devoted to interreligious dialogue:[154]

Decision: 26. The members of different religions should work in order to develop and spread the beliefs and thoughts that can contribute to world peace.

Decision: 27: Interreligious dialogue activities should be removed from the position of marketing any religion. Participants should be careful of any secret, political and other aims to be taken in dialogues and should reflect this to educational studies.

Decision: 28. The members of different religions; a) should try to recognize other religions away from bigotry and prejudice and should make efforts in this direction b) should seek collaboration by organizing training programs for giving their officials accurate information about other religions.

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[153] *II. Din Şurası Tebliğ ve Müzakereleri*, 6.

[154] *II. Din Şurası Tebliğ ve Müzakereleri*, 780-81,

http://www2.diyanet.gov.tr/dinisleriyuksekkurulu/Sayfalar/2DinSurasi.aspx.

Decision: 29. The members of every religion should cooperate with each other in the fight against terrorism and drugs.

Decision: 30. Should stand by oppressed nations and communities without considering their religious and nationality identities, in terms of human rights, especially regarding freedom of religion and conscience and should act jointly in this regard.

Decision: 31. Clear and sound information must be given about adherents of other religions, especially in courses and textbooks in educational institutions, as well as in the communication tools.

Decision: 32. By taking advantage of a religious way of life and implementation of positive examples, historical experiences should be presented to people.

Decision: 33. PRA should take the necessary action in order to provide scholarship for training experts about living religions, Judaism and Christianity in particular, knowing their languages and sources.

Decision: 34.Tablig and proclamation services in the divine religions should be revised within the spirit of religious pluralism and coexistence.

Decision: 35. More work should be done for making dialogue between religions possible at grassroots levels, not letting it only happen at academic levels.

Decision: 36. a) In the future a meeting should be arranged about the past, the present and the future of the Abrahamic religions in Turkey.

b) By providing solid information about these religions, PRA should contribute to the "Faith Tourism" project of the Tourism Ministry of Turkey.

Decision: 37. The "General Secretary for Interfaith Dialogue" should be established within PRA in order to carry out interreligious dialogue more effectively.

a) "World Religions Research and Documentation Center" should be created in the secretariat.

b) And this center should provide and conduct research projects with similar institutions around the world and should publish the research.

Decision: 38. Staff of PRA, especially the mufti, preachers and imams

should be trained through in-service courses and seminars about other religions in and out of Turkey.

A strong statement also can be found about dialogue in the final declaration of the PRA in the International European Union Shura (Council), 3-7 May 2000 in Istanbul: "there is a great need in interreligious dialogue in the age that religions and cultures create intense and direct relations in terms of how people coexist and live within peace and contribute to world peace."[155] The Fourth Eurasian Islamic Shura was handled the same year on 25-28 July. In its final declaration the following significant statement declared: "It should not be understood that interreligious dialogue is combining or assimilating; rather every religion stays within its borders, keeps its distinctive features, does not attempt any compulsion, should talk on common issues of *hoşgörü*/torelance and understanding and should look for collaboration, especially starting from the point of Abrahamic religions of which Islam is also a part."[156]

In the final declaration of the Fifth Eurasian Islam Shura, 15-19 April 2002, intrareligious dialogue was stressed as much as interreligious dialogue. And in the sixth article of the final declaration of the Third Religion Shura, 20-24 September 2004, it is stated that "the PRA is open for dialogue and collaboration with members of other religions and faiths. However, it does not endorse imposition of any religions or denominations by taking advantage of their physical and psychological weaknesses."[157]

In short, one may conclude that while the PRA is open for dialogue, it keeps some

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[155] Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog*, 57.

[156] Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog*, 58.

[157] *III. Din Şurası Tebliğ ve Müzakereleri 20-24 Eylül 2004* (Ankara: DİB, 2005), 1010.

concerns regarding relations between missionary-interreligious dialogue.[158] The idea of interreligious dialogue is strongly related to tablig and irshad. The PRA considers dialogue as an appropriate means for developing coexistence, showing the message of Islam and understanding others correctly. Moreover, the PRA stresses good intention and rejects any hidden agenda in dialogue. Social dimensions of dialogue such as contributingto world peace, helping people in need and those who suffer, preventing wars, fights and injustice are among the most significant ones that the PRA desires to promote through dialogue. So, instead of theological dialogue, moral dialogue takes the major place in perception of dialogue in the documents of the PRA. Intrareligious understanding is also highlighted in the documents of PRA. The need and desire for the establishment of an official organization for handling issues of dialogue is another significant point stressed in the documents.

Interreligious Dialogue Branch Directory

Even though the Second Religion Shura suggested establishment of a general secretary for interreligious dialogue in PRA, in 1999 the Interreligious Dialogue Branch Directory was established in the Foreign Affairs Department Directory of the PRA. The Foreign Affairs Department Directory was responsible for following, observing and exploring non-Muslim religions and making assessments. Its other significant task was developing interreligious relationships with non-Muslim institutions.[159] By 2010 some institutional changes had occurred within the PRA. The Foreign Affairs Department

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[158] Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog: Din Görevlileri Üzerine Sosyolojik Bir Araştırma,* 59.

[159] Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kuruluş ve Görevleri Hakkında 633 numaralı 1965 senesinde Resmi Gazetede yayınlanmış kanun 7. Madde D/4-5. Also see Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Görev ve Çalışma Yönergesi Madde 50/j tarih: 10/12/2002 sayı: 80.

Directory was transformed into the Foreign Affairs General Directory and the branch directory into "Dinler ve Kültürler Arası Diyalog Daire Başkanlığı" (Inter-Religions and Inter-Cultures Relations Department Directory) within the Foreign Affairs General Directory.[160] Observe that the term "dialogue" was removed and the term "relations" used instead. The term "interreligious dialogue is" removed from the tasks of the directory.

Interreligious Dialogue Branch Directory (1999-2010) [161]	Interreligious and Intercultural Relations Department (2010 – in progress)[162]
1. to research the issues of interreligious dialogue, to observe meetings, workshops and studies and to compile and to evaluate their reports.	1. to create relationships between members, institutions and societies of other religions, and to monitor and assess the approaches within context.
2. to gather information regarding international activities and publications about Islam and other religions, to observe, to contribute to the significant ones and to evaluate them.	2. to organize national and international events which aims to promote a culture of peace and tolerance among members of different religions, to carry out task regarding to send representatives to events organized both national and international organizations.
3. organizing international and national associations by developing relationships and dialogue among members of different religions in order to develop and to spread peace and hoşgörü/tolerance.	3. to monitor developments about Islam and other religions, scientific studies and publications, to evaluate them, and to provide the necessary publications.
4. to provide information regarding the living world religions.	4. to monitor developments about proselytism, discrimination and racism

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[160] Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kuruluş ve Görevleri Hakkında 633 numaralı 1965 senesinde Resmi Gazetede yayınlanmış kanun 7. Madde D/4-5.

[161] Even though the official PRA website no longer provides this information, it can be found in Uçar, *Dinler Arası* Diyalog, 57. Also, Hakan Olgun reports the goals of the branch directory in "Diyanet'in Diyalog Algısı," 276-77.

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http://www2.diyanet.gov.tr/DisIliskilerGenelMudurlugu/Sayfalar/D%C4%B1nlerveKulturlerAras%C4%B1 Ilisk%C4%B1lerDa%C4%B1reBaskanl%C4%B1g%C4%B1.aspx.

	faced by Turkish citizens other Turks and to evaluate information, documents and complaints.
5. to observe destructive and separatist movements including the missionary and assimilation activities toward Turkish citizens abroad, to compile documents concerning these issues, to evaluate them and to take necessary steps.	5. to explore social and institutional structures communities of other faiths, religions, cultures in our country and make efforts to improve relations with them.
6. to observe activities of non-Muslims in Turkey, to evaluate them, to provide reports.	6. to work in issues concerning the responsibilities of the Presidency within the framework of relations with the European Union.
7. to carry out activities regarding the European Union.	7. to get periodic reports from overseas organizations of the PRA and evaluate them.
8. to carry out other tasks given by the presidency.	8. to carry out other tasks concerning its duties.

The Goals of PRA in the Framework of Interreligious Dialogue

According to an information-note by Ali Dere, head of the PRA Foreign Affairs Department Directory (DIM),[163] dated 21.04.2004 the goals of interreligious dialogue are as follows:[164]

"1. Our people will continue to talk, meet and collaborate with members of other religions on the specific subjects that will be helpful for the humanity and our sublime religion. For instance, in 2005 cooperation was planned and preparations are continuing with representations of minority religion in our country for fighting against common problems of the society such as drug usage.

2. It will continue to send representatives to the invitations regarding dialogue meetings that come with national and international scope. The number of invitations is consistently increasing.

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[163] Dere was in office in 2003-2008.

[164] Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog,* 65-66.

3. The training of officers in all departments will continue in order to develop and spread the culture of coexistence with tranquility, peace and dialogue with others that is also inherited from our past. For instance, in the courses for all department/levels officers who go abroad, interreligious dialogue is also taught or conferences are given.

4. The Interreligious Dialogue Branch Directory is supported in terms of staff, tools and information.

5. A study is made by the staff of the branch directory regarding interreligious dialogue. Studies are continuing about the living world religions.

6. A weekly bulletin about religious developments in the world will be provided that also will be sent to officers or subscribers.

7. In Köln, Germany, where our citizens densely live abroad, the Interreligious Dialogue Directory was established.

8. The ultimate goal is to take PRA to the level of "decisive and initiative" in the global scale in terms of international dialogical relations, to contribute to the concept of dialogue with Turkish-Islamic dimension and experience and to make it a more universal concept."

After presenting the goal of dialogue according to PRA, it would be helpful to see some significant events and meetings of PRA.

Interreligious Dialogue Activities of PRA
Pope John Paul II & Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz meeting

A PRA delegation headed by President Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz, , made a visit to the Vatican on 14-18 June 2000 in the framework of "Interreligious Dialogue" and "Mutual Support." In the visit, Yılmaz met Pope John Paul II and visited Cardinal Francis Arinze,

Jean Louis Tauran, Cardinal Achille Silvestrini and other officials. The delegation also visited the PISAI.[165]

Religions in the Age of Faith and Hoşgörü/Tolerance Meeting

Uçar considers this meeting the organized by PRA in Tarsus on 10-11 May 2000, the first interreligious activity. The final declaration of the meeting, also called the Tarsus Declaration, keeps significant points in terms of dialogue.[166] The declaration underlines the historical and religious significance of Anatolia in general and Tarsus in particular, states that religions are not the real source of conflict; rather, people who interpret them are responsible for the clashes. Moreover, lack of proper knowledge and information is another effect. The approach to solving the conflicts is teaching/presenting each religion in the proper way. Interreligious dialogue is not for combining or assimilating religions, but for keeping the differences, without forcing each other, and talking on common problems and collaborations. Interreligious dialogue in the contemporary is no longer a choice but a requirement. Without peace among religions, world peace is only a dream. Members of such a perfect religion as Islam, s the religion of peace, should not hesitate to enter into dialogue.[167]

Istanbul Meeting (Bosporus declaration)

On 11 April 2002, within interreligious dialogue activities, PRA organized a

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[165] Yel, *Dialogue of the Two Institutions*, 341-42.

[166] Yel, *Dialogue of the Two Institutions*, 342. The presentations were published in the book *İnanç ve Hoşgörü Çağında Dinler* (Ankara: DIB, 2002).

[167] The PRA website no longer provides this information; it can be found in Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog*, 60-61.

meeting on the conflict in the Middle East. Jewish and Christians representatives also joined the meeting. The final declaration made the following important points: Members of monotheistic religions share human and moral values, which support peace, freedom, morality, love and justice. It is their common goal to find peace instead of chaos in the universe. Allah desires peace and coexistence to occur among people. If people do not live according to the desire of God, they will fail in this world and will be responsible in the hereafter.[168]

Center for Hoşgörü/Tolerance

The Center for Hoşgörü-Garden of Religions in Belek, Antalya, was opened by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan with a ceremony on 8 December 2004. Erdogan stated that the message of peace and brotherhood should be reflected around the world.[169] Ali Bardakoğlu, PRA president, also stressed the importance of dialogue and tolerance. He emphasized that dialogue does not necessary mean one approves of the other's stance.[170] The garden keeps a mosque, church and synagogue where members can worship, considered a significant step for interreligious dialogue.

Caricature Crisis

Bardakoğlu, in his interview with BBC Turkish Service 6 February 2006, stated that freedom of thought should not be used to insult others' sacred beliefs. It is unacceptable for a caricaturist to insult Muslims by drawing a caricature of Muslims' most admired personality, the prophet. However, Muslims should not express their

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[168] Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog*, 61.

[169] http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/dinler-bahcesi-acilis-toreni-basbakan-erdogan-uc-semavi-dinin-mabetlerini-b/3797#1

[170] Bardakoğlu's speech can be found in his book, *Religion and Society*, 69-71.

reaction with violence. He underlined that there are two theses in the world: clash of civilizations and alliance of civilizations. PRA and Turkey stand beside the alliance of civilizations and cooperation of religions for the common peace of humanity: "We should not use the differences as a source of conflict, but rather as a source for richness. We should learn to live in peace; otherwise we all will be defeated."[171]

All in all PRA organized and participated in many international meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops, and so on. Orhan Yılmaz in his master's thesis lists thirtyeight meetings dated in 1993-2005.[172] He also mentions that PRA made many international visits and meetings within the framework of developing dialogue and understanding. It also hosted many visitors from the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Turkic world, Islamic states, Europe, Vatican, the Armenian Patriarch and the USA. He gives a list of forty meetings and visits dated 2003-2005.[173]

Dialogue in PRA's Encyclopedia of Islam

Interreligious dialogue is also addressed in PRA's influential and authoritative encyclopedia of Islam. The sub-article "Christianity and other Religions" within the article "Christianity," is written by Baki Adam. While the article indicates general Christian reaction to non-Christians, Adam basically explores Catholic attitude toward

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[171] Interview by Alper Ballı from BBC Turkish Service,

http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/europe/story/2006/02/060206_cartoons_turkey.shtml accessed 10.03.2014.

[172] Orhan Yılmaz, "Avrupa Birliği Sürecinde Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı ve Dinlerarası Diyalog," Master's Thesis, Sakarya University, 2007, 111-15.

[173] Yılmaz, *Avrupa Birliği Sürecinde Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 115-23. Olgun gives a list of national and international organizations the PRA participated in or organized in, "Diyanet'in Dinlerarası Diyalog Anlayışı," 277-81. Also see Yel, "Dialogue of the Two Institutions," 342.

other religions. He points out that classic, exclusive, "no salvation outside the Church" was broken after the Second World War when ancient cultures and religious traditions such as China, India, and Israel revived their strength. So the collapse of the colonial system, revolution in communication and social pluralism are the basic factors that forced Christians to consider that there is salvation outside the Church.[174] Adam states that three basic perceptions have been developed among theologians: exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. Adam considers the Church attitude an inclusive approach that, even though it considers the truth in other religions, believes they will be better fulfilled by the Christian message.[175] So, in order to spread the message of Christianity, instead of rejecting everything in other religions, there is an effort to correct improper understanding within them. In order to practice this attitude, the Church developed four basic methods: proclamation (*inancı açıklama*), dialogue, enculturation and joining salvation with independent movements. So, dialogue is pictured with new methods of presenting the Christian message to non-Christians.[176] In the article, the Prophet Muhammad's debate with Najranite Christians is considered the first Christian-Muslim dialogue. Similar to the general attitude among Turkish scholars, Adam also underscores that Christian scholars who were able to enter direct interaction with Islam during the Crusades did not explain Islam to their people properly and transferred a negative image to in the West.[177] He also underlines that the positive statements in the documents of the Second Vatican Council

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[174] *Diyanet Islam Ansiklopedisi*, v.17, p. 359.

[175] *Diyanet Islam Ansiklopedisi*, v.17, p.359

[176] *Diyanet Islam Ansiklopedisi*, v.17, p.360

[177] *Diyanet Islam Ansiklopedisi*, v.17, p.361

do not affirm Islam's salvific feature and accept Christianity as the only true religion.[178]

In the article "misyonerlik" (missionary) Şinasi Gündüz addresses dialogue among new concepts such as homogeneous union (*homojen birlik*), national/regional churches (*milli/yerli kiliseler*), folk movement (*halk hareketi*), and faith mission *(iman misyonu)* that have also been used also by missionaries in the contemporary world. Gündüz underlines that missionaries use dialogue as a means for spreading Christianity. According to Protestant, evangelical groups and among missionaries, genuine dialogue is bringing people who are in the wrong to Christianity.[179]

Interreligious Dialogue in PRA's Monthly Magazine Diyanet Aylık Dergi

Interreligious dialogue became among the significant topics of the *Diyanet Aylık Dergi*. One may easily observe that articles of the magazine represent the general stance of PRA.[180]

Attitude of the Religious Officers of the PRA about Dialogue

Ramazan Uçar's study gives striking informations about interreligious dialogue within the scope of the PRA. He states that even though the interreligious dialogue perception of PRA is appreciable, in practice, the goals are not reached generally, because conflicts, wars and injustice have continued in Turkey and worldwide.[181]

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[178] *Diyanet Islam Ansiklopedisi*, v.17, p.362

[179] *Diyanet Islam Ansiklopedisi*, v.30, p.198

[180] Some of the articles are as follows: *Dinler Arası Diyalog* (by Harun Özdemirci); *Din Şurası'nın Ardından* (by Sabri Hizmetli), *İnanç ve Hoşgörü Çağında Dinlerarası Diyalog Toplantısı Tarsusta Yapıldı* (by Ali Yıldırım); *İki Önemli Buluşma* (by Harun Özdemirci,), and *Tarihte ilk kez gerçekleşen Katolik Aleminin Vatikanda Diyanet İşleri Başkanı ve Papa Buluşması* (by Harun Özdemirci).

[181] Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog*, 66.

In his research on the imams/preachers of PRA, he found out that the branch directory for interreligious dialogue does not give them enough information (74.4 percent).[182] Moreover he also states that teachers think that PRA does not give necessary information (89 percent).[183] In his evaluation of the survey he states that PRA religious officers think interreligious dialogue is an event among members of religions, not between religions, and thus is aimed to create a syncretic understanding.

Even though they do not consider interreligious dialogue part of missionary activities, nevertheless they have concerns that Christians use it as a means of missionary efforts. The majority of them, advocate dialogue and support dialogue activities. They also consider dialogue as fruitful in terms of Islamic tablig. They also understand that it has a relationship with political, economic and cultural dimensions, New World Order and globalization. They consider interreligious dialogue with Christians beneficial – even Christians who do not accept Islam as a religion. They also do not think interreligious dialogue is a project for Western dominance. They consider that in dialogue, thoughts of Muslims toward Christians would not be changed, but Christians' thoughts can be changed.[184]

They also do not agree that dialogue should be organized by official institutions; PRA should not direct it. Even though they think the branch directory does not give necessary information, they believe PRA affirms the significance/necessity of dialogue. They think that even though the Turkish community does not have necessary information

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[182] Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog*, 98.

[183] Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalo*, 166, 198.

[184] Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog*, 98.

regarding dialogue, they will not be affected negatively from the dialogue initiatives. They think that even though people do not embrace it totally, they are uncomfortable that dialogue events are being practiced in specific places.[185]

Conclusion

When exploring the PRA stance in terms of dialogue, we observe that it encourages every kind of effort for mutual understanding, respect and world peace.[186] However, almost in every instance, it warns Turkish Muslims to be careful about ill-intentions of some Christians who may use dialogue as a means of missions. Yet, it considers dialogue as helpful tool for presenting Islam to other, peaceful coexistence and breaking prejudices. Moreover, dialogue is not considered alternative/opposite to irshad and tablig; rather it helps Muslims to show message of Islam. Another significant point is that PRA engagement has been strongly linked to the official policy of the Turkish administration regarding religious freedom. As a result, its stance keeps a similar attitude with other official institutions concerning dialogue. Moreover, it increasingly has been engaging in dialogue since the mid-1990s. Furthermore, Hakan Olgun rightly argues, PRA has not been able to develop a unique interreligious understanding.[187] Last, we observe that PRA keeps its stance in religion shuras, Eurasian Shuras, its branch directory for interreligious dialogue and its monthly magazine.

Dialogue in the History and the Documents of Other Institutions

After exploring the PRA perception and reaction to dialogue in general and the

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[185] Uçar, *Dinler Arası Diyalog*, 98.

[186] Bardakoğlu, *Religion and Society*, 84.

[187] Olgun, *Diyanet'in Dinlerarası Diyalog Algısı*, 282-83.

Christian call for dialogue in particular, now we can now examine other governmental and nongovernmental organizations' perception of dialogue. Since there are many events handled by Turkish organizations about dialogue, I will only touch on six of the most influential of them; three governmental and three nongovernmental. In this way, we will be able to grasp the broad scale of thoughts, aims and objections concerning dialogue among organizations other than the PRA.

Interreligious Dialogue Events in Governmental Organizations

The development of interreligious dialogue within state universities keeps parallel with the PRA, where we can see increasingly organized meetings after the 1990s. We also see preparatory individual meetings between officials from the Roman Catholic Church and Turkey. One may go back to the visit of Pope Paul VI to Turkey on 25-26 July 1967, as the starting point.[188] The contact continued with another papal visit by Pope John Paul II on 28-30 November 1979 and later in 1986 when Cardinal Arinze visited Turkey[189] and made an agreement between Ankara University and Gregorian University.[190] Within this program two colloquiums were organized, one in Rome in 1989 and one in Ankara in 1990, and academic staffs were exchanged. The subject of the colloquium in Rome was "Collaboration in Muslim and Christian Theology Education." Thirteen Turkish Muslim theologians, mostly deans of theology faculties around Turkey

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[188] Mahmut Aydın considers the concept of interreligious dialogue was started to be used in the 1970s, yet does not give any specific work about it. See Aydın, *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar*, 292.

[189] Pope Benedict XVI's visit Turkey on 28 November-2 December 2006 is also significant development.

[190] Beyza Bilgin, "Roma'da İlahiyat Eğitiminde İşbirliği Semineri," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 32 (1992): 233.

with the rector of Ankara University, Dr. Necdet Serin, and twelve Christian scholars participated in the seminar. All the Turkish professors made presentations at the seminar, yet the presentations were not published in a book. Dr. Bilgin reports to us that the group of Turkish scholars was also welcomed by Pope John Paul II.[191] The following year the second colloquium was held in Ankara. I will explore it in detail below. Within the scope of the agreement Thomas Michel taught in Ankara University and a Turkish professor taught at Gregorian University the next year. Michel also taught in Selçuk University (Konya in 1988) and Dokuz Eylül University (Izmir in 1989). We also observe that since 2003 international conference series have been held by Marmara University and Gregorian University.

Until the 2000s dialogue events were held by academicians in more limited spaces and were not influential among the Turkish society. However, after the 2000s the meetings have been organized with participation of much broader and different social groups. Moreover one may state that the publications of papers presented at these conferences and the final declarations constitute the majority of documents of governmental organizations regarding interreligious dialogue.

Here, I will touch on three significant colloquiums: "Religions, Cultures, and Tolerance: Past and Present Colloquium," "Sivas Cumhuriyet University Symposium," and "International Muslim-Christian Dialogue Symposiums."

Colloquium between Ankara University and Gregorian University

As part of the agreement between Ankara University and Gregorian University, on 1-2 November 1990 the two organized a colloquium titled "Religions, Cultures, and

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[191] Bilgin, *Roma'da İlahiyat Eğitiminde İşbirliği Semineri,* 233.

Tolerance: Past and Present" and the presentations were published in a book with thesame title.[192] Turkish Muslim professors and scholars of Gregorian University were able to express their views regarding coexistence within the framework of religions. Cardinal Francis Arinze, Arij A. Roest Crollius and Marcel Chapping were among the Christian speakers. Ibrahim Agâh Çubukçu, Sabri Hizmetli, Süreyya Şahin, Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, Mehmet Aydın, Ünver Günay, Emrullah Yüksel and Abdurrahman Küçük were the Turkish presenters. The meeting opened with a speech by Necati Öner, dean of Ankara University Divinity Faculty. Necati Serin, rector of Ankara University, made a short speech with his good wishes for the meeting. Then Monsignor Sergio Sebastiani and Cardinal Francis Arinze made a short talk. The papers focused on the concept of tolerance, its different implications such as sociological, theological and historical bases and problems.[193] The papers presented by Turkish academicians were usually in French and were about a basis for tolerance and dialogue in the Islamic tradition in general and Turkish Islamic understanding in particular. In this colloquium one may state that the two different worldviews in the Turkish context were able to face each other at the academic

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[192] *Religions, Cultures, and Tolerance: Past and Present* (Ankara: Ankara Universitesi Rektörlüğü Yayınları, 1991).

[193] The English and French titles of papers are "The Development of the Idea of Tolerance within the Religious Community" (Ibrahim Agâh Çubukçu), "Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien au temps du prophète Muhammad" (Sabri Hizmetli), "The Attitude of Islam towards non-Muslims in the Course (Süreyya Şahin), A General Outlook on Islam-Christianity Dialogue" (Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu), "A Sociological Approach to Tolerance" (Mehmet Aydın), "Tendance de tolérance religieuse dans la culture turque" (Ünver Günay), "Le paix dans l'Islam" (Emrullah Yüksel), "Quelques réflexions au dujet du dialogue interreligieux" (Abdurrahman Küçük).

level for the first time. The meeting closed with good wishes by both sides and further collaborations.

Sivas Cumhuriyet University Symposium

The symposium entitled "Dialogue for Peace: the Contribution of Religions to Living Together" was held at Cumhuriyet University in Sivas on 12 September 2002. This symposium can be considered as representing a basic form of the academic organization approach to dialogue in Turkey, therefore I will explore it in more detail. The presentations of the symposium were published also with the same name.[194]

In the opening speech, Ali Yılmaz, dean of the Faculty of Theology, stressed the necessity of coexistence of the adherents of different religions. For him, even if you are different, you have to live in the same world.[195] Ferit Koçoğlu, rector of Cumhuriyet University, pointed out the cultural side of the subject and highlighted that religions have the power to stop clashes and contribute to peace. After referring to the words of Yunus Emre, a famous Turkish *sufi* poet, "love/*hoşgör* the creature for the sake of the Creator," he stressed the unitive value of Turkish culture.[196] The governor of Sivas, M. Lütfullah Bilgin, also pointed to the fact that Anatolian culture has already kept the principle to tolerate and respect "others." In his cultural review of dialogue he stressed that there are so many resources in the proverbs regarding dialogue/*hoşgörü*. Moreover, many personalities also took seriously the issue of coexistence; he exemplified this by quoting

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[194] *Barış İçin Diyalog: Dinlerin Bir Arada Yaşamaya Katkısı Sempozyum Tebliğleri* (Sivas: C. U. Rektörlük Basımevi, 2002).

[195] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 1.

[196] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 5.

from Haji Bektash Veli, a Turkish saint, "do not offend even if you are offended."[197] One

may find his views a common perspective about dialogue among Turkish public opinion.

The head of the Presidency of the Religious Affairs (PRA), Mehmet Nuri Yılmaz,

gave an impressive talk about the place of dialogue in Islam, especially in the PRA

context. He stated that the PRA supported the activities that focus on peace and

hoşgörü/tolerance. After expressing that the essence of religions is *tawhid* and *hoşgörü*,

he articulated that communities that have not understood this essence have been dragged

into conflicts and clashes. One cannot take evil as an example, and people should take

lessons from negative experiences in history. And people have to work to strengthen

positive relationships. Additionally, he said that among the universal principles of Islam

is letting Muslims have real humane virtues and respect for the existence and rights of

"others."[198] He stressed that conflict among religions and cultures cannot be accepted. He

considers such views as incorrect claims.[199]

Yılmaz also stressed that the role of followers of religions is "to reach the

conscience of living together through reconciliation of different cultures by using

peacemakers, conciliators, integrative potentials of religions and letting friendly relations

develop by finding common values."[200]

Yılmaz underscored that people are brothers on three points: All mankind is

brother through *fitrat* (it shows that he builds the concept of dialogue on the notion of

fitrat). The second point is that as faithful members of religions they are brothers through

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[197] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 9-10.

[198] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 13.

[199] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 15.

[200] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 15.

faith. Last, members of the same religion are also brothers through religion. Therefore, people who are related to each other with the nexus of creation, faith and religion should develop their foremost task, which is living together.[201]

He also stressed that individuals should attain attitudes that lead to coexistence. Within this framework, he articulated that Islam principally admits that there is more than one religion on earth and does not consider this factual reality a contradiction to its teachings.[202] According to him these verses show that differences are not the means of clashes but tools for enrichment.[203]

Yılmaz also expressed his views regarding religious freedom and existence of other religions: on the one hand, Islam offers boundless freedom of religions for the need of non-Muslims; on the other hand, it deprecates the insolence toward sacredness. He supported his views with the Qur'an 6:108:

"And do not (O believers) revile the things or beings that they have, apart from God, deified and invoke, lest (if you do so) they attempt to revile God out of spite, and in ignorance. Thus have We made their deeds seem fair to every people; then to their (true) Lord is the return of all of them, and He will make them understand what they were doing (and call them to account for it)."[204]

After highlighting the reality of coexistence as the requirement of the age, Yılmaz pointed out trust as among the most significant factors in neighborly relations. In Islam there are principles such as "there is no goodness with one who does not trust and is not

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[201] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 15.

[202] He references Qur'an 5:1 and 5:48.

[203] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 16.

[204] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 16.

trustworthy," "Muslims are from whose tongue and hand the people are safe." These principles play a crucial role in sustaining a trustful environment.[205]

For Yılmaz, in the trustful environment, commonalities rather than differences should be stressed and problems can be solved only by working together. Last, he underlined that there are people have made many achievements through dialogue and *hoşgörü*. Representatives of religions have responsibilities to keep these achievements against evil intentions and misconduct.[206]

In the conference, Julien de Pommerol, head of the Jesuit community, stated that preserving peace was stated in the mission of the Church. He also referred to the words of Jesus, "love each other as I loved you" by stating that this saying is significant in terms of coexistence.[207] Pommerol also stressed that preservation of peace is the precondition of humanness. Therefore, motivations of clash and conflict should be examined deeply and every individual should make self-criticism. In this perspective, by referring the statements of Pope Jean Paul II, he considered coexistence based on respect for human rights as necessary. Moreover, he stated that love for God encourages love for people according to Christianity. [208]

Rav Yeuda Adoni, a member of the Turkish Rabbinical Religious Committee, also gave significant messages regarding the issue of dialogue. According to him, dialogue, which was not freely expressed twenty or twenty five years ago, today can be

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[205] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 16-18.

[206] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 18.

[207] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 25.

[208] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 25.

freely conducted.[209] He states that religions were misconducted for self-interest by biased interpretations and thereby caused clashes. Instead of being used for people's happiness, religions were used as means of self-interest.[210]

He highlighted that no religious tradition does not play an essential role in clashes. Religion and enmity cannot be considered together, which are opposite concepts. He pointed out that religion is misconducted after stating that these concepts cannot come together.[211] After referring to dialogue between Abraham and Lot, he stated that any attempt to create peace cannot be ignored.[212]

International Muslim-Christian Dialogue Symposiums

With the leadership of Ömer Faruk Harman (from Marmara University) and Maurice Borrmans (from the PISAI), symposiums on interreligious dialogue between Muslims and Christians were arranged. They have been organized since 2003 by Marmara University, with PISAI and Gregorian University and with the participation of Order of Friars Minor Capuchin in Yeşilköy, İstanbul. The subjects through 2007 are as follow:

2-3 October 2005 – The Word of God

7-9 October 2004 – Relationship between God and Human

23-24 September 2005 – Jesus according to Islamic and Christian Sources

3-4 November 2006 –Salvation in Islam and Christianity

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[209] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 29.

[210] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 30.

[211] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 31.

[212] *Barış İçin Diyalog,* 32.

25-26 October 2007 – Islam and Christianity Facing Modernism.[213]

Interreligious Dialogue Events in Nongovernmental Organizations

As stated above interreligious dialogue generally became a widespread subject after the mid-1990s and after Turkey made more democratic steps and gave more freedom of religion. Another significant factor I should mention is Turkey's striving to enter the European Union.

In parallel to these positive political steps, interreligious dialogue between Muslims and Christians attained a new momentum. We observe some independent institutional engagements before the mid-1990s such as the meeting entitled Effects of Aristo on Individual and Society/Mediterranean World, held 5-8 January 1986 by the Foundation of Mediterranean Conferences for International Collaboration.[214] Even though the meeting was about Aristo's philosophy, the papers, presented by Muslim and Christian scholars, touched on common points between Islam and Christianity and called for mutual understanding and respect.[215] Another significant development was the Intercultural Dialogue Symposium organized by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality in 1996. The papers published constitute a broad scope of dialogue stances. However one may argue that these developments were limited to experts.[216]

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[213] I reached two of the published versions of the symposiums. Both include the presentations in three languages: Turkish, French and Italian. See *Uluslararası Müslüman-Hıristiyan Diyalog Sempozyumu V 25-26 October 2007* (Istanbul: Marmara Universitesi, PISAI and Gregoriana University, 2008).

[214] In collaboration with Anatolia France Research Institute and Italian Culture Institute.

[215] Niyazi Öktem gives the list of the participants and summarizes the papers. See Niyazi Öktem, *Laiklik, Din ve Alevilik Yazıları* (Istanbul: Ant, 1998), 16-18.

[216] *Kültürlerarası Diyalog Sempozyumu*, (Istanbul: IBB, 1998).

Besides these significant steps, we observe that with the participation of M. Fethullah Gülen, honorary president of the Journalists and Writers Foundation (GYV), dialogue gained a new dimension. With his encouragement and engagement in dialogue with non-Muslims, he carried out noteworthy steps and met religious leaders of non-Muslim communities. In this context, he visited I. Bartholomeos in Istanbul 6 April 1996, then Armenian Patriarch Karatekin and finally on 9 February 1998 Pope John Paul II. Some scholars consider Gülen the starter of dialogue in Turkey because of his advocacy.[217]

His visit and letter to the papacy have taken many criticisms from conservative Muslim circles. For instance, his address to the Pope as "Papa Cenabları" (Pope excellency/majesty) and the statement, "we are here to become part of the mission of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) which was started by Pope Paul VI and has been continuing,"[218] prompted criticisms such as: Muslims cannot call a pope "Papa Cenabları" and Gülen is part of the missionary program of the Christians and therefore is a secret agent of Christians and he is deforming Muslims. Even some religious scholars consider his visit opposite to Islam.[219] However, putting the criticism aside, his advocacy and work for dialogue are the major factors for interreligious

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[217] Mahmut Aydın, *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar*, 315; Nevzat Kösoğlu, "Dinler Arası Diyalog Üzerine,"51.

[218] The Turkish letter was published in the Turkish daily *Zaman*, 10 February 1998.

[219] For some such views see Fikri Atilbaz, *Küfre Açılan Kapı Dinlerarası Diyalog* (İzmir: Seç Matbaacılık, 2008), 23; Mehmet Oruç, *Dinlerarası Diyalog Tuzağı ve Dinde Reform* (Istanbul: Arı, 2003), 20; Ali Nar, "Diyalog Fitnesi Kahire'de Düğümlendi," in *Dinlerarası Diyalog Fitnesi*, ed. Ali Nar, 3rd edition (Istanbul: Doğru Yorum Gazetesi Yayınları, 2013), 7-27.

dialogue to be popular among academics and on a popular level. Activities of the Journalists and Writers Foundation, especially its subunit Intercultural Dialogue Platform (KADIP),[220] of which Gülen is honorary president, are the majority of the dialogue events in Turkey.

Besides the activities of the Journalists and Writers Foundation, there are other nongovernmental activities sponsored by organizations such as Ufuk Diyalog Derneği,[221] Noel Baba Barış Konseyi,[222] Kondrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.[223] and Antakya Medeniyetler Korosu.[224]

We observe that interreligious dialogue is also discussed within the framework of Turkey's bid for the European Union. Therefore, written and online materials regarding dialogue noticeable increased during 1999-2004, where significant steps were taken in terms of entrance to the EU.[225] During this term and afterward interreligious dialogue became a popular topic of religious-cultural magazines such as *Aksiyon,*[226] *Köprü,*[227] *Yeni*

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[220] Kültürlerarası Diyalog Platformu (KADIP). Its website is www.kadip.org.tr.

[221] Its website is http://www.udid.org.tr/. This organization is also deeply engaged with the activities of the Journalists and Writers Foundations.

[222] English: Santa Claus Peace Council. Its website is http://www.stcpc.org.

[223] This is the Turkish branch of the Germany based institution. Its website is http://www.konrad.org.tr.

[224] English: The Civilization Choir of Antakya. Its website is http://www.medeniyetlerkorosu.com.

[225] In this respect three dates are important: 12 December 1999. the date the European Council recognized Turkey as a candidate equally with other potential candidates; 12 December 2002, the date the Council declared that if Turkey completed the Copenhagen Criteria it would be accepted "without delay"; and finally 17 December 2004, when the EU decided to start negotiations with Turkey.

[226] http://www.aksiyon.com.tr/.

[227] http://www.koprudergisi.com/.

Ümit,[228] and *Türk Yurdu,*[229] and it was discussed in detail in newspapers such as *Zaman*, *Yeni Mesaj*, *Akit*, and *Bugün*. Moreover, it is a popular subject in the social media, especially Facebook. For instance, by 22 July 2014 there were four Facebook pages about interreligious dialogue titled "Dinlerarası Diyalog İfadesi Küfürdür" (The phrase "Interreligious Dialogue" is Infidel)[230] with 620 likes; "Dinlerarası Diyalog Misyonerliktir" (Interreligious Dialogue is a missionary work)[231] with 223 likes; "Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Dinde Reform Tuzağı: Bir İhanetin Görünen Yüzü" (The Trap of Interreligious Dialogue and Reform in Religion: Frontal Face of a Betrayal)[232] with 849 likes; and "Dinlerarası Diyalog Tuzağı ve Dinde Reform" (The Trap of Interreligious Dialogue and Reform in Religion)[233] with 824 likes. The Facebook groups created in the name of dialogue, which have a mostly negative image concerning dialogue, are smaller groups of not more than 90 people and are mostly passive groups.

After touching briefly on dialogue nongovernmental organizations and press, we can explore three events organized as an example: Asrımızda Hıristiyan Müslüman Münasebetleri, Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloga and Istanbul Fransiskan Rahipleri ve Mevlevi Dervişler arasındaki Ortak Dua.

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[228] http://www.yeniumit.com.tr/.

[229] http://www.turkyurdu.com.tr/.

[230] https://www.facebook.com/AhirZamanFitnesi reached on 22.07.2014.

[231] https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dinlerarasi-Diyalog-Misyonerliktir/634304333275722 reached on 22.07.2014

[232] https://www.facebook.com/diyalogyalani reached on 22.07.2014.

[233] https://www.facebook.com/DinlerarasiDiyalogTuzagi reached on 22.07.2014.

Christian-Muslim Relations in the Present Century Conference

The Foundation for Research in Islamic Sciences (İslami İlimler Vakfı-İSAV) organized a conference in Istanbul in 1992 entitled Asrımızda Hıristiyan Müslüman Münasebetleri" (Christian-Muslim Relations in the Present Century). The papers were published in a book with the same title in 1993. Interreligious dialogue was seriously discussed by seven Turkish Muslim scholars: Suat Yıldırım, Abdurrahman Küçük, Şaban Kuzgun, Mehmet Aydın, Ömer Faruk Harman, M. Süreyya Şahin and Günay Tümer. All speakers except Suat Yildrum were from the field of History of Religions. The discussions on the papers were made by Ali Arslan Aydın, Mustafa Fayda, Ahmet Efe, Süreyya Şahin and Ömer Faruk Harman.

In the inauguration speech Ali Özek, the head of the İSAV board of trustees, pointed out the technological developments and their effects on coexistence. He indicated that the aim of the heavenly religions (*semavi dinler*), namely Semitic religions, is making people turn to the creator and inviting people to faith of tawhid.[234] He expressed that the first *diyalog tartışması* (dialogue debate) occurred between the prophet and Najranite Christians. From his expressions it is clear that Özek understood dialogue as a kind of debate.

He moreover expressed that although the major factor that determines relationships between communities and people is economic, the impact of religion is also being strengthened quickly in today's world. Considering religion as a significant part of the relationship between communities, he underscored that other religions, in order to

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[234] İslami İlimler Araştırma Vakfı, *Asrımızda Hristiyan Müslüman Münasebetleri* (İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2005), 7.

destroy the universality of Islam, have been applying a new method of equating all religions without distinguishing between truthfulness and vanity. This new method is dialogue, which is another trap of the West.[235]

Özbek furthermore stated that the West aimed to destruct Islam in the "valley of dialogue" where Muslims had not followed developments closely. Therefore, Muslims must be ready to answer the dialogue call of Christians, in order to keep and develop Muslims inside and outside Turkey, defend Turkish Muslims and proclaim the universal truths of Islam. For this preparation the foundation started an "Islam-Christian dialogue"[236] workshop. He also stated that a center should be established to develop dialogue within the Turkish context.[237]

It appears that Özek perceives dialogue as a concept from the result of clash and competition, as a method for defending against traps of others. Hence, the insincerity and bad intentions of the call for Christian dialogue are stressed in his speech.

The summary of the meeting is added at the end of the book. According to this summary, "in religious terminology dialogue… means a situation where people are able to establish healthy communication with each other through efforts to eliminate conflicts and disputes between them in order to put forward and discuss common issues in the way of realizing cooperation among those who are the members of different schools or

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[235] *Asrımızda Hristiyan Müslüman Münasebetleri*, 8.

[236] His usage of Islam-Christian dialogue contributes to the misunderstanding of dialogue.

[237] *Asrımızda Hristiyan Müslüman Münasebetleri*, 9.

different sects in the same religion."[238] It states that a Muslim dialogue call for Christians was already made through the revelation of the Qur'an, which mentions Jesus as messenger of Allah and honors Mary. The book indicates that Islam is the last religion, so members of all divine religions must obey the call of the last Prophet Muhammad. Christians are also responsible for this call, the call for dialogue between Muslims and Christians. It also stresses that throughout history although Muslims treated Christians with moderation and toleration, Christians mostly treated Muslims aggressively.[239]

From Clash of Civilizations to Dialogue

The Journalists and Writers Foundation (GYV) organized an international meeting in Istanbul on 6-7 June 1997. The papers have been published in a book entitled *From Clash of Civilizations to Dialogue*.

Latif Erdogan in his inauguration speech stated that three kinds of brotherhood of mankind stand in front of people: brotherhood of religion, brotherhood of faith and brotherhood of creation.[240]

Mehmet S. Aydın expressed that civilizations and cultures do not fight; people and nations fight. People who look for reasons to fight generally use religion for reaching their goals.[241] He indicated that differences, not similarities, are the main factors behind the clash of civilizations. He also underlined that people are interested in

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[238] *Asrımızda Hristiyan Müslüman Münasebetleri*, 207.

[239] *Asrımızda Hristiyan Müslüman Münasebetleri*, 208.

[240] Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı, *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa* (İstanbul: GYV yayınları, 2000), 15-16.

[241] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 36.

weird/differences.[242] People emphasize different aspects of their own civilization and culture to draw attention and finally to persuade others. He considers the clash of civilizations thesis as a similar attitude.[243] For him people's task should be keeping diversity away from the forefront, which can lead to many dangers.[244]

He specified that dialogue should take place on three levels. The first is the descriptive level, where cultures, civilizations, people and communities should be recognized. He emphasized the presence of ignorance, and that being close to learning has no place in dialogue.[245] From this perspective, not only ist the wrong image of Islam in the West rooted in bad intentions but ignorance plays a crucial role also. The impact of mass media cannot be ignored.[246] The second level is the critical level. Exchanging information alone is not enough; critical thinking also should be practiced. Only after critical thinking can the new information contribute to dialogue.[247] The third level is what he describes as an existential level. It is the conditioning of new learned information through dialogue to become part of one's life. He states that the best example in this regard can be found in Sufism.[248]

He underlined that through high-level dialogue, participants would be able to perceive people's beliefs and cultures embodied in the adherents of their faiths, so such

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[242] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 38.

[243] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 38.

[244] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 39.

[245] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 39.

[246] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 39.

[247] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 40.

[248] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 40.

dialogue creates friendship and familiarity. Only through such interaction can an exchange of information occur at a human level.[249]

He also stated that Muslims contributed a lot to the dialogue meetings. He underlined that he strongly supports such meetings. It is easier to behave coldly toward ideas than toward people. Through dialogue people will be able to see belief embodied in flesh, which is the biggest gain for people. If one wants to respect someone, one needs to be respectful to their sacred beliefs also.[250]

Mehmet Aydın expressed that the Qur'an is a book that is completely open to dialogue.[251] Now is the right time to answer the invitation of the Qur'an around this common word.[252]

Last, he underscored that there is enough space for every kind of idea and religious belief. It is not possible to survive by being destructive of others. "Either we live together or we migrate together. While there is opportunity to live together why should we dream to leave?"[253]

Another influential scholar at the meeting was Süleyman Hayri Bolay. In his reflections, he stated that Muslims did not treat Westerners harshly and did not hate them until the Crusaders. After the Crusades war and hatred formed that continued over centuries.[254]

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[249] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 41.

[250] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 41.

[251] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 41.

[252] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 41.

[253] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 42.

[254] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 62.

Bolay underscored that there is not a problem for a Muslim to engage in dialogue with a Christian or Buddhist. Christians wanted to unite with Muslims against communism and they accomplished this collaboration by acting against materialist philosophy. He stated that this collaboration should be practiced in cultural and scientific fields. Yet he stressed that the thought of surpassing/dominating each other must be kept away. For him, this idea led the West to colonialism.[255] He closed his speech by emphasizing the importance of intimacy and sincerity in intercultural dialogue.[256]

İlber Ortaylı, among the most influential Turkish historians, stated that today Christians cannot sustain tolerance even among themselves. In such a situation for Christians to strive/call for dialogue between Muslims and Jews is meaningless. Hence he stressed intrareligious dialogue and said that in the current situation it is practiced insufficiently.[257] He indicated that in the fide dei of Catholics some 400 million Orthodox are still considered a heretical movement and therefore Catholics assigned missionaries in order to teach religion again. By pointing to these factors he voiced that Christians are not even able to show love among themselves. For him, in such situations, at least they should change the discourse and be patient with each other.[258]

Ortaylı also stated that tolerance is based on science, knowledge and love. A tolerance that does not keep these qualities is a dry title. Tolerance, used improperly with some power, can be a means of hegemony on some national values and even work to

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[255] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 64.

[256] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 65.

[257] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 74.

[258] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 78.

sustain control.[259] He claimed that Andalucía Spain was much more tolerant than contemporary, modern, European Spain. He also expressed that today we do not have the tolerance practiced in Ptolemaic Alexandria.[260]

According to him, tolerance for the multitudes in the Ottoman Empire does not exist in today's Balkans. Ottomans achieved this and experienced an understanding of living together in a more fruitful way beyond today's communities, which break down their preconceptions about other religious groups.[261]

Ortaylı also questioned the existence of sincerity in today's dialogue meetings. Participants need to make it part of their lives beyond the meetings. Otherwise, if they still alienate themselves from a covered person in their schools and overlook them in a despotic manner, there will be no benefit from attendance at dialogue meetings.[262] He underscored that it is impossible for everyone (5.5 billion people) to be a scholar. Therefore, in dialogue, instead of focusing on mutual learning, religious officials have more responsibilities for informing people.[263]

He also emphasized the significance of Occidentalism and desired it to be developed.[264] In this context he stated that Turkish scholarship does not deeply engage in Arab studies, Iranian studies, Byzantine, Greek, Europe, and so on. Turkish scholarship does not genuinely know their literature, geography and folklore as they know us, and

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[259] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 75.

[260] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 76.

[261] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 76.

[262] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 77.

[263] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 78.

[264] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 80.

this makes Turkish academia weaker. In this respect he said: "as long as we know what the Christian world is, we can engage in a strong dialogue."[265]

Common Prayer (Dua) Ceremony between Istanbul Franciscan Brothers and Derviche Brothers

The common dua ceremony that has been held between the Saint Louis des Français Church in Istanbul and Mawlawi Brothers is a significant example for the development of interreligious dialogue between Christian and Muslim communities in Turkey. In my personal visit to Fr. Ruben Tierrablanca at Saint Louis des Français Church in 2013, I learned that they have been organizing common prayer with Muslim derviches for a long time. They held last year's ceremony on 27 November 2013 in the church. According to the booklet they prepared for the ceremony, in both French and Turkish, groups enter the church hall and stand in the church facing each other in a line. Franciscan friars start the prayer by singing hymns and then derviches perform their rituals.[266] The booklet also includes positive statements by Franciscan and Muslim derviches regarding mutual love toward each other. This spiritual dialogue seems to be a significant step for Muslim-Christian dialogue in the Turkish context. Fr. Tierrablanca also informed me that besides this communal, spiritual dialogue, there are also some individual spiritual engagements in dialogue. For instance, Fr. Gwénolé Jeusset engages in spiritual dialogue by going to mosques in Istanbul. And after getting permission from the imam of a mosque, he sits at a remote place of the mosque and contemplates while Muslims perform their daily prayers.

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[265] *Medeniyetler Çatışmasından Diyaloğa*, 82.

[266] Booklet of Saint Louis des Français Kilisesi: Priere – Orcion – Prayer – Preghiere-Dua, Beyoglu, Istanbul, 27 November 2013.

Conclusion

We observe that interreligious dialogue at governmental and nongovernmental levels is developing in various directions. At the governmental level, the Christian call for interreligious dialogue is usually perceived positively after the 1990s, especially as democracy, economy and politics become more developed. Dialogue is usually understood as a requirement of the current century, where technological developments make it impossible to stay isolated from others. Peace-building messages from religious traditions are also acknowledged generally in the meetings. However, Muslim participants are warned about any hidden agenda from Christians and missionary activities especially are asked to be suspended. So, within governmental organizations, dialogue is mostly welcomed in moral/ethical collaborations, but its political implication is rejected. Moreover, there is not much stress on theological dialogue even though some attempts are made by individual scholars in the meetings.

In terms of nongovernmental organizations we observe that interreligious dialogue is understood in much more varied ways and therefore is treated differently. Whenever dialogue is perceived as a new face of Christian missionary activity, as we saw in the ISAV meeting, it is approached cautiously. In the GYV meetings it is mostly welcomed and encouraged because dialogue is mostly understood as moral/ethical collaboration in order to fight against common problems of the world. The necessity of mutual recognition and reconciliation is usually stressed in these types of meetings. There are also some meetings that focus on the theological dimensions of interreligious dialogue such as International Panel titled "the Virgin Mary in the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an" organized by KADIP on 1-2 November, 2013, in Istanbul. In such meetings, participants are very cautious not to be involved in any kind of religious

relativism. So, discussions on theological dogmas are usually kept away. Participants usually state their respective theologies regarding the issue of the meeting. In this way, it is aimed to develop mutual understsanding. We also observe that there are rare yet significant branches of interreligious dialogue centered on spiritual dialogue. In such events mutual love is stressed and spiritual goals are decided by both sides.

Dialogue in the Textbooks of Public Education

After mentioning interreligious dialogue at the organizational level by focusing on the six meetings as case studies, it will be helpful to touch on interreligious dialogue in public education.[267] In this regard, I examine dialogue in the textbooks for public elementary and high schools, for Imam Hatip Schools and for distance education of Anadolu University.[268]

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[267] Even though there is consensus that education in the public schools should be peace/dialogue oriented, the research by Recep Kaymakcan shows that religious education about Christians is not so appropriate and effective. According to him, in religious education; rather than treating and teaching Christianity in its own terms, a confessional method is followed in the schools. The dominant influence of Islamic perception of Christianity and traditionalist viewpoint about Alh al-Kitab is clear in the textbooks. Also, controversial issues are being focused in the books which pave the way for more opposition between the two religions. Moreover, the contemporary and living dimensions of Christianity are not presented properly in the schools. As a result of his research he believes that more tolerant and sensitive behavior toward followers of other religions is lost because of above mentioned reasons. See Recep Kaymakcan, "Christianity in Turkish Religious Education," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 10:3 (1999), 279-93.

[268] There are some Turkish studies made about dialogue and tolerance in the Turkish education system. For instance, see Zübeyir Bulut, "Dinsel Çoğulculuk ve Ortaöğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Dersinde Diğer Dinlerin Öğretimi," *Kelam Araştırmaları* 8:2 (2010), 65-90; Emine Kolaç, "Haci Bektaş Veli, Mevlana ve Yunus Felsefesiyle Türkçe Derslerinde Değerler ve Hoşgörü Eğitimi," *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı*

Before exploring interreligious dialogue in public education it will be helpful to touch on the study by İskender Oymak on the perception of interreligious dialogue among students and graduates of the Faculty of Theology in Turkey. His research covered hundred participants. According to this research majority of participants (83 percent) believes the Church did not stop its missionary activities after the Second Vatican Council. Yet, in terms of the Qur'an 5.51 "Take not the Jews and Christians for friends and allies,"[269] the majority (82 percent) believe it does not prevent Muslims from having friendship with them. Oymak states that according to the results of his study, the Qur'anic statements are not considered a barrier for friendly relations with non-Muslims. The majority of the participants (84 percent) agree that Turkish Islamic tradition is strong basis for hoşgörü and dialogue. In terms of living together with Christians, the majority (60 percent) are in favor and only 27 percent are not. Yet the majority believe the Muslim world and the PRA are not ready for interreligious dialogue.

Another striking result of his study is that the majority (87 percent) do not believe Jews and Christians are sincere in their engagement in dialogue. Oymak evaluates this view by referencing the document *Redemtius Missio* of John Paul II, which states that dialogue is part of the Christianization mission of the Church. Last, the majority of the participants still support that dialogue is "to talk, to collaborate in religious issues without imposing each other's views." The majority believe dialogue will help strengthen

Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi 55 (2010), 193-208; Nebahat Göçeri, "Devlet Politikası Olarak Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Kitaplarında İnsan Anlayışı ve Hoşgörü," *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 2:2 (2002), 27-40.

[269] Unless otherwise noted, all following Qur'anic references will be taken from Ali Ünal, *The Qur'an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English*, (Somerset: Light, 2006).

friendship, tolerance and *hoşgörü* between people of different religions.[270]

In short, we observe that the issue of interreligious dialogue is perceived mostly positive by the participant especially in terms of humanly relationship, contributing world peace, and cultural heritage of Turkey. However, they do not fully convinced with the sincerity of Christians mostly because of the common discourse that missionary activities are very strong in Turkey. One may easily be able to observe that the development of such views is also influenced by the public textbooks and the views of scholars below.

In the Textbooks for Public Elementary and High Schools

Dialogue is a significant element of public school textbooks for the class called "Din Kültür ve Ahlak Bilgisi" (Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge), which is taught from fourth to twelfth grade.

We observe gradual study of dialogue and tolerance in the textbooks. In the textbook for the fifth grade students it is possible to find basic references to coexistence in the context of the life of Prophet Muhammad, discussed in the third unit/chapter. His words, "The believer is not he who eats his fill while his neighbor is hungry" are given for discussion at the class.[271] Hence, neighborly relationship is presented as the basis for good relationship between people.

The textbook for sixth grade students gives information about the common message of religions. For instance, in the third unit, which is about holy books, it is stated that holy books are not different in essence. Even though it states that Injil (Gospels) was

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[270] İskender Oymak, "Dinlerarası Diyaloga İlişkin Görüş ve Düşünceler," *Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 5 (2000): 169-92.

[271] İbrahim Kani, *İlköğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı 5* (Ankara: MEB yayınları, 2013), 76.

written after Jesus it does not state that it is deformed.[272] Thus, students are taught that religions keep basic messages for people's welfare.

The textbook for the seventh grade offers more resources regarding tolerance with other religions. The fourth unit states that different understandings of Islam are natural (it also mentions briefly the different schools/understandings of Islam such as Yassawiyya, Qadiriyya, Naqshbandiyya, Mawlaw'īyya, Alawiyya, and Bektashiyya), and that Muslims should be tolerant of them. In the same context the principle that there is no compulsion in religion is studied. The historical instance where the prophet admitted Najranite Christians in his masjid and let them pray there is given.[273]

The eighth grade textbook has a unit entitled "religions and universal advices" and focuses on other religions and universal values. Thus we see that tolerance becomes a significant part of the book. It references that Prophet Muhammad always had good relationships with his non-Muslim neighbors and visited them when they were sick and when they had a funeral. The prophet appreciated them because they were creatures of Allah. He was approaching them equally without making distinctions.[274] Here it repeats the Najranite Christians.[275] The unit states that Christianity is a religion sent by God and does not indicate it was deformed.[276] It also underscores that all religions call people to behave morally. Trustfulness, cleanliness, charity and helping, saving animals and the

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[272] Kenan Demirtaş and Murat Özdemir, *İlköğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı 6* (Ankara: İlke, 2013), 23.

[273] Nazım Genç, *İlköğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı 7* (Istanbul: Netbil, 2013), 107.

[274] Demirtaş and Özdemir, *İlköğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı 8* (Ankara: İlke, 2013), 66.

[275] Demirtaş and Özdemir, *İlköğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı 8*, 74.

[276] Demirtaş and Özdemir, *İlköğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı 8*, 132.

environment, staying away from harming others and oneself are the issues discussed under morality.[277] It also mentions that people should respect each other because of the freedom to have faith and practice that faith.[278] Therefore, significant preconditions of dialogue are laid down in the eighth grade book.

In the ninth grade book we come across more detailed information concerning other religions in the context of coexistence. It reiterates that religion encourages people to respect each other for humaneness. Religion contributes to social peace.[279] In addition, it states that Christianity, Judaism and Islam are religions based on revelation. The revelations were brought by Gabriel. It seems that the book keeps an Islamic perspective regarding other religions.[280] It also mentions the Madina Charter, which enabled Muslims to live with pagans and Jews peacefully for a period.[281] Last, it underscores that respecting human rights includes respecting people from other faiths and that this is a common value.[282]

In the fifth unit of the tenth grade textbook, in the framework of "rights, freedoms and religion" a significant example is given that prompts dialogue. After conquering Constantinople, Sultan Fatih let Christians live freely according to their religion. There were many mosques, churches and synagogues in the same neighborhood during his time.

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[277] Demirtaş and Özdemir, *İlköğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı* 8, 136-44.

[278] Demirtaş and Özdemir, *İlköğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı* 8, 145.

[279] Mehmet Evkuran, *Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı* 9 (Ankara: ADA, 2013), 17.

[280] Mehmet Evkuran, *Ortaöğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı* 9 (Ankara: ADA, 2013), 19.

[281] Evkuran, *Ortaöğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı* 9, 60.

[282] Evkuran, *Ortaöğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı* 9, 112.

It also mentions the Najranite Christians.[283]

In the eleventh grade textbook, dialogue/tolerance is presented in the framework of "Exemplary of Prophet Muhammad" and his tolerance is underlined. Najranite Christians are discussed.[284] It also mentions differences among Islamic sects as representative of the richness of Islam.[285]

In the twelfth grade textbook we observe much emphasis on tolerance. In the unit "Living Religions and Their Similar Features," Christianity and Judaism are defined as revelation-based religions. However, Christianity is presented in mixed ways according to Islamic and Christian sources. Therefore, it creates an ironic and inconsistent view of Christianity. For instance, it states that Injil (Gospel) was revealed to Jesus and he was sent to the Israelites in Palestine, which are traditional Islamic perspectives. Later on, it mentions that he was crucified and speaks of the Trinity, traditional Christian perspectives.

Moreover, it mentions common points of religions in faith, rituals, morality and significant days and nights.[286] The book also defines "interreligious relations," under the subtitle Interreligious Relations in Globalized World as the "gathering of people from other religions for exchanging of information and looking for solutions to problems."[287] It also underlines that interreligious respect exists in Islam after stressing that in today's

[283] Adil Kabakçı, *Ortaöğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı* 10 (Ankara: Tutku, 2013), 86.

[284] Eyüp Koç, et al. *Ortaöğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı* 11 (Ankara: MEB, 2013), 48.

[285] Koç, et al. *Ortaöğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı 11*, 64.

[286] Kenan Demirtaş, *Ortaöğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı* 12 (Ankara: Özgün, 2013), 144-78.

[287] Demirtaş, *Ortaöğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı* 12, 180.

world it is a requirement for people to gather on common values. It states that Islam can be explained in the best way through dialogue initiatives. This is different from missionary activity, which is often used as a means of sneaky goals. Therefore, dialogue should not be used as a means of ill intentions. Muslims should be careful toward "missionaries who belong to several religious groups linked to outside [powers] who misuse the weaknesses of one who might have some hesitations."[288]

In short, exploring interreligious dialogue in the textbooks for the public elementary and high school students, we observe that dialogue is presented within the framework of religious tolerance, human rights and freedom of faith. In addition, textbooks keep a very traditional Islamic stance toward other religions. Christianity and Judaism are the two religions presented with Islam as divinely revealed religions. When presenting them to students, the information is given in a mixed way by using both Islamic and Christian or Jewish perspectives. This inappropriate stance creates an incorrect picture of other religions.

In the Textbook for Imam Hatip High Schools

The issue of dialogue is presented in the *Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi Ders Kitabı* (Comparative History of Religions Textbook) for the Imam Hatip High Schools, which are public schools for religious education. The book was written by a committee and published by the National Education Ministry.

Dialogue is presented in the eighth chapter, "Religious Pluralism, Dialogue and Missionary." Dialogue is presented as a fact that is between religious pluralism and missionary activity in this last chapter of the book. The issue is discussed within the

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[288] Demirtaş, *Ortaöğretim Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Ders Kitabı* 12, 181-83.

framework that living together is required in a contemporary pluralistic environment, Christians' desire to go monopole in the globalized world and transformation of their destructive attitude toward Muslims is necessary. Therefore, dialogue stays between these two significant poles. However, some problems appear here.[289]

The book perceives religious pluralism as coexistence/living together of members of different religions with *hoşgörü*/tolerance in the globalized world that is rapidly shrinking with technical developments. It also reminds the reader that religious pluralism is also conceived as a philosophical term that presupposes all religious traditions are on different, true paths to God. Since the book generally treats religious pluralism as a social concept, it creates an image of religious coexistence. Therefore, the term coexistence/living together would be better than religious pluralism.[290]

Even though every religion claims it is the true religion/faith, this does not prevent individuals from treating members of other religions with tolerance/*hoşgörü* because religions affirm the real existence of other religions. In a peaceful environment every people will find a place to practice their religious requirements; they also will be able to express and proclaim their message to others. The book explains the goal of interreligious dialogue as to contribute to the culture of coexistence/living together.[291] The book also gives examples from the history of Islam regarding interreligious dialogue and shows that it has a place in Turkish Islamic culture.[292]

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[289] Ekrem Özbay et al., *İmam Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi Ders Kitabı* (Ankara: MEB Devlet Kitapları, 2010), 163.

[290] Özbay et al., *İmam Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi Ders Kitabı,* 164.

[291] Özbay et al., *İmam Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi Ders Kitabı,* 166.

[292] Özbay et al., *İmam Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi Ders Kitabı,* 167.

After drawing these positive features of dialogue, the book also states that dialogue can be used as a means of missionary/colonization. Nevertheless, it hopes such negative experiences of the past do not continue in the future, because for Muslims there is not any fear of interacting with adherents of other religions. [293] The last paragraph of the chapter stresses that dialogue must be practiced by the professionals in the area.[294] In short, dialogue is presented in the tension of pluralism and missionary activities. And reader is warned against the difficulties of dialogue.

In the Textbook for Distance University Education

Dinler Tarihi (History of Religions), the book for distance education for the Department of Islamic Theology, which has a chapter on dialogue, gives us an idea about interreligious dialogue in university level books. The book was written by Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, both professors from Ankara University Divinity Faculty. The issue of dialogue is discussed in detail in the twelfth chapter. The previous chapter is about religious traditions in Turkey and a later chapter is about missionary activities. This implies that dialogue has a strong relationship with the pluralistic environment of Turkey and missionary efforts and therefore should be treated tentatively. Here it appears that it keeps a similar attitude toward dialogue. The basic reason is that dialogue is generally examined in the field of the History of Religions, and academicians in the field have a similar understanding of dialogue. Since the textbooks are written by referencing books in history of religions, dialogue is presented within *hoşgörü*/pluralism and a missionary perspective. The main reason that it is related with missionary activity is the idea that it

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[293] Özbay et al., *İmam Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi Ders Kitabı,* 168.

[294] Özbay et al., *İmam Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi Ders Kitabı,* 168.

was officially started by the Roman Catholic Church. While today adherents of so many different religions can come together on the basis of dialogue independent from Christianity, it would be unfair to link dialogue and Christian missionaries. The clear indication of this problem is the Turkish Muslim academicians' limited perception of dialogue as a Christian tool.[295]

The book examines the historical background of the appearance of dialogue. It asserts that followers of the three religions were able to come together to debate/discuss without offending, but that such activities were not organized as systematically as today. The book includes mistakes by using dialogue with its general meaning, which creates conceptual confusion. The debates in the past on religious issues cannot be accepted as dialogue in the context of interreligious dialogue. This misrepresentation of dialogue for the sake of introducing the historical background of dialogue appears in the writings of Aydüz also.[296]

Dinler Tarihi also points out that the dialogue call of Catholics has been perceived cautiously because of the negative attitudes of Christians in the past.[297] The book claims that after the Crusades, the West and Islam directly interacted, but Islam was introduced to the West incorrectly. It appears that the book keeps the general attitude of Turkish Muslim scholars.[298] Christians are called friends and Jews enemies. However, these kinds

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[295] Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi, Açık Öğretim Fakültesi İçin* (Anadolu Üniv. Yayını: Eskişehir, 2005), 175.

[296] Adam and Katar, *Dinler Tarihi, Açık Öğretim Fakültesi İçin,* 176. We explore Aydüz's views in detail below.

[297] Adam and Katar, *Dinler Tarihi, Açık Öğretim Fakültesi İçin,* 176.

[298] Adam and Katar, *Dinler Tarihi, Açık Öğretim Fakültesi İçin,* 185.

of statements are questioned by many Muslims.[299]

The book ought to state also that friend-enemy concepts are variable/dependent notions that change from time to time and person to person. One cannot argue that a religious group is statically friend or enemy. The historical events clearly show that this presupposition is incorrect. Rejectionists usually think statically; supporters of dialogue usually think dynamically as Aydüz does in his book.[300]

The book touches on the positive developments in the Medina and Medina Charter. The authors define Muslim-Jewish-Christian relations in Andalusia as a "beautiful dialogue."[301] They moreover state that "There is no problem for Muslims to attend interreligious dialogue, which is revived by Catholic Christians, according to Islam."[302] Muslims who would join dialogue must be ready for every aspect and know the goals of their dialogue partners. Without knowing this, dialogue will be harmful, so professionals should enter into dialogue.[303]

In the summary part of the chapter the following interesting point is made: "Catholics' goal of dialogue is not bringing adherents of different religions and cultures together for finding solutions for contemporary problems. But they perceive dialogue as an indirect way for spreading Christianity."[304]

According to the book, the Qur'an speaks of the *tawhid*, faith in the hereafter and

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[299] Adam and Katar, *Dinler Tarihi, Açık Öğretim Fakültesi İçin,* 188.

[300] Adam and Katar, *Dinler Tarihi, Açık Öğretim Fakültesi İçin,* 188.

[301] Adam and Katar, *Dinler Tarihi, Açık Öğretim Fakültesi İçin,* 189.

[302] Adam and Katar, *Dinler Tarihi, Açık Öğretim Fakültesi İçin,* 189.

[303] Adam and Katar, *Dinler Tarihi, Açık Öğretim Fakültesi İçin,* 189.

[304] Adam and Katar, *Dinler Tarihi, Açık Öğretim Fakültesi İçin,* 189.

practicing good deeds as the common points with People of the Book and reminds them of these crucial points. In this way, Jews and Christians are called to dialogue with Muslims. However, the Qur'an questions Christians in terms of their faith and Jews in terms of their behavior.[305]

In short, the textbooks for the public education from fourth grade to university level students keep parallel attitude toward interreligious dialogue. While interreligious dialogue on the grassroots is presented as a natural behavior, the official call for dialogue from Christians in the second half of the twentieth century is approached cautiously. The basic reasons behind this reaction are historical facts, missionary activities and ill intentions. Second, a basis for Islamic dialogue is easily found by referencing positive statements in the Qur'an and instances from the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Turkish Islamic tradition is also presented as significant source for dialogue. Last, considering these points, needless to say, the textbooks present a parallel attitude with the PRA toward interreligious dialogue. Hence, interreligious dialogue is perceived similarly in both official institution and public education between the tension of pluralism and missionary activities.

After examining interreligious dialogue in organizational level and public education textbooks, now I can explore it in the writings of Turkish scholars.

Dialogue in the Thoughts of Scholars

It is impossible to set forth all the opinions on dialogue propounded by Turkish Muslim scholars. Here, I willdiscuss two major personalities whose works are frequently discussed in almost every setting regarding dialogue: Said Nursi and Fethullah Gulen.

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[305] Adam and Katar, *Dinler Tarihi, Açık Öğretim Fakültesi İçin,* 190.

Considering the life and the works of Said Nursi, one can perceive that his Islamic-centered views regarding Christians play a significant role in terms of his faithful followers understanding dialogical relationships with Christians. Fethullah Gulen is considered a representative of dialogue in the Turkish context for his bold attempt to embody theory in practice. His perception of dialogue deeply constitutes his movements' remarkable effort for engaging dialogue with Christians and organizing their own events.

To present a multidimensional Turkish perception of the interreligious dialogue call of Christianity, I will touch also on views of scholars who represent a very broad scope of views: Suat Yıldırım, Mehmet Bayraktar, Mustafa Erdem, Yümni Sezen, Hüseyin Cahit Mesut Kaynak, Ali Kemal Belviranlı, Osman Cilacı, İlhan Arsel, İsmail Mutlu, Orhan Çeker, M. Sadettin Evrin and Niyazi Öktem.

I must also state that interreligious dialogue is a subject that in Turkey almost all theologians, especially scholars in History of Religions, write about and delivers their. Among them I should mention Mustafa Alıcı,[306] Şinasi Gündüz,[307] Baki Adam,[308] Ali

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[306] Some of the important studies of Dr.Alıcı are: *Müslüman-Hıristiyan Diyaloğu.* 2nd edition (Istanbul: İz, 2011); "Dinlerarası Diyaloğun Ana Konuları ve Hedefleri." *EKEV* 7:16 (2003), 1-16; "Diyaloğun Misyo-Politiği: Hıristiyan Teolojisinde Diyalog-Misyon İlişkisi." *İslâmî Araştırmalar* 20:2 (2007), 145-163; "II. Vatikan Konsili Sonrası Papalık Diyalog Vesikalarında Türkiye (1962-2001)." *Yeni Türkiye Dergisi* 46 (2002), 364-376; "Müşterek Kelimeler ve Aykırı Oluşlar: Al-i İmran 64 Ayeti ve Müslüman – Hıristiyan Diyalogu Sürecine Pratik Bir Bakış." *Köprü Dergisi* 93 (2006), 23-44.

[307] Some of the important studies of Dr.Gündüz are: *Dinsel Şiddet (Sevgi Söyleminden Şiddet Realitesine Hıristiyanlık).* Samsun: Etüt, 2002; Gündüz, Şinasi. *Küresel Sorunlar ve Din* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu, 2005); "Dinin Siyasallaşması ve Hıristiyan Misyonu." İslamiyat 5:3 (2002), 49-72; "Dinlerarası Diyalog Ne Demektir?." In *Birlikte Yaşama Kültürü ve Hoşgörü*, Mehmet Evkuran et al. (Ankara: Öncü: 2010), 53-58.

İsra Güngör,[309] Bülent Şenay,[310] Mehmet Aydın,[311] Ömer Faruk Harman,[312] Şevket Yavuz,[313] Ali İhsan Yitik,[314] Fuat Aydın,[315] Ali Erbaş,[316] Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu,[317] Hakan

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[308] Some of the important studies of Dr. Adam are: "Katolik Kilisesi'nin Kurtuluşu Öğretisi Açısından Yahudiliğe ve İslam Bakışı," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 41:1 (2000), 195-224; *Yahudilik ve Hıristiyanlık Açısından Diğer Dinler* (İstanbul: Pınar, 2002); Baki Adam & Mehmet Katar, Dinler Tarihi, Açık Öğretim Fakültesi İçin, Anadolu Üniv. (Yayını: Eskişehir, 2005).

[309] Some of the important studies of Dr. Güngör are: "Müslüman-Hıristiyan Diyaloguna Güncel Yaklaşımlar," in *Dinler Tarihi Araştır maları IV: Müslümanlar ve Diğer Din Mensupları* (Ankara: Türkiye Dinler Tarihi Derneği Yayınları, 2004), 333–43; "Forty Years after *Nostra Aetate*: Reflections on Interreligious Dialogue in Turkey," *Islamochristiana* 32 (2006), 99-115; "Katolik Kilisesi'nin Çağdaş Misyon Anlayışında Diyalog Kavramı," in Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları 1 Sempozyum 9-9 November 1996, (Ankara: Dinler Tarihi Derneği, 1998), 177-92; "Türkiye, Avrupa Birliği ve Dinler Arası Diyalog," *Türk Yurdu* 31:284 (2011), 207-14; *Vatikan Misyon ve Diyalog* (Ankara: Alperen), 2002.

[310] Bülent Şenay, "Islam and Other Religions," *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 9:9 (2000), 409-30; "Quo Vadis Dialog: 'Redemptoris Missio' Değil 'Eman' ve 'Tevellâ'," 796-811.

[311] Mehmet Aydın, "Dinlerarası Diyalog Çağın Bir İhtiyacı," *Türk Yurdu Dergisi* 209 (2005), 49-51; *Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Hoşgörü*, Besinci Avrasya İslam Şurası (Ankara: TDV, 2003); "Türk Toplumunda Dini Hoşgörünün Temelleri, Selçuk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fak," *Dergisi* 8 (1998), 7-17.

[312] Some of Harman's important studies are Ömer Faruk Harman, "Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Papa Benedict," in *Polemik Değil Diyalog*, ed, Hayreddin Karaman et al. (Istanbul: Ufuk, 2006), 55–64; "Farklılık Zenginliliktir," Kültürler Arası Diyalog Platformu, Istanbul, Diyalog Avrasya Yayınları, 2004; "Hıristiyanların İslâm'a Bakışı," Asrımızda Müslüman-Hıristiyan Münasebetleri (İstanbul: ISAV, 1993), 95-110; "Katolik Kilisesi Diyalogu ve Misyonerlik," *Türk Yurdu Dergisi* 209 (2005), 54–57.

[313] Şevket Yavuz, 'Öteki' ile 'Beriki' Arasındaki Salınımda Dinlerde Birlikte ve Beraber Yaşamanın Teolojik ve Pratik İmkanı," *Milel ve Nihal* 6:2 (2009), 31-50.

[314] Ali İhsan Yitik, "Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Dünya Barışı," in *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı*, 60-66; "Islam and Pluralism," *Journal of Religious Culture* 68 (2004), 1-5.

Olgun,[318] and Mehmet Esgin.[319] There are also academicians in other areas of specialty such as Basic Islamic Sciences and Religious Philosophy at the Faculties of Theology who discuss interreligious dialogue: Kenan Görsoy, Mehmet S. Aydın, Hayrettin Karaman, İbrahim Canan, Mustafa Köylü, Levent Öztürk, Abdulhakim Yüce, Bayram Sevinç, Beyza Bilgin, Ali Can, Cafer Sadık Yaran, Ramazan Uçar, Mehmet Okuyan, Süleyman Ateş, Nevzat Aşıkoğlu, Bekir Karlığa, Tahsin Görgün, Ali Dere and M. Macit Kenanoğlu are among the influential academicians.

I should also mention writers who touch upon interreligious dialogue in a more popular way. In this respect I can state Cemal Uşak, Ali Ünal, Tuncer Elmacıoğlu, Ali Bulaç, Abdullah Aymaz, Ahmet Kurucan, Hüseyin Irmak, and Ömer Fevzi Mardin[320] as

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[315] Fuat Aydın, *Hıristiyanların İslam'ından Müslümanların* İslam'ına (İstanbul: Aytaç, 2005).

[316] Ali Erbaş, "Müslüman-Hıristiyan Münasebetleri Süresince Hıristiyanların İslam'a ve Müslümanlara Bakışı," *İLAM Araştırma Dergisi* 3:2 (1998), 117-53; "Hoşgörü Noktasında Yahudi, Hristiyan ve Müslümanlar'ın Birbirlerine Yaklaşımları, *İlim ve Sanat* 44/45 (1997), 156-64.

[317] Ekram Sarıkçıoğlu, "A General Outlook on Islam Christianitiy Dialogue," in *Religion, Cultures and Tolarance Past and Present* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü Yayınları, 1990), 91-100; "Önce Kendi İçimizde Diyalog," *Türk Yurdu Dergis*, 209 (2005), 42-43; "İslam Dışı Dinlerde Kur'an'ın Temel Yaklaşımı ve İbrahimi Din Ölçüsü," in *Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları IV Müslümanlar ve Diğer Din Mensupları* (Ankara: Dinler Tarihi Derneği, 2004), 35-40.

[318] Hakan Olgun,"Diyanet'in Dinlerarası Diyalog Algısı," *Milel ve Nihal* 6:2 (2009), 265-286.

[319] Mehmet Esgin, "Kur'an'ı Kerim'in Diğer Dinlere Karşı Tavrı," *Bozok Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 5:5 (2014), 77-105.

[320] Even though his works are pre-dated to Second Vatican Council, his views can be considered positive in terms of Christian-Muslim dialogue. Yet, I should articulate that his views regarding relations with Christians has totally different basis and implications from Nursi and then Gülen.

supportive of interreligious dialogue, and Müslim Karabacak, Ahmet Tekin, Fikri Atılbaz, Mehmet Oruç, Mehmet Şevket Eygi, Ali Ergenekon, Ebubekir Sifil, Kadir Mısıroğlu, Lütfü Özşahin, Abdülaziz Bayındır, Ahmet Mahmut Ünlü, Vedat Özcan, and Haydar Baş as rejecting a Christian call for dialogue. I provided an extended bibliography concerning these works.

Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1877-1960)

Said Nursi is one of the most influential Muslim scholars of the twentieth century in the world and Turkey in particular.[321] While his works date before the Second Vatican Council, his understanding and reinterpretation of Islam in the modern world have deeply affected the Turkish intellectual mindset. Therefore, I will briefly examine his basic views on Christianity and collaboration with Christians.[322]

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[321] There are International Said Nursi Symposiums held by Nur Movement, see http://iikv.org/academy/index.php/sympeng/index. Also, there are numerous studies on his perception of Muslim-Christian relations: Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, *Muslim Christian Alliance*, compiled by Ittihad. İstanbul: İttihad, 2000; Şükran Vahide, "Reconciliation with Christianity and the West in Said Nursi's Thought and Practice: An Overview," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 19:1 (2008), 17-23; Colin Turner, "Reconsidering Jihad: The Perspective of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi," *Nova Religio* 11:2 (2007), 94-11; Cuneyt Şimşek and Faris Kaya, "Nursi's Call for Faith-Based Interfaith Cooperation," *Muslim World* 100 (2010), 490-503; Zeki Saritoprak, "Said Nursi on Muslim-Christian Relations Leading to World Peace," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 19:1 (2008), 25-37; Zeki Saritoprak, "Said Nursi's Teachings on the People of the Book: A Case Study of Islamic Social Policy in the Early Twentieth Century," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 11:3 (2000), 321-32.

[322] Though scholars such as Davut Aydüz have articles such as "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Views of Said Nursi," I do not think we can call it interreligious dialogue in the contemporary sense. Because the issue of dialogue is mostly understood in the post-Vatican II context, we may basically consider his work as

In order to understand Nursi's perception of the relationship to non-Muslims, it is significant to consider the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the period of fast decline of the Ottoman Empire in particular and the Muslim world's relation with the West in general. Besides sociopolitical disaster, Muslims faced intellectual threats that were spreading rapidly around the world, such as nationalism, communism, atheism and materialism. Two major trends appeared in such situations. On the one hand, many Muslims responded to these challenges by abandoning traditional values and accepting Western thoughts. On the other hand, the majority of Muslim intellectuals rejected Western ideas and isolated themselves from the rest of the world, endeavoring for more fundamental Islamic views. Within this polarization of the responses of Muslim intellectuals toward the Western modernity, Said Nursi formed a faith-based understanding that reconciles Islamic and Western values. By attempting to show that Islam is not opposed to science and technology, Nursi highlights Islam's emphasis on faith and integration in the modern world.[323]

Since the newly founded Turkish state was in danger of communism, Nursi challenged atheistic thoughts throughout his life. His influential thoughts caused him to be imprisoned and exiled in different parts of Turkey. However, these actions did not prevent him or his followers from spreading his thoughts and books in the country. In his books, called Risale-i Nur (Epistles of Light), using scientific knowledge and information, he makes efforts to prove the existence of God. According to him, nature,

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Turkish Muslim views about Muslim-Christian relations. See Davut Aydüz, "Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Bediüzzaman Said Nursi'ye Göre İslâm-Hıristiyan Diyalogu," *Köprü* 93 (2006), 63-75.

[323] Thomas Michel, "Peaceful Movements in the Muslim World," in *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics*, ed. Thomas Banchoff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 231-32.

the universe, atoms, galaxies, earth and plants are all signs of God on earth. After explaining how complex the nature of their structure is and how priceless their values, he emphasizes how it is impossible for them to come into existence by chance. Human beings' unique qualities, spiritual characteristics, emotional values, and so on are also signs of God's existence.[324]

After pointing out Nursi's general understanding of religion in the modern world, I can turn to his perception of Christianity. Yet it will be helpful to state that he does not have a specific booklet or chapter on Muslim-Christian relations. We find his views concerning the Christian religious situation according to Islam in different books of the Risale-i Nur.

Throughout Risale-i Nur, as I note above, Nursi intensely focuses on faith in one God and love for God, which is for him the essential goal of human life. Faith, according to Nursi, has two sides. One is affirmation of the existence of love for God with the heart. The other is *intisab* (belonging), the link established between God and all other things. A person who believes in God is secure and confident from all kinds of dangers and fears. And, since a believer creates a connection with God by having clear faith, he becomes a friend with everything by perceiving them as the expression of God's names and attributes and possession of God. On this basis a believer can establish a strong relationship with people and nature. One of the examples Nursi gives in this context can be found in *Sözler* (Words).[325] When a person declares "bismillah (in the name of God)" before starting his or her work, everything related to that work will serve him because he

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[324] For instance see Nursi, *Sözler*, 13, 66-68, 333.

[325] Nursi, *Sözler*, 5-15.

or she declares it in the name of the creator. Thus, a true believer can conceive the universe as a representation of God's divine names and attributes. Hence, by acknowledging God's everlasting power and presence, a believer would not feel alienated and isolated from the universe.. Through having sound faith in and connection (*intisab*) to God, every faithful Muslim can also be in good relations with everybody and even everything. According to Nursi, perfect faith also connects a Muslim with other Muslims in the world and makes them brothers and sisters in one faith. Moreover, one can understand from his views that when they manifest the divine names and attributes of God, by considering God's beauty and compassion, Muslims are encouraged to be compassionate towards non-Muslims.[326]

Nursi by following a traditional Islamic approach to Christians underscores that even though Torah, Injil (Gospels) and Zabur (Psalms) are not miraculous as the Qur'an and are translations of the original texts, it is possible to find references to the prophethood of Muhammad in their current form. In this respect, he explores in detail how historical Christian figures such as Bahira, Najashi, Harith b. Abi Shumar, al Gasani, Ibn Ala, and Haraklius affirmed his prophethood.[327] Moreover, the Islamic virtue of justice is a substantial motivation behind Nursi's understanding of Christians. He usually referes to historical events such as that the Caliph Ömar was judged because of the complaint by a non-Muslim.[328] We also observe that Nursi points out religiosity as alternative to racism, when he examines racism/nationalism in the Umayyad Dynasty and

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[326] Şimşek and Kaya, "Nursi's Call for Faith-Based Interfaith Cooperation," 490-503.

[327] Nursi, *Mektubat*, 163-64, 174.

[328] Nursi, *Emirdağ Lahikası II*, 157-58; *Şualar*, 358, 375.

Arabs' nationalistic reaction to Turks. For him, although nationalism/racism is nurtured by harming other nations, religiosity will contribute to friendship. He believes that collaboration between members of the same or different religions will be the basis for peace between not only four hundred Muslim world (in his time) and eight hundred Christians who desire for peace.[329]

Another significant view of Nursi relevant to the dissertation is that he does not consider Europe a monolithic community. According to Nursi, two different and opposite Europes exist. The apparent Europe is the source of dangerous thoughts and ideologies that contradict Islam and human nature. The other is the Christian Europe, which has roots in Jesus Christ's original messages. This Europe does not completely contradict Islamic civilization.[330] Nursi stresses that Muslims will collaborate with true pious Christians (*İsevilerin hakiki dindarları*)[331] to fight against their common enenmy of communism in the Last Time (*Ahir Zaman*).[332] He states that both the USA and the Europe must stay close to the Qur'an and Islam because of the danger of communism and terrorism.[333] This collaboration will happen when Christianity acts in its original and true form.[334] In this regard, Muslims and Christian missionaries must be careful against

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[329] Nursi, *Emirdağ Lahikası II*, 222-23.

[330] Nursi, *İman ve Küfür Müvazeneleri*, On Yedinci Lema beşinci Nokta, http://www.erisale.com/?locale=tr&bookId=11&pageNo=193#content.tr.11.177

[331] When he criticizes Christians, he uses the term "arrogant Christians" or "oppressor Christians," *Şualar,* 732.

[332] Nursi, *Kastamonu Lahikası*, 111-12.

[333] Nursi,*Emirdağ Lahikası* II, 54.

[334] Nursi, *Emirdağ Lahikası*, 58; *Lemalar*, 151; *Mektubat*, 57; *Tarihçe-i Hayat*, 484.

communism's attempt to breaking their collaboration.[335] Moreover, Nursi stresses that when Muslims and Christians fight against the attacks of cmmunism, the differences in the two religions should not be highlighted.[336]

In his famous Damascus Sermon in 1911, Nursi explicated his ideas about the purification of Christianity. According to him, "true Christianity, stripping off superstition and corrupted belief, will be transformed into Islam, following the Qur'an, it will unite with Islam."[337] Sidney Griffith compares Nursi's statement with Louis Massignon, a Catholic friar and theologian who was influential in the decisions of the Second Vatican Council concerning dialogue with Muslims. Massignon sees great points in Islam and expects Islam's unification with Christianity. According to Griffith, since Massignon and Nursi both see positive points in the other's religion, neither sees the other religion as an opposing culture or religion. For him, considering the commonalities is imperative for starting dialogue.[338]

It is also possible to find Nursi's perception of non-Muslims in his interpretation of Qur'an 5:51[339] "O you who believe! Take not the Jews and Christians for friends and

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[335] Nursi,*Emirdağ Lahikası*, 159-60; *Tarihçe-i Hayat,* 499.

[336] Nursi,*Emirdağ Lahikası*, 206.

[337] Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, trans. Şükran Vahide, 2nd edition (Istanbul: Sözler, 1996), 36, http://www.saidnur.com/foreign/en/risaleler/sermon1.htm .

[338] Sidney Griffith, "Bediüzzaman Said Nursi and Louis Massignon in Pursuit of God's Word: A Muslim and a Christian on the Straight Path," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 19:1(2010), 12-13.

[339] Qur'an 5:51. "O you who believe! Take not the Jews and Christians for friends and allies (in their Judaism and Christianity, and against the believers). Some among them are friends and allies to some others. Whoever among you takes them for friends and allies (in their Judaism and Christianity and against the believers) will eventually become one of them (and be counted among them in the Hereafter). Surely

allies/friends." He understands the verse as not de facto for every kind of relation, which can be interpreted in different contexts. He understands the verses in the historical circumstances during the time of the prophet. Some individual Jews or Christians who were treating Muslims with hypocrisy were the subject of the verse; and therefore Muslims were warned. This verse should be perceived as prohibition applies to certain forms of relationships, not all. Accordingly, he says, "our friendship with the Christians and Jews is from the standpoint of their civilization, their progress, and the protection of the social order… thus, the Qur'anic prohibition does not encompass this friendship."[340]

Also, Nursi states that even though Injil (Gospels) were deformed during history, the basic points on faith partly kept their originality. Christians believe Jesus is the son of God, which is rejected by Islam, but Nursi points it is because Christians became exaggerated in their love and admiration of Jesus as a prophet that they were led them to consider him the son of God.[341] We observe that Nursi attempts to understand why Christians developed their faith in Jesus as son of God in an Islamic perspective. Moreover, he respects the religiosity and fidelity of Christians toward their faith. Furthermore, he requests his fellow Muslims to treat non-Muslims justly so that Muslims in non-Muslim countries will be treated well.

Lastl, in his *Kastamonu Lahikası*, Nursi presents striking views about the situation of Christians who died during World War II. Nursi states that people who died because of

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God does not guide such wrongdoers."

[340] Nursi, *Münazarat* (Istanbul: Envar 1993), 31-32. Also see Zeki Sarıtoprak, "Said Nursi's Teachings on the People of the Book: A Case Study of Islamic Social Policy in the Early Twentieth Century," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 11:3 (2000), 321-32.

[341] Nursi, *Mektubat*, 106.

the disasters should be considered martyrs. Similarly, especially children and teenagers younger than 15 years old are martyrs regardeless of their religions. If they are older than 15 and are innocent and oppressed, their reward will be very high in the hereafter and they may avoid Hell because God's mercy is infinite.[342] Thus, he underscores the fact that regardless of one's religion, salvation depends on independence, the opportunity to reach clear and accurate information about religions and freedom of religion.

Besides promoting his positive thoughts regarding Christians, Nursi wrote a letter to Pope Pius XII in which he advocated cooperation against the common danger of atheism. It is reported that the Pope responded by mail that these views were appreciated by the Holy See. It is also known that he met in 1953 with Athenogaros, the religious leader of the Christian community in Turkey.[343]

All in all, instead of focusing on dissimilarities and contradictions, Nursi's emphasis on commonalities is a very important step for development of interreligious dialogue in the Turkish context. His stress on ignorance as a common enemy of religious people that should be monitored as a negative version of "learning" is one of the crucial conditions and principles of dialogue addressed by contemporary scholarship. What is so remarkable in his life is that, even though he experienced the fall of the empire and two world wars, he achieved making the distinction between Christians.

Nursi's traditionalist views and his Islamic interpretation of the multireligious and cultural world have deeply affected Turkish intellectuals and community. His followers, called *Nurcular*, include a significant part of society and academia. One of the foremost

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[342] Nursi, *Kastamonu Lahikası*, 111-12; see also *Tarihçe-i Hayat*, 296.

[343] Aydüz, "Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Bediüzzaman Said Nursi'ye Göre İslâm-Hıristiyan Diyalogu."

representatives of a section of this movement is Fethullah Gulen's community. Now we can explore Gülen's views regarding dialogue with Christians.

M. Fethullah Gülen

As I noted above, Fethullah Gülen's engagment into dialogue is one of the turning points for interreligious dialogue activities in Turkey. Gülen, by taking a step further than Nursi's thoughts, preached love and a tolerance-centered Islamic view toward nature and humans. By pointing out ignorance as the common enemy of human beings, he proclaimed the importance of education and asked people to establish educational institutes around the world.

I have stated that there are numerous studies of Gülen's views on dialogue.[344] Yet, it is possible to find his views about interreligious dialogue presented very clearly and briefly in the chapter "Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi'nin Diyalog Etrafında Sorulan Sorulara Verdiği Cevaplar" (The answers of Fethullah Gülen Hodja about Questions regarding Dialogue) in the book *Diyaloğun Dini ve Tarihi Temelleri* (Religious and Historical Basis of Dialogue) edited by Ömer Çetinkaya.

Gülen states that "din mensupları arası diyalog" is the correct Turkish translation

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[344] Some of them are Thomas Michel, "Sufism and Modernity in the Thought of Fethullah Gülen," *Muslim World* 95 (2005), 341-58; Zeki Saritoprak and Sidney Griffith, "Fethullah Gülen and the 'People of the Book': A Voice from Turkey for Interfaith Dialogue," *Muslim World* 95 (2005), 329-40; Michael J. Fontenot and Karen Fontenot, "The Gulen Movement: Communicating Modernization, Tolerance, and Dialogue in the Islamic World," *International Journal of the Humanities* 6:12 (2009), 67-78; Ali Ünal, "An Interview with Fethullah Gülen," trans, Zeki Saritoprak, *Muslim World* 95 (2005), 447-67. Ali Bulaç's book *Din-Kent ve Cemaat: Fethullah Gülen Örneği* (İstanbul: Ufuk, 2008) has a comprehensive chapter on Gülen's perspective on interreligious dialogue and mission (215-80).

of the term "interreligious dialogue." He proposes two more concepts, "intercultural dialogue" and "dialogue among different philosophies," and by referring to these concepts states that dialogue will spread to religions other than the divine religions. In this context, dialogue includes all events that encourage people to listen, to learn from each other and to mutually talk without imposing views on each other, so as to coexist peacefully and even collaborate for solving common human problems.[345] Moreover, when perceiving life in this way, *hoşgörü* and dialogue mean respecting and accepting everyone as they are. In respect to dialogue, it is the responsibility on every Muslims to engage in dialogue. Moreover, he stresses that respecting is different from accepting, so dialogue never means accepting views of others as totally correct.[346]

Gülen considers that dialogue in the sense of "accepting everyone as they are" is not new to Islamic tradition. For him the Medina Charter and Last Sermon of the prophet are concrete examples of dialogue in Islamic context.[347] Pointing out that freedom of religion is mostly provided – even there were some negative instances – in Muslim states, he believes dialogue has been experienced in the history of Islam. In this context, he considers rulers who oppressed non-Muslims as not understanding Islam properly.[348]

In terms of Qur'anic foundations for dialogue, Gülen refers to Qur'an 20:44, where Allah orders Moses to speak kindly to the Pharaoh and that, even to such an

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[345] Fethullah Gülen, "Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi'nin Diyalog Etrafında Sorulan Sorulara Verdiği Cevaplar," in *Diyaloğun Dini ve Tarihi Temelleri,* ed. Ömer Çetinkaya (Istanbul: Işık, 2006), 13.

[346] "Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi'nin Diyalog Etrafında Sorulan Sorulara Verdiği Cevaplar," 14.

[347] "Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi'nin Diyalog Etrafında Sorulan Sorulara Verdiği Cevaplar," 14.

[348]" Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi'nin Diyalog Etrafında Sorulan Sorulara Verdiği Cevaplar," 15.

oppressive ruler, God wants Muslims to be gentle.[349] Moreover, referring to the first five verses of the surah al-Baqara,[350] he states that one of the requirements of being a faithful Muslim is to accept previous prophets. Gülen understands this requirement as a significant base for dialogue with People of the Book.[351]

In terms of the verse known as "common word" Qur'an 3:64, Gülen believes that if one represents Islam as a palace, there are countless doors that open for entrance. Islam embraces everyone according to their distinctive positions and everyone can enter any door of Islam they want. So, this verse calls People of the Book to one of the doors already known to them and builds a bridge between Muslims and People of the Book. He also refers to Qur'an 29:46[352] and emphasizes that this verse provides a general attitude Muslims should take toward People of the Book, discussing with them in the most

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[349]" Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi'nin Diyalog Etrafında Sorulan Sorulara Verdiği Cevaplar," 16.

[350] "Alif. Lâm. Mîm. This is the (most honored, matchless) Book: there is no doubt about it a guidance for the God-revering, pious who keep their duty to God. Those who believe in the Unseen, establish the prayer in conformity with its conditions, and out of what We have provided for them (of wealth, knowledge, power, etc.), they spend (to provide sustenance for the needy and in God's cause, purely for the good pleasure of God and without placing others under obligation.). And those who believe in what is sent down to you, and what was sent down before you (such as the Torah, Gospel and Psalms, and the Scrolls of Abraham), and in the Hereafter, they have certainty of faith. Those (illustrious ones) stand on true guidance (originating in the Qur'an) from their Lord; and they are those who are the prosperous."

[351] "Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi'nin Diyalog Etrafında Sorulan Sorulara Verdiği Cevaplar," 16.

[352] "Do not argue with those who were given the Book save in the best way, unless it be those of them who are given to wrongdoing (and, therefore, not accessible to courteous argument). Say (to them): "We believe in what has been sent down to us and what was sent down to you, and your God and our God is one and the same. We are Muslims wholly submitted to Him.""

favorable way and coming together on common faith in God.[353] Therefore, in relationship with nonoppressive non-Muslims, Muslims must treat them in a nonoppressive and egalitarian way.[354]

In terms of the verses mostly understood as negative in terms of interreligious dialogue, Gülen brings supportive interpretations. He stresses that the Qur'an must be understood within certain scholarly methods of *tahsis*, *ta'mim*, *takyit* and *asbab-al-nuzul*. The verses (Qur'an 5:51 and 3.118) that state, "Take not the Jews and Christians for friends and allies" were revealed after historical events and represent certain situations and conditions. He states that besides Qur'an 5:51 we must observe 60:9,[355] which states that Muslims should not avoid from nonoppressive, non-Muslims.[356] Moreover, Qur'an 5:51 only forbids Muslims from taking them as friends for no other reason than their Jewishness or Christianity; otherwise friendship is not prohibited. He refers to the words of Said Nursi, "if you have a Jewish or Christian wife, of course you will love her." Moreover, political and social conditions should be considered when taking People of the Book as friends.[357]

He also presents Prophet Muhammad's relations with non-Muslims and his invitation to them to Islam many times with gentle words as significant examples that can

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[353] Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi'nin Diyalog Etrafında Sorulan Sorulara Verdiği Cevaplar, 17-18.

[354] He also refers to Qur'an 60:8 for providing Qur'anic basis for dialogue.

[355] Qur'an 60:9, "God only forbids you, as regards those who make war against you on account of your Religion and drive you away from your homes, or support others to drive you away, to take them for friends and guardians. Whoever takes them for friends and guardians, those are the wrongdoers."

[356] "Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi'nin Diyalog Etrafında Sorulan Sorulara Verdiği Cevaplar," 21.

[357] "Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi'nin Diyalog Etrafında Sorulan Sorulara Verdiği Cevaplar," 22.

be considered as a basis of Islamic dialogue.[358]

All in all, we observe that Fethullah Gülen perceives interreligious dialogue as accepting everyone in their respective positions and collaborating for world peace, so he understands it as compatible with Islam. He also understands dialogue as a point where Muslims can present themselves to non-Muslims and learn from others in a proper way. Hence, we see that he perceives dialogue as mutual learning/understanding and moral/ethical collaboration for world peace. He does not favor the philosophy of religious pluralism or theological dialogue and he keeps an inclusive approach to non-Muslims.

After briefly examining the views the two significant Turkish Muslim scholars, I will now explore different perceptions of dialogue from a very broad area of Turkish scholarship. Before presenting contemporary discourse of dialogue among Turkish scholars, I will briefly touch on the views of two earlier scholars.

M. Sadettin Evrin

After the 1960 military coup, General Sadettin Evrin was appointed vice president of PRA. He also was an officer of the high board of religious affairs of the PRA in 1963-1965.[359] One year later, in 1961, he published his book entitled *Dinler arası Müşterek Bir Söz: Allah Bizimle* (Interreligious Common Word: God is with Us) in the PRA publication series General Books about the Religion of Islam.

Evrin's book is important because it deals with dialogue between religious traditions on the basis of faith in one God. And it is a significant pattern that gives idea

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[358]" Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi'nin Diyalog Etrafında Sorulan Sorulara Verdiği Cevaplar," 23-24.

[359]   http://www2.diyanet.gov.tr/dinisleriyuksekkurulu/Sayfalar/DinIsleriYuksekKuruluuyeleri1.aspx accessed on 16.05.2014.

about how Muslim-Christian relations or dialogue are presented in times when people are under pressure. The book was written a year before the Second Vatican Council. So, it does not handle the issue of dialogue in the contemporary context. Yet its goal is significant in terms of the scope of the dissertation. The book is also among the earliest works where the term "interreligious" is used in terms of dialogue.[360] Moreover, it keeps an almost total Islamic perspective by referencing the Qur'an but rarely pointing to statements from the Bible[361] and only once from Taoism.[362]

In the book, Islamic values, the existence of God, his power, his enmcompassing of people, his attributes and the Qur'anic verses are examined with scholarly method. The book consists of two parts; the first about the power of God and the proofs of the Qur'an, the second s about the God-people relationship. Moreover, other religions are not referred to as corrupt religions. We observe that when he references the Bible and the Gospels, he uses the term "Law (Sharia) of Moses."

Throughout Evrin's book, he refers to many Western scholars such as James Hopwood Jeans, Isaac Newton, Louis de Broglie and Henri Bergson for supporting his views regarding the existence of God and his power in the universe. Yet he does not consider evolutionary theory versus an Islamic perception of universe, which is not typical intraditional Turkish Islamic understanding. And at the end of the book he states that one of the titles of Jesus is "Immanuel," which means "God is with us" and was also mentioned in the ancient word. Moreover, he mentions that according to the Islamic

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[360] M. Sadettin Evrin, *Dinler arası Müşterek Bir Söz: Allah Bizimle* (Ankara: DİB, 1961).

[361] For instance, he references to Corinthians 11.6 on p. 96, Deuteronomy 24.14 p. 98, Numbers 35.25 and Philippians 2.2-5 on pp. 104-5.

[362] Evrin, *Dinler arası Müşterek Bir Söz,*120.

tradition (*sirah*), Prophet Muhammad and his friend – and first caliph – Abu Bakr hid in the cave of Sevr and when Abu Bakr asked the prophet what would happen, the prophet responded don't worry, God is with us. Hence, he claims that faith and trust in God is the common point that brings people together.

Thus, Evrin's book is significant in being the one of the earliest Turkish books that deals with dialogue between religious traditions, even though it presents an Islamic perspective.

The second scholar is Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, whose views will help us conceive another perception of Christians in the Cumhuriyet era.

Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın (1875-1957)

Hüseyin Yalçın, who is among the influential scholars of the early Cumhuriyet era of the Turkish Republic, presents eye-catching views about Christians. Therefore, even though his writings date back to the Second Vatican Council, similar to Nursi and Evrin, I will briefly explore his views on the positions of Christians.Hhroughout his workshe asserts that all religions originated from Allah and so there is no real difference between Islam and other religions. The differences appear only in the details. Therefore, it would not be possible to talk about superiority among religions and members of other religions would not be required to obey or converted to Islam.[363]

For Yalçın, Prophet Muhammad did not bring a new religion. The Qur'an states clearly many times that all religions are one religion. Therefore, he believes t the Qur'an does not speak of different religions. It accepts one religion and this religion is Islam. Yet, there were communities who received this religion and deformed it. And the Qur'an

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[363] A.İshak Demir, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Aydınlarının İslam'a Bakışı* (İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2004), 114.

mentions these communities.[364]

Yalçın is sure that the differences among religions are not because of the essence of religions but because of deprivations. He states that according to the Qur'an, since there is only one religion on the earth one cannot make a classification that ranks superiority among them.[365] The Qur'an moreoever does not aim to bring all people to the same law/sharia. The concepts "Islam" and "Muslim" cannot be limited to the religion of Prophet Muhammad. For Cahit, this mistake also limits the universality of Islam.[366] In this respect, he does not consider Prophet Muhammad the first Muslim, because the Qur'an already states it is based on the religion of Abraham. Prophet Muhammad is the first Muslim among the Arabs. However, he highlights that many interpretations have ignored this reality.[367]

According to Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, even after Prophet Muhammad proclaimed his religion, Jews and Christians are not different from Muslims to God. It seems the Qur'an does not deal with Judaism and Christianity or other religions. The essential religion consists of common principles of Judaism, Christianity and Muhammadanism. These essential points we learn from the Qur'an are *tawhid*, faith in the hereafter and

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[364] Demir, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Aydınlarının İslam'a Bakışı,* 115.

[365] Demir, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Aydınlarının İslam'a Bakışı,* 116.

[366] Demir, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Aydınlarının İslam'a Bakışı,* 116

[367] "İbrahim oğullarına bu dini vasiyet etti. Yakub da: evlatlarım, dedi, Allah sizin için bu dini seçmiştir. Ancak Müslim olarak ölünüz. 2/132. Başta olmak üzere 27/31, 12/72, 10/84, 7/126,3/52, 5/111 ve 28/53 ayetlerini delil olarak verir. Agm. (İslamiyet Nedir? Kimler Müslümandır? Fikir hareketleri s 25 (12 nisan 1934)) s.4-5. Demir, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Aydınlarının İslam'a Bakışı,* 117

good deeds.[368]

Thus, Yalçın presents a pluralistic approach to religions besides Islam. His perception of religion is heavily based on the "essential religion" of Allah, the root of all other religions. Moreover, the essential values and faiths in all Semitic religions are the basis that people should focus on. Considering his views regarding other religions, we may state that his arguments contributed to Turkish scholarship on inclusive Islamic theology of religions.

We can now delve into more diverse views of Turkish scholars. The first is Suat Yıldırım of Fatih University, one of the most-respected Turkish professors of *tafsir*,[369] exegesis of the Qur'an, and one of the supporters of the Gülen Movement. He basically perceives the Christian call for dialogue in an optimistic way and responds to it positively.

Suat Yıldırım

In Yıldırım's writings, dialogue takes a significant place. We can see it in his translation of the Qur'an also. In his Turkish translation, by giving references to the Bible, he brought the issue of Muslim-Christian dialogue into the Turkish intellectual and public sphere. Thus, he wanted to show common points of the two scriptures of different religious communities in order to understand each other better. He received many criticisms and appreciations.[370] His translation can be viewed as a significant turning

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[368] Hüseyin Cahit presents the following verses for supporting his views. The Qur'an 2:62; 3:64; 6:162-63, 5:69 cited in Demir, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Aydınlarının İslam'a Bakışı,* 118.

[369] Muhammed Çelik, "Kur'an-ı Hakîm ve Açıklamalı Meâli," *Dicle Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 9:2 (2007), 1-24.

[370] Suat Yıldırım, "Mealim Hakkında Hezeyanlar," *Yeni Ümit* 71 (2006).

point for the contemporary Turkish Muslim apprehension of dialogue. According to Yıldırım, dialogue means that each side is to accept the other side's situation and to allow both sides to speak. Each side explains himself/herself to the other and insures that the other understands, so the result can be to find common values and develop them. In this respect, unlike the other Turkish Muslim scholars of *tafsīr*, Yıldırım understands some famous Qur'anic verses about dialogue as an Islamic ecumenical, universal and ceaseless call for Jews and Christians to come together on a common basis. These verses are Qur'an 29:46 and 3:64. Yıldırım also states that it is the Qur'an, namely Muslims, who started the call for dialogue with the People of the Book. Only in the twentieth century has Christianity changed its fourteen-century negative attitude and called for dialogue in Vatican II.[371]

Yıldırım expresses that this ecumenical call was acknowledged positively by Christians in Arabia during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. So, from the beginning of Islamic history, Christians and Muslims have displayed an exemplary friendship and relationship.[372] According to Yıldırım, the only thing the Qur'an wants from the People of the Book is their acceptance of the prophet who also was mentioned in their scriptures. Likewise, the Qur'an warns them to reject some of the mistakes they have made, such as

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[371] Suat Yıldırım, "Kiliseyi İslamla Diyalog İstemeğe Sevk Eden Sebepler," *Yeni Ümit* 16 (1992), accessed 28 October 2013, http://www.yeniumit.com.tr/konular/detay/kiliseyi-islam-ile-diyalog-istemege-sevk-eden-sebepler.

[372] İbrahim Canan also states that at the beginning there was no enmity between Muslims and Christians about religious issues. Enmity began as a political issue. See İbrahim Canan, "Müslüman Hıristiyan İlişkileri Üzerine Bir Diyalog," in *I. Hazreti İbrahim Sempozyum Bildirileri*, ed. Ali Bakkal, (İstanbul: Şurkav, 2007), 121-22.

accepting Jesus as the son of God. Even though Christians did not accept these suggestions, Muslims did not force them to convert or leave their lands.

Yıldırım also stresses the point that Islam is the only religion other than Christianity thataccepts Mary's virginity and the miraculous birth of Jesus. Its account is even much more sensitive than Christianity's, where Mary is said to be engaged to Joseph. The Qur'an does not imply anything like that. It warns Christians to reject the idea of Jesus as the son of God.[373]

In terms of supporting his argument about dialogue, Yıldırım finds some historical evidence. For example, an important event in history was the dialogue of Muslims with the Negus of Abyssinia. Muslims were accepted by the Negus (Al-Najashi), emperor of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) after hearing the Qur'anic verses about the birth of Jesus. All the Muslims living in Abyssinia helped the Negus against his enemies. Muslim relations with Byzantines were also peaceful and even friendly. Moreover, the Qur'an heralded the Byzantine victory over the Sassanid Empire. Likewise, Najran Christians were welcomed to the Prophet's masjid and allowed to pray there. They lived peacefully together. For this reason, according to Yıldırım, even though Islam makes a difference between its followers and nonfollowers, in this world Muslims and non-Muslims have equal rights in almost every issue of life.[374]

However, mostly for political reasons, Christianity, which stopped its relationship with Islam on an intellectual level, also began to fight Islam with force. It saw the clash

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[373] Yıldırım, "İslâm'ın Hristiyanlara Uyguladığı Hoşgörü," *Yeni Ümit* 31 (1996). Accessed October 28, 2013. http://www.yeniumit.com.tr/konular/detay/islam-in-hristiyanlara-uyguladigi-hosgoru

[374] Yıldırım, *Mevcut Kaynaklarına Göre Hıristiyanlık* (Ankara: DİB, 1988), 6.

as a way of survival. Moreover, it attempted to slander Islam and its messenger with countless inaccuracies. Thus, Yıldırım stresses the fault of the Christian West. The West is mainly responsible of nondialogical relations. Moreover, the Islamic conquests of the Christian lands led many Christian clergy to act in errant ways against Muslims. The main reason for the medieval Church to have negative attitudes against Muslims is that it felt insecure. This is one of the common points of Muslim scholars who advocate dialogue. According to them, even Muslims have made mistakes in history, but they do not bear as much responsibility as Christians in terms of the ceasing of dialogue.[375]

Yıldırım stresses that Muslims must join in dialogue with non-Muslims to instigate the relationship, because partnerships that do not present themselves across international boundaries are destined to be forgotten. And powerful thoughts stand firm. Therefore, even though in today's world non-Muslims are stronger in economic and military power, Muslims have a chance to benefit from pluralist environments to express their powerful thoughts.

It will be helpful to give Yıldırım's thoughts on why Muslims did not answer the Christian call for dialogue with enough dynamism. According to him these are some possible reasons:

– There is no Muslim organization equivalent to the Holy See to respond to the call, because Islam does not allow such clerical institutions. This creates problems in Muslims' representation in dialogue.

– Colonization and its relationship with the West. Dialogue is a political attempt

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[375] Yıldırım, "Dinler Ve Barış Sempozyumundan Geriye Kalan," *Yeni Ümit* 64 (2004), accessed 28 October 2013, http://www.yeniumit.com.tr/konular/detay/dinler-ve-baris-sempozyumundan-geriye-kalan

and new way of colonization.

    – Muslims did not forget the Crusaders.

    – The possibility that dialogue is a new way to proselytize.

    – Muslims heard the dialogue call unexpectedly from the Christians. After a long time of clashes and wars on intellectual and sociopolitical levels, Muslims were not expecting a call for friendship from Christians.

    – Therefore, Muslims were not ready for dialogue, especially on intellectual levels. They did not have enough materials, conferences or workshops on theological and scholarly dialogue. On the other hand, with the help of orientalists, Christians have many materials about dialogue and Islam. Christians have produced and published many documents about dialogue and thus have created many resources. Therefore, Muslims are more sensitive and most cautious about dialogue."[376]

Yıldırım gives special attention to Turkish Muslim scholars and tries to understand why they reject or at least are cautious about dialogue. He articulates that one of the barriers is the internal problem of Turkish political issues that scholars also deal with, such as secular-religious tensions. Another problem seems to be the tradition that states Islam is the only true path and it is enough for Muslims. This leads to the implication that Muslims are not ready for scholarly discussions or that they think that dialogue is not fruitful act.

Last, according to Yıldırım, Muslims must respond to the Christian call for dialogue regardless of any reasons. It is vital, because around four million Turks live in

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[376] Yıldırım, "İç Diyalog Tartışmaları Durulurken," *Yeni Ümit* 40 (1998), accessed October 28, 2013.

http://www.yeniumit.com.tr/konular/detay/ic-diyalog-tartismalari-durulurken.

Europe, where Christianity is the major religion. Moreover, the Turkish effort to enter the EU is another stimulus for Muslim scholars to find solutions on a religious level for coexistence. Most important, these dialogical works and materials that scholars produce will counteract the prejudices about Islam – Islamophobia – among Western people. All in all, Yıldırım perceives the dialogue call of Christians as a very significant development and opportunity for breaking down centuries-long hostilities and prejudices.

After presenting positive views of professor Yıldırım, now we can turn to a negative perception of Christian call for dialogue by Mehmet Bayrakdar and his rejection. Bayrakdar is one of the well-known professors of Islamic Philosophy at Yeditepe University, Turkey.

Mehmet Bayrakdar

Bayraktar has written several articles[377] and a book *entitled Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan Islam*[378] (Interreligious Dialogue and Alterated Islam), presenting his rejectionist approach to interreligious dialogue. I will explore his views, depending heavily on this book. According to Bayrakdar, the concept of interreligious dialogue goes back to the sixteenth century and aimed to create a human religion above religions, or a humane religion, which was among results of imperialism. He asserts that religious authorities and groups stand against imperialism. The imperialist powers, instead of

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[377]Mehmet Bayrakdar, "Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan İslam," *İslâmî Araştırmalar* 20:3 (2007), 283-300; "Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Misyonerlik," *İslâmî Araştırmalar* 20:4 (2007), 391-98; "Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Tarihçesi," *İslâmî Araştırmalar* 20:4 (2007), 379-90; "Dinlerarası Diyaloğa Karşı İnsani Diyalog." İslâmî Araştırmalar, 20:3 (2007), 309-15; "Kur'an ve Sünnetin Dinlerarası Diyaloğa Alet Edilmesi," *İslâmî Araştırmalar* 20:3 (2007), 301-8.

[378] Mehmet Bayrakdar, *Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan İslam* (Istanbul: Kelam Yayınları, 2011).

rejecting and demolishing religious traditions, have aimed to transform fundamental principles of religions into moral and spiritual teachings. Hence, almost every religious tradition is subject to this danger, yet Islam is in the most danger.[379]

Bayraktar stresses that many people who know the hidden dimension and goal of interreligious dialogue reject the contemporary discourse. For him, even though at first the Roman Catholic Church supports interreligious dialogue; it is not because it believes the power of dialogue. Rather, according to him, the RCC has been participating in dialogue because of pressure by domestic and international powers.[380] Another significant factor behind its participation is to use dialogue as means of missionary activity and universal ecumenism of the Chruch.[381]

Bayrakdar also asserts that one of the silliest discourses of supporters of dialogue is the motto that "all religions are same."[382] The path of interreligious dialogue goes to combine religions and create a new religion,[383] and finally to transform Islam into a Progressive Islam mode.[384] He summarizes the Western demand for a new religion as minimizing social and religious fightings among followers of religions. He claims that the view of creating a human religion goes back to Friedrich Hegel and August Comte, and is the root of interreligious dialogue. Moreover, views and activities such as religious pluralism, transcendant unity of religions and alliance of civilizations are supported

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[379] Bayrakdar, *Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan İslam*, 9.

[380] Bayrakdar, *Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan İslam,*10.

[381] Bayrakdar, *Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan İslam,*20.

[382] Bayrakdar, *Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan İslam,*11.

[383] Bayrakdar, *Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan İslam,*20.

[384] Bayrakdar, *Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan İslam,*13.

against Islam and the Muslim world.[385]

Moreover, Bayrakdar thinks the fact that religions keep common concepts such as "God" and the "prophets" do not mean they point to the same personalities.[386] Common concepts in religions have different contextual meaning and each religion presents a different teaching concerning Allah or God. Moreover, one cannot call Islam a monotheist religion similar to Christianity and other religious historians, sociologists of religion, anthropologists or psychologists state.[387]

According to Bayrakdar, if people sincerely want to engage in dialogue, they should not do it through religion or should not use religion. He moreover asserts that in dialogue meetings, none of them mention the wars of Bosnia-Serbia, the Israel-Palestine war or the Afghanistan and Iraq invasions.[388] Last, I should note that throughout his book he critiques the Gulen movement as collaborating with and being used by incorrect and devious calls from Christians.

Thus, we observe that Bayrakdar perceives the interreligious dialogue call from Christians as having devious political and theological goals for weakening and deforming Islam, and therefore rejects it. Moreover, considering that there are no concrete developments concerning world peace, he also does not believe that interreligious dialogue keeps its aim to solve global problems. Therefore, we observe that he does not consider dialogue in the context of ethical and moral collaboration.

A more positive approach to the Christian call for dialogue is from Niyazi Ötkem,

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[385] Bayrakdar, *Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan İslam,* 19.

[386] Bayrakdar, *Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan İslam,* 11.

[387] Bayrakdar, *Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan İslam,* 12.

[388] Bayrakdar, *Dinlerarası Diyalog ve Başkalaştırılan İslam,* 13.

one of the supporters of dialogue and professor of Law at Fatih University. Öktem is one of the earliest Turkish scholars to bring the issue of interreligious dialogue onto the agenda. His personal and academic experience of dialogue since the mid-1980s has been contributing interreligious dialogue within the Turkish context.

Niyazi Öktem

Niyazi Öktem has several articles and books on dialogue. His first book, *Diyalog Yazıları*, collected his newspaper and journal articles from different times and contexts.[389] In his second book, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri* (Christian and Muslim Dialogue Leaders of our Age) Öktem presents historical and contemporary Christian and Muslim scholars as leaders of dialogue, and examines their views and lives.[390] It is possible to find his updated views regarding interreligious dialogue. Here I will explore his views mostly depending on this book.

Öktem defines interreligious dialogue as "mutual conversation made by members of different religion on religious issues, beliefs and practices and exchange of information." He proposes that there are as many similarities as differences in the monotheistic religions and these similarities should be recognized and emphasized. He thinks that excessive emphasis on differences will not give any benefit for the people and similarities will not cost anything. He is convinced that people who are afraid of dialogue are not sure about the truthfulness of their own religion.[391] According to him, a Muslim must be sure of his/her religion, yet in reality many Muslims do not have strong

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[389] Niyazi Öktem, (Istanbul: Timaş), 2001.

[390] Niyazi Öktem, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri* (İstanbul: Selis, 2013).

[391] Öktem, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri,* 20; see also *Diyalogdan Korkanlar*, Zaman Gazetesi, 22.02.2002.

attachment to Islam, so they oppose dialogue. One of the reasons for lack of confidence is Western scientific, technical and military superiority.[392]

He believes that learning about other religions is also a way for learning more deeply about one's own religion. He furthermore states that if one follows a religious tradition that is the perfect religion for him, it is normal to reach the values of his religion with other religions as well as his fellows. Religions have moral values that prevent evil deeds and have essential principles such as human rights, justice, mercy and compassion. In this respect, Öktem points out a hadith in which Prophet Muhammad says to Ali, his cousin and fourth caliph, "do not act with injustice to people because man is either your brother in faith or your brother in humanity."[393]

Öktem furthermore believes the source of anti-dialogue is nationalism/racism and sectarianism.[394] For him, the Qur'an and the Sunnah always stand near the truth, not nationalism or sectarianism, and never justify any kind of injustice. In nationalism or sectarianism belonging is more important than pursuing the truth. Therefore, nationalists and sectarians oppose or at least avoid dialogue. In this respect, he is convinced that people who pursue human rights, justice, mercy and compassion on the basis of religion are looking for, not opposed to dialogue. Although religious Muslims approach dialogue positively, ideologists (such as nationalists, atheists and sectarianists) reject it.[395]

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[392] Öktem, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri*, 21.

[393] Öktem, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri*, 22.

[394] It is clear that he is influenced by his mentor Pierre Dubois about his views about the danger of racism as enemy of dialogue. See Niyazi Öktem, *Galatasaraylı Monsenyör Vatikan'ın Türkiye Dinsel Temsilcisi Pierre Dubois'nin Anı ve Görüşleri* (İstanbul: Uygarlık, 1989), 58, 60.

[395] Öktem, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri*, 23.

Öktem does not see any contradiction between *tablig* and dialogue. Rather, they fulfill each other. *Tablig* or *dawa* is practiced by inviting other people, and this happens through speaking, acquaintance and dialogue.[396]

In order to find a theological basis for dialogue, following traditional Islamic belief, Öktem states that before the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an there were other prophets and books sent by God. All the previous prophets were Muslims. So for him, having this Islamic view, it is not difficult for Muslims to believe in the existence of other religions and followers. So, participating in dialogue with people of other religions would not be an awkward situation and compromise from Islam for Muslims. From this perspective, Öktem believes Muslims have an advantage over Christians.[397]

Öktem uses the term "Abraham Faith System" for denoting Abrahamic religions and states that Islam is in this system. So, according to Öktem, the prophet invited People of the Book to become Muslim, but the prophet did not see it objectionable when they rejected his call. Öktem believes this was because they were in the same system.[398]

In order to stress the necessity of dialogue in a social and moral way, he points out that when Muslims conquered a land, they had to be in dialogue with the people of that land.[399] From his views regarding the Islamic conquests, we observe that he perceives conquests empowered Muslims to live with non-Muslims, as basic motivation for dialogue. So, we can easily witness that he understands dialogue mostly as social fact.[400]

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[396] Öktem, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri*, 23.

[397] Öktem, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri*, 24-25.

[398] Öktem, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri*, 36-37.

[399] Öktem, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri*, 36-37.

[400] Öktem, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri*, 39.

Yet, Öktem speaks of polemics within a dialogue environment and states that through dialogue people want to justify their own views. Here we observe that he perceives dialogue as a general concept where people come together to talk on a subject.

Öktem considers the history of Islamic states such as Abbasid, Seljuk and Ottoman as keeping significant examples for dialogue. When the Abbasids conquered new lands, Christian population in the state was around 60 percent. Yet, through dialogue with Christians, the Muslim population increased significantly. So, he perceives living together peacefully is a good opportunity for Muslims to expound their faiths. And he is sure Muslims will benefit from dialogue. Hence we can state that Öktem does not support a dialogue based on *tablig*.[401]

Last, Öktem perceives many historical and contemporary Muslim and Christian scholars as leaders of dialogue, such as John of Damascus, Abu Qurra, Timotheus, Ammar al-Basri, Abu Raitah, Fethullah Gulen, Kenan Gürsoy, Said Nursi, Arij Roest Crollius, Maurice Borrmans and Mehmet Fırıncı. The following summarizes his views about dialogue: "because everything is equal and respected, dialogue is the basic rule of existence."[402]

After presenting a very positive response to Christian call for dialogue, we can to another Turkish scholar and politician, Mustafa Erdem who rejects such a call. An influential scholar of History of Religions at Ankara University and a representative from the National Movement Party, Erdem looks at Christian call for dialogue cautiously and rejects it because of his nationalistic and religious concerns.

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[401] Öktem, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri*, 46-47.

[402] Öktem, *Çağımız Hıristiyan Müslüman Diyalog Önderleri*, 53.

Mustafa Erdem

Mustafa Erdem has several articles[403] and a chapter of a book entitled *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye* (Missionary Activities and Turkey) on contemporary interreligious dialogue. Here, I will heavily depend on his book.

In the book it is possible to find his views on interreligious dialogue, where he examines Christian missionary activities and their danger in Turkey. In this respect, Erdem states that Christians have changed their missionary strategy after the image of missionary was deformed. According to this strategy the concept of dialogue is used instead in order to penetrate different cultures without upsetting their followers.[404]

Erdem stresses that the Turkish nation is more sensitive to dangerous temptations from the West because of modernism. For instance, in the past missionary effort was considered dangerous. Yet, today it is not perceived as dangererous even among religious groups.[405] He critiques Turkish officials, pointing that southern cities of Turkey such as Şanlıurfa, Mardin and Hatay are designated by the Western powers under the name Meeting of Civilizations or Interreligious Dialogue. According to him there is no concrete development in the meetings in these cites; for instance, EU restrictions continue and Joseph Ratzinger, who was opposed to the Turkish bid for the EU, was selected by the Vatican as Pope. Hence, we observe that Erdem questions the sincerity of the Christian call for dialogue by pointing at political and religious issues between Turkey and the

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[403] Mustafa Erdem, "Dinlerarası Diyalog Üzerine Bazı Düşünceler," *Türk Yurdu* 19-20 (2000), 148-60; "Dinler Arası Diyalog ve Türkiye" *Türk Yurdu* 25: 209 (2005); "Hayal ve Gerçek Arasında AB, Hıristiyanlar ve Diyalog," *Dinî Araştırmalar* 7:19 (2004), 5-12.

[404] Mustafa Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye* (Ankara: Türkiye Kamu-Sen Yayınları, 2005), 4.

[405] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,* 4.

EU.[406]

Even though he does not consider dialogue call a sincere call, Erdem nevertheless stresses its necessity. He states that in the contemporary world it is necessary for people to know and understand each other. And, the common goal of people is to know the creator, which is also clearly indicated in the Qur'anic term People of the Book. Qur'an 3:64 underlines that they should come together on the common point that they do not worship and do not serve other than God. For Erdem, this verse not only stresses the necessity of dialogue, but also shows the common point to come together which is tawhid.[407] In this respect, he claims that success of the *tablig* of Prophet Muhammad depended on his use of the method of dialogue in his relations with non-Muslims. Therefore, dialogue in Islamic contexts should be affirmed and the practice of the prophet should be known clearly and be followed sensitively.[408] He considers the religious practice of Najranite Christians in the prophet's mosque an important example.[409]

If we turn to Edrem's views concerning the Christian call for dialogue, we observe that he understands it within his perception of Christian missionary efforts. Stressing that Christian participants are former missionaries, he asks, is it possible for them to give up their mission?[410] He furthermore points out that statements of the Second Vatican Council regarding dialogue did not accept doctrines of other religions; rather the council underscored the importance of belief in Jesus as the Son of God, spreading the

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[406] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,* 5.

[407] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*150.

[408] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*152.

[409] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*154.

[410] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*155.

message of the Gospels and Christianization.[411] So, considering the development of the Council he believes that in order to reach these goals the Church gave up old methods and considered other societies as a significant reality Pope John Paul II acknowledged other societies as reality, yet his main concern was Christianization of them.[412]

It is also possible to find his views about the factors that pushed Protestant and Catholics into dialogue:[413]

− Christians' loss of power because of wars among themselves and coming together for compensation

− Soviet invasion of the Balkans, capture of the places of Orthodox Christians, and being a threat for Catholics

− Lack of trust in Christianity, clergy, and churches

− Division in the Church and appearance of new denominations

− Vatican authority on Christians by using its political power

− Reconciliation for Jews who were tortured by Hitler

− Fulfillment of the missionary effort with its identity of missions

− The faith that dialogue would be more influential spearding the message of Christianity to world by using technical, economical and political support.

He moreover states that there is no indication that the Vatican gave up missionary activities after claiming there are around 138,000 active missionaries belonging to the Vatican.[414] Similar to rejectionists he underscores that there were no concrete results of

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[411] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*156.

[412] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*157.

[413] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*162-63.

[414] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*166.

dialogue meetings concerning negative events around the world.[415] After mentioning the negative sides of dialogue, he states that it is beneficial only when the experts engage in it.[416] He also emphasizes that whereas Christian sides are prepared and relaxed during dialogue meetings, Muslims are more cautious for not disturbing the host people and presenting people better, so Turkish Muslims are not influential. He critiques Turkish Muslims for not being sensitive to national and religious values as much as respecting Christian values.[417]

We observe that while the chapter is about interreligious dialogue, Erdem usually links dialogue with missionary activities or goals.[418] Dialogue events are organized under the control of the Vatican, so they present positive pictures of Christians.[419] Moreover, he believes interreligious dialogue will contribute negatively to the national values of Turkish Muslims in the process of the Turkish EU bid.[420] Nevertheless, there is no fear for Muslims to engage in dialogue meetings that do not depend on imposition or misuse of weakness of participants, and happen in equal grounds by experts. Hence he stresses the necessity of experts in dialogue meetings.[421] The following points should be considered by Muslims for healthy dialogue:[422]

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[415] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*167.

[416] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*167.

[417] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*169.

[418] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*170.

[419] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*187.

[420] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*187.

[421] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*189-90.

[422] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*193.

– The Vatican did not give up missionary activities

– Even though it is known that staff of the Interreligious Dialogue Secretary of the Vatican is missionaries, they nevertheless carry out dialogue.

– Even though dialogue is carried out by experts in the Christian world, in Turkey it is not.

– Instead of mentioning distinctive features of each religion, universal values and Abrahimic religions are mentioned in dialogue meetings.

– The Church considers inculturation as most significant part of missionary work and accepts dialogue as an important means in this process.

After underscoring these negative attitudes he states that dialogue is necessary.[423]

All in all, we observe that even though Erdem acknowledges the idea of dialogue among members of different religions, he rejects dialogue as a Christian call as an organized new missionary method. Now, we can explore a more positive approach to Christianity by Mesut Kaynak, who is a Turkish Muslim architect. Kaynak is the author of several books about the Qur'an, women, and the Bible. Even though he is not an influential scholar or academician, it will be helpful to present his views about Christianity and dialogue as an ordinary Turkish writer and citizen. Since the goal of the dissertation is to present readers about dialogue in Turkish contexts also in a broader sense, such works will be helpful.

Mesut Kaynak

Mesut Kaynak's views about dialogue can be found in his book entitled *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler* (Observations from Torah, Psalms, Gospels and

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[423] Erdem, *Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Türkiye,*193.

the Qur'an). [424] According to Kaynak, Qur'an 5:46 affirms that the Gospels were given to Jesus by Allah. Christians had a Gospel called "Q" at the time of the prophet. The Q Gospel was written by Nasranis, the successor of Jesus. The Qur'an affirmed the real Gospel that covers the life and words of Jesus instead of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which contradict each other.[425] Moreover he believes that when Jesus was alive and during Nasrani Christianity, there was no opposition or contradiction between the Gospels and the Qur'an. In later centuries, Christianity set up by the Church was a different religion from that in the time of Jesus.[426]

Kaynak asserts that the Qur'an presents Christians as the closest/friendliest group to Muslims.[427] Moreover, it expresses that the people of the book are chosen and on the path of Allah and therefore praises them.[428]

According to Kaynak, the Qur'an asks Jews and Christians who believe the Torah and Gospel to practice the law in their books. The Qur'an invites all people who have no sacred books to the new religion and encourages Jews and Christians to practice laws in their own holy books.[429] After referencing Muhammad Hamidullah's work, *Prophet of Islam*, he states that Prophet Muhammad did not compel small Christian Arabian communities by inviting them to his religion when he conquered their lands. He just

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[424] Mesut Kaynak, *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler*, İstanbul: Yay Matbaacılık, 2007.

[425] Kaynak, *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler*, 167.

[426] Kaynak, *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler*, 167.

[427] Kaynak, *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler*, 168, referring to Qur'an 5:82.

[428] Kaynak, *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler*, 168, referring to Qur'an 3:113114.

[429] Kaynak, *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler*, 170.

asked *jizya* from them in order to protect them within the Islamic State.[430]

In terms of their salvation, Kaynak believes that in the hereafter, people will be rewarded or punished according to the laws of their holy books, Torah, Gospel and Qur'an.[431] He also gives exceptional information by stating that according to some researchers (without giving any names) Christians were keeping the genuine Gospel when the Qur'an began to be revealed in the seventh century. For him Qur'an 5:47 does not mention the four deformed Gospels but the original and genuine Gospel.[432] Hence, according to him, Allah wanted the Qur'an to be affirmative for the previous sacred books and keep their essential message. It approves appropriate verses in the previous scriptures and accepts them as the words of Allah. However, it also points out the deformations within them. Herein, it differentiates the truth and non-truth within them. The criterion is the laws of the Qur'an. Thus, the points opposite to the Qur'an were deformed by the hands of mankind.[433]

Moreover, Kaynak claims that Allah gave divine laws to humanity in three different books. If he wanted, all peoples would be one community and be enlightened by a single book. However, he did not want it this way. He provided a distinctive way for each People of the Book and examined whether they become helpful for their communities.[434]

Last, according to Kaynak, the Qur'an makes the broadest call in the history of

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[430] Kaynak, *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler*, 170.

[431] Kaynak, *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler*, 170, referring to Qur'an 45:28.

[432] Kaynak, *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler*, 170.

[433] Kaynak, *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler*. 173.

[434] Kaynak, *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler*, 173, referring to Qur'an 2:148.

religions. In this respect he states that the Qur'an calls people with: "Oh Jews, Christians and Muslims! Come, let not become servants other than Creator Power and worship only to him because our and your God is the same. Let's do not accept each other as lord. Let's unite to build peaceful world."[435]

In short, Kaynak's views about Christianity and dialogue with them are based on his understanding of holy books. Now, we can explore opinions of Dr. Yümni Sezen, another influential Turkish professor (emeritus) of Sociology of Religion at Marmara University. Sezen's rejection of Christian call for dialogue is summarized in the title of his book "Dinlerarası Diyalog İhaneti: Dini-Psikolojik-Sosyolojik Tahlil," (Betrayal of Interfaith Dialogue: Religious-Pyshological-Sociological Analysis). In the fifth edition of the book cover Mr. Gülen and Pope John Paul II hold each others' hands under the title "Betrayal of Interfaith Dialogue."

Yümni Sezen

Dr. Yümni Sezen throughout his book critiques the Gulen Movement engagement in dialogue with Christians.[436] In this context he disputes Gülen's statements regarding being part of the mission of the Vatican, the concept of Muslim Isawi, the hidden agenda of Christianization through dialogue, ignoring the prophethood of Muhammad for sake of dialogue, and gathering around Jesus instead of Prophet Muhammad.

It is also possible to find an outline of Sezen's objections regarding dialogue in his response to Ali İhsan Yitik's presentation in the symposium Dinin Dünya Barışına

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[435] Kaynak, *Tevrat, Zebur, İncil ve Kur'an'dan Gözlemler*, 173, referring to Qur'an 29:46; 3:64.

[436] Yümni Sezen, *Dinlerarası Diyalog İhaneti: Dini-Psikolojik-Sosyolojik Tahlil*, 5th edition (Istanbul: Kelam Yayınları, 2011). In *Türk Düşüncesi* (Turkish Thought), (İstanbul: İrfan, 2007), 147-48, of which Sezen is a co-author, we observe similar reactions to interreligious dialogue.

Katkısı (Contribution of Religion to World Peace). He underscores five points as incorrect concepts used in dialogue: Abrahamic Religions, Interreligions Dialogue, Three Greatest Religions, Garden of Religions and Muslim Isawi (Muslim Christian). He rejects them and argues that in the field of History of Religions there are no such concepts. Moreoever, these concepts are unfamiliar to theologians of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. According to him Louis Massignon produced the concept of Abrahamic Religions to alieniate Muslims from Prophet Muhammad.[437] He aslo argues that there is no plural use of the term "religion" in the Qur'an, and so believes the only true religion is Islam.

Regarding the concept "interreligious dialogue," similar to other academicians, he argues that it is impossible to have such a dialogue, because dialogue and development occur among the members of these religions.[438] In addition, he emphasizes that "three greatest religions" (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and "garden of religions" (a place of where mosque, church and synagogue are built in), used by supporters of dialogue in Turkey, are also inappropriate concepts. It is striking that these four terms are already used in the official PRA documents, as we explored above. The last term he critiques is Müslüman Isevi (Muslim Isawi/Christian). He believes it is an incorrect and very dangerous concept because both terms refer to a religious tradition.[439]

Sezen believes that the Church considers non-Christians sons of the Church, yet, many Muslims, who are not aware of this fact, see the Church's call for dialogue as

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[437] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı,* 68-69.

[438] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı,* 68-69.

[439] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı,* 69-70.

mutual recognition. Sezen does not believe in the sincerity of the Church, so he believes that for the Church Jesus is active outside the Church. The Prophet Muhammad only helped Muslims recognize the God of Abraham, Moses and Jesus – which is God in the Christian context. So, according to him, the Church only desires Muslims to fulfill the message of Muhammad by acknowledging Jesus as the Son of God.[440]

Sezen believes that interreligious dialogue in the documents and activities of the Roman Catholic Church is always presented in the context of missionary works. The Church on the one hand encourages dialogue and on the other hand supports missionary activities. In this context he believes Christian missionary work and interreligious dialogue did not come from different sources but from the same understandings.[441]

Sezen criticizes supporters of dialogue who state that "the Qur'an does not ask Christians to give up their religion" and "Christians who accept Islam are Muslim Christians," and argues that these kinds of views may pave the way for syncretism.[442]

The Islamic term *müsamaha* (tolerance) should be used and considered as true way in Muslim-Christian relations. Sezen believes that *müsamaha* in the Islamic context is totally different from today's dialogue discourse. He points out that Qur'an 109:1-6 provides answers to Christian call for dialogue.[443] The verses were revealed during the

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[440] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı,* 70.

[441] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı,* 71.

[442] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı,* 71.

[443] "Say: O you unbelievers (who obstinately reject faith)! I do not, nor ever will, worship that which you worship. Nor are you those who ever worshipwhat I worship. Nor am I one who do (and will) ever worship that which you have ever worshipped. And nor are you those who do and will ever worship what I ever worship. You have your religion (with whatever it will bring you), and I have my religion (with whatever it will bring me)."

Mecca period of Prophet Muhammad when polytheists asked him to give up his religion for worldly pleasures. In another narrative, the verses were revealed when the Meccan polytheists proposed both should practice each faith every other year. Sezen believes the Christian call for dialogue is not different from the proposal of the Meccan polytheists.[444]

Last, he proposes some points to Christians if they are sincere in dialogue. First of all, Christians must stop their deceitful missionary activities which use political, social and economical situations. And former missioners and clergy should not engage in dialogue. Books about Islam written by Muslims should be translated into Christians' language. Hence, misunderstanding about Islam should be removed.[445]

In short, Sezen does not believe there is sincerity in the Christian call for dialogue and rejects it. He criticizes Muslim scholars' attempt to create a theological and cultural basis for dialogue by arguing that their views contradict essentials of Islam. He proposes *müsamaha* for a true applicable dialogue and asks Christians to deny and suspend their missionary activities.

Now we turn into another Turkish scholar, İlhan Arsel, professor of Law at Ankara University, who was anti-Islamic. Unlike other Turkish scholars who support or reject the Chrsitian call for dialogue, Arsel presents a rejectionist approach to the Islamic dialogue call. His views will be helpful to present ongoing discussions around the issue of dialogue in Turkey.

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[444] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı,* 71.

[445] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı,* 72.

İlhan Arsel (1921-2010)

İlhan Arsel, a Kemalist anti-Islamic Turkish scholar and professor of Law, wrote two books regarding Islam's relationship with non-Muslims: *İslam'a göre Diğer Dinler*[446] (Other Religions according to Islam) and Şeriatın Getirdiği Hoşgörüsüzlük [447] (Intolerance that Islam Promotes).

I will explore his views concentrating on his first book, in which his views are clearly seen, that Islam is not a tolerant religion and it always promotes religious enmity and hostility toward non-Muslims. He makes many references to the Qur'an (mostly certain exclusive verses) throughout the book. Even though it is significant to state that his views are not influential among the majority of Muslims, nevertheless, it would be helpful to mention his attitude toward Muslim-Christian-Jewish dialogue, because this very anti-Islamic, Turkish perception of Muslim-Christian dialogue, which can be seen as an exceptional work, shows diversity of thought in Turkish scholarship.

After quoting a peace message from an imam and a priest from Istanbul, Arsel states that he clearly deceives people because the same imam, when he goes to his mosques eill mention that Islam is the only religion and non-Muslims are enemies of Muslims and God. According to Arsel, the hate speech of the imam is based on the Islamic Sharia (law) that forces Jews and Christians to pay *jizya* and insults them by stressing that they are heretics who will go to hell. Arsel believes Islam prevents Muslims from making non-Muslims their friends.[448]

According to Arsel, Islamic Sharia not only teaches that Islam is the only valid

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[446] İlhan Arsel, *İslam'a göre Diğer Dinler*, 2nd edition (Istanbul: Kaynak, 2009).

[447] İlhan Arsel, *Şeriatın Getirdiği Hoşgörüsüzlük*, 2nd edition (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2005).

[448] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 13-14.

religion and there is no holy book besides the Qur'an, but that it also imbues hostility and enmity against members of other religions. For him, it is because the Qur'an states that polytheists worship gods other than the God, and that People of the Book abused their prophets, deformed their holy books and thus are damned.[449] If Jews and Christians do not accept Islam and *jizya* with their hands, they are killed. So, Muslims consider *jizya* the requirement of their refusal of Islam.[450]

In this context Arsel believes that there are many verses of the Qur'an that prevent Muslims from having friendly relationships with non-Muslims. Some these are 5:51; 5:112; 9:30; and 98:6.[451] He also claims that there are many narratives in the Islamic tradition that increase enmity toward non-Muslims.[452] For him, Islamic law forces Muslims to consider almost 80 percent of the world as the enemy. He also alleges that the publications of PRA also consist of such views and PRA with its huge budget and many religious officers increases anti–non-Muslim attitudes that at the same time destroy love for humanity.[453]

Arsel asserts that the majority of Muslims, without being aware of the basic principles of Islam, consider that Islam promotes peace among members of different religions. However, Muslims do not prevent themselves from calling others *kafir* or *gavur* (both mean infidel) and keep hidden enmity toward them. So they cannot even integrate into the society of different countries where Muslims are the minority because

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[449] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 16-17.

[450] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 16-17.

[451] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 18.

[452] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 19.

[453] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 20.

in their subconscious attitudes they consider non-Muslims damned. [454]

Arsel also claims that Orientalists were influenced by exaggerated statements of so-called Muslim experts and made the mistake of stating that Islam promoted religious freedom in history compared to the Western countries.[455] In this regard he considers the positive statements in the Qur'an regarding Jews and Christians were because of Muhammad's ignorance of them when he was in Mecca. When he migrated to Medina, he called Christians and Jews to Islam; on their rejection of his call, he attacked, fought, enslaved and slaughtered them. He divided the world into two sides: land of Islam and land of war, and declared war against the land of war.[456] He considers some tolerant activities of Muhammad toward non-Muslims in this sense. They were not because of tolerance; rather he was aiming to give time for non-Muslims to accept Islam. In this respect Arsel understands the Islamic principle, "there is no compulsion in religion" not within freedom of religion; rather he understands it as there is no easiness in religious worship.[457] By referencing the verse "fight non-Muslims until there is only the religion of Islam in the world," Islam does not free anyone in terms of religious issues. [458]

After Prophet Muhammad, Arsel believes that enmity toward Jews and Christians has continued. In this context, he affirms that there were some exceptions because of the personal, tolerant attitude of some Muslim rulers. For instance, he believes that Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror of Istanbul ignored the Qur'anic laws, and so he opened the door

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[454] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 21.

[455] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 23.

[456] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 25.

[457] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 28.

[458] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 28.

of the state for the Jews expelled from Spain. Therefore, he believes the good conditions of Jews in the Muslim states compared to the West are not because of Islam, but despite the rules of Islam.[459]

When Muslims stayed away from the Sharia, Arsel asserts that they became more tolerant. He alleges that during Ottoman times, non-Muslims were treated well by the administration but faced enmity from the people because the people were directed by the religious leaders of their community. [460] According to Arsel, Turkish people essentially keep a very strong tradition of tolerance. However, this tolerant character has been easily defeated by the propaganda of Muslim religious imams/leaders.[461] For him, Atatürk, by bringing secularism to Turkey, paved the way for tolerance to non-Muslims and was successful in doing this. However, after him, with religious parties like the Democratic Party (1945-55), a conservative party, and later the Refah Party (1997), an Islamic-rooted party, this tolerant environment was mostly distorted.[462] In short, Arsel presents a very negative picture of Islam by considering that there is no possibility to find an Islamic basis for dialogue. Positive historical instances were all either strategic moves or bold personal decisions by rulers despite Islam. Yet, he is sure that Turkish tradition is open for dialogue as was seen in Atatürk's era.

After examining this anti-Islamic view of dialogue from a Turkish scholar, we can explore a more political approach to interreligious dialogue presented by Fikri Atılbaz, a columnist from *Ortadoğu Gazetesi*, a newspaper known for its close relations with the

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[459] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 27.

[460] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 268-70.

[461] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 268-70.

[462] Arsel, *İslama Göre Diğer Dinler*, 271.

National Movement Party. Atılbaz also rejects the Christian call for dialogue.

Fikri Atılbaz

Fikri Atılbaz collected his writings in a book entitled *Küfre Açılan Kapı Dinlerarası Diyalog* (Interreligious Dialogue: The Door Opens to Kufr/Infidelity) presents a very political argument and considers dialogue a political tool created by the West against Muslims.

According to the book, since the West expresses its destructive goals in dialogue, the dialogue should be rejected. Whoever accepts the dialogue call of Christians commits shirk and kufr/infidelity against Islam and the Muslim community.[463] Atılbaz presents Turkishness as the only strong remedy for the corruptive politics of the West that also provides space for Muslims to practice Islam freely and appropriately. He considers supporters of dialogue pawns of the West or betrayers of Islam.

In his provoking book Atılbaz provides biased views regarding dialogue. According to Atılbaz, even though dialogue basically means mutually persuading by listening to each other's views, it is not what the Vatican wants from Muslims. What the Vatican dictates is sheer monologue.[464] The Qur'an, which is entirely words belonging to God, cannot even be compared to the Torah and to the Gospels written during the Christian councils. So, one cannot put the Qur'an and the Bible together as subjects for discussion.[465] "How can you set aside the expression of the prophet 'proclaim Islam,' and become part of the Papacy's mission [he criticizes Gülen's words here] and become a

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[463] Fikri Atilbaz, *Küfre Açılan Kapi Dinlerarası Diyalog* (İzmir: Seç Matbaacılık, 2008), 23.

[464] Atilbaz, *Küfre Açılan Kapi Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 9.

[465] Atilbaz, *Küfre Açılan Kapi Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 9.

servant in their system. And how can you, without being shy by using interreligious dialogue tricks, draw people behind you."[466]

Atılbaz states that in Christian theology there is no revelation that comes directly from God. Rather, there are scriptures written under the guidance of God and the Holy Spirit.[467] He also states that missionary activities are pursued very harshly today. He believes that the war between the Vatican, the West and Islam was created by the West, by depending on the concept of clash of civilizations. In this respect he considers every tragic event, including 9/11, a U.S. plot for creating a new enemy: the Muslim world.[468] He also states that the EU crumbled Turkey financially and tried to do so religiously by using interreligious dialogue. So, we observe that he believes dialogue as a trap of the Europe and the United States.[469]

Atılbaz believes that behind every major event in today's world is a religious intention. He identifies freemason and Zionist groups as behind important events. Even though all the great countries are considered secular, they do not disobey the Vatican, rearrange their strategies according to evangelical understanding, and desire to spread Christianity around the world. Interreligious, intercivilizational dialogues are different missionary methods. He criticizes promoters of dialogue for not seeing the clear intention of the Vatican behind it, which means proclaiming only/fully Christianity.[470]

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[466] Atilbaz, *Küfre Açılan Kapi Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 9.

[467] Atilbaz, *Küfre Açılan Kapi Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 10.

[468] Atilbaz, *Küfre Açılan Kapi Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 11.

[469] Atilbaz, *Küfre Açılan Kapi Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 23.

[470] Atilbaz, *Küfre Açılan Kapi Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 23, 28.

Last, Atılbaz considers that the Vatican was a forerunner of the CWold War. It produced new missionary methods, and one of the influential and devious interreligious dialogue. Interestingly he mentions the group Opus Dei, founded by Josemaría Escrivá. According to Atılbaz this group also uses the discourse of interreligious dialogue for spreading Christianity.[471]

We now turn to the views of of Osman Cilaci as a positive response to the Christian call for dialogue. Besides his studies on comparative religions, Cilacı has two articles[472] and a book chapter entitled "Hıristiyanlık Propagandası ve Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri" (Propaganda of Christianity and Missionary Activities) on interreligious dialogue.

Osman Cilacı (1940-2004)

Dr. Osman Cilacı's writings highlight the importance of dialogue. For him, people need to create an interreligious dialogue atmosphere to break down the artificial barriers between civilizations and religions. Cilacı believes that genuine dialogue gives results when it depends on love, respect and devotion.[473] In this context genuine interreligious dialogue means to talk about every human problem, to produce solutions and to practice/apply them with collaboration. This understanding can also be called "interreligious peace dialogue."

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[471] Atilbaz, *Küfre Açılan Kapi Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 28.

[472] Osman Cilacı, "Tarih Boyunca Anadolu'da Yaşayan Gayr-i Müslimlere Genel Bir Bakış." *Diyanet İlmi Dergi* 35:4 (1999), 19-28; Osman Cilacı, "Müslüman-Hristiyan Diyaloğu ve Ülkemizde İslamın Hoşgörüsü." *Diyanet İlmi Dergi* 33:3 (1997), 7 –86.

[473] Osman Cilacı, *Hıristiyanlık Propagandası ve Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri* (Ankara: Halk Kitapları, 2005), 46.

Cilacı finds a basis for dialogue in the Qur'an, the life of the Prophet and the tradition of Islam sources. For him, the Qur'an expresses that it is a book open for dialogue.[474] It articulates that every religion rests on the same foundations, Judaism and Christianity and especially Islam.[475]

Moreover, according to Cilacı, the Arabian Peninsula was home for many different Christian sects/traditions when Islam emerged. Prophet's relationship with them was an example for many other positive historical relations, such as Sultan Salahaddin's positive response to the papal letter of 1245 and peaceful relations between Christians and Muslims in Anatolia and other places.[476] He states that Orhan, the second Ottoman sultan, was married to a daughter of a Roman senator and that Turkish people have been giving names like Moses, Aaron, Noah, Ibrahim and Jesus to their children. Another significant instance is that Turkish Muslims along with Christians visit the historical Saint Mammes of Caesarea church. Hence, Turks share some cultural heritage with their Christian neighbors.[477]

The Christian missionaries should review these facts and adopt a position similar to *tablig* in Islam, by not offending non-Christians with their proclamations, pressures and behavior, and leaving people alone with their faiths. It is the most natural expectation of Muslims about the Church and a perception of dialogue as a new method and kind of missionary activity that discourages dialogue.[478]

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[474] Cilacı, *Hıristiyanlık Propagandası ve Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, 47.

[475] Cilacı, *Müslüman-Hristiyan Diyaloğu ve Ülkemizde İslamın Hoşgörüsü*, 78.

[476] Cilacı, *Müslüman-Hristiyan Diyaloğu ve Ülkemizde İslamın Hoşgörüsü*, 77-79.

[477] Cilacı, *Müslüman-Hristiyan Diyaloğu ve Ülkemizde İslamın Hoşgörüsü*, 79.

[478] Cilacı, *Hıristiyanlık Propagandası ve Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, 48.

Cilacı considers post-Vatican II developments within Christianity as positive:[479]"we hope that after the Vatican Council, in which Christians decided to bring Christians together and to dialogue with world, the Church will progress in this process, which is very beneficial for humanity."[480] One positive sign of this development is that the Church gave up radical opinions such as "there is no salvation outside the Church." Another is the statement of Pope John Paul II about the Qur'an as a "holy book." [481] Moreover, Cilacı claims that after dialogue activities there is a decrease in the negative image of Islam in writings of the Western scholars.[482]

According to Cilacı, the role of freedom of religion and conscience after World War II significantly affected the appearance of the idea of dialogue.[483] He considers that there is a close link between religious tourism and interreligious dialogue. If interreligious dialogue is understood properly, religious tourism would not produce any problems for Turkish Muslims.[484]

In short, Osman Cilacı presents dialogue in a Turkish Islamic context and considers the Christian call for dialogue as a positive development in Christianity. Without inserting an issue of sincerity in his works he points out that people should use this opportunity for world peace. Now we turn to the views of İsmail Mutlu, a conservative Turkish Muslim scholar, editor of Mutlu Yayınclık (Press) and author of

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[479] Cilacı, *Müslüman-Hristiyan Diyaloğu ve Ülkemizde İslamın Hoşgörüsü*, 80.

[480] Cilacı, *Müslüman-Hristiyan Diyaloğu ve Ülkemizde İslamın Hoşgörüsü*, 80

[481] Cilacı, *Müslüman-Hristiyan Diyaloğu ve Ülkemizde İslamın Hoşgörüsü*, 80

[482] Cilacı, *Hıristiyanlık Propagandası ve Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, 48.

[483] Cilacı, *Hıristiyanlık Propagandası ve Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, 48.

[484] Cilacı, *Hıristiyanlık Propagandası ve Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, 50.

numerous books on many issues in Islamic tradition. He is known as close to Said Nursi and publishes the Risale-i Nur, besides his books.

İsmail Mutlu

Mr. İsmail Mutlu has written several books on the issue of dialogue: *Dinlerarası Diyalog Nasıl Başladı Nasıl Gelişti?*[485] (How did Interreligious Dialogue begin and develop?), *Dinlerarası Diyalogda Kırmızı Dönemeçler*[486] (Red Rolling Hills in Interreligious Dialogue) and *Hıristiyan Dünyası İslama ve Müslümanlara nasıl baktı?*[487] (How did the Christian World Look at Islam and Muslims?).

It is possible to find Mutlu's general perception of Christian dialogue and response to this call in *Dinlerarası Diyalog Nasıl Başladı Nasıl Gelişti?* I will explore his views depending on this book, in which Mutlu without original Church documents (the general attitude of Turkish scholarship in studies of interreligious dialogue, basically because of difficulty or ignorance of the English language), sets his understanding of the Church's dialogue call. The book does not represent a distinctive academic approach since he makes many repetitions and direct quotations of studies by scholars such as Mustafa Alıcı, Abdurrahman Küçük and Mahmut Aydın. In general, the book conceives dialogue of the Church as a modern Christian trap, even though Mutlu considers dialogue in social relations acceptable.

According to Mutlu, Christianity never acknowledged Islam as a sacred religious tradition, by seeing it as a rival religion or a heretic sect of Christianity, and made many

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[485] İsmail Mutlu, *Dinlerarası Diyalog Nasıl Başladı Nasıl Gelişti* (Istanbul: Mutlu Yayıncılık, 200.

[486] Mutlu, *Dinlerarası Diyalogda Kırmızı Dönemeçler* (İstanbul: Mutlu Yayıncılık, 2010).

[487] Mutlu, *Hristiyan Dünyası İslam'a ve Müslümanlara Nasıl Baktı?* (İstanbul: Mutlu Yayıncılık, 2008).

outrageous statements towards the Prophet Muhammad. Especially after the Crusades, Christians used methods such as missionary efforts, orientalism, imperialism and colonization to weaken Islam and convert Muslims. After all, a new tactic was found, namely, love.[488] Reaching Muslims with the concept of love would easily convince them not to be frightened of Christians but to trust them.[489] Through love Muslims would be easily converted to Christianity. Here he refers to Pope John XXIII's words about Christianization of Asia. Mutlu considers that in the Second Vatican Council, by making the decision of interreligious dialogue, a means of missionary efforts was declared by the Church.[490]

Mutlu considers Christian figures such as Pope Gregory VII, Raymond Llull,[491] Nicolas of Cusa, Rudolf Otto, Karl Rahner and historical events such as the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago as forerunners of interreligious dialogue in Christendom.[492]

According to Mutlu the basic motives behind the Church's interest in interreligious dialogue the Church's desire for renovation and exposure to the world, intra-Church problems, recovering defective Christian union, Christianization of Christians and the world and preventing the growth of anti-Semitism and the rise of

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[488] Mutlu, *Dinlerarası Diyalog Nasıl Başladı Nasıl Gelişti,* 12.

[489] Mutlu*, Dinlerarası Diyalog Nasıl Başladı Nasıl Gelişti,* 12.

[490] Mutlu*, Dinlerarası Diyalog Nasıl Başladı Nasıl Gelişti,* 13.

[491] Even though Llull was considered the father of the modern missionary movement, Mutlu considers him a pioneer of interreligious dialogue.

[492] Mutlu*, Dinlerarası Diyalog Nasıl Başladı Nasıl Gelişti,* 45-59.

Islam.[493] Moreover, in the chapter entitled "Special reasons why the Church engaged in dialogue with Muslims" he lists the following factors: loss of esteem toward the Church, Communist threat in Russia, desire to spread the message of Jesus in the new millennium, letting people forget the tyranny of the Crusades and colonization, political developments, sustaining minorities in Muslim countries, conditions of the age, showing Christianity as a valid religion, maintaining moderate Islam, reaching pieces of truth in other religions and practicing missionary activities more easily.[494]

For him dialogue is practiced in two dimensions: dialogue among people and dialogue among Christian elites and the official Church. The first is natural dialogue. The second dialogue promotes "transforming others" and "imposing your rights on others."[495] Mutlu in the chapter "Interreligious dialogue is a missionary activity" explores views of individual Christians and Muslims who argue that dialogue is the new method of missionary.[496]

All in all, Mutlu considers dialogue as practiced in the Islamic tradition as a valid dialogue type and believes should be supported by Muslims. However, the dialogue call of Christians is the result of centuries of Christian challenge/encounter of Islam. In order to defeat, deform and transform Islam/Muslims, interreligious dialogue was developed according to the new era. Therefore, he supports dialogue with people and the elites of Christianity, but rejects the official dialogue call of the Church, which is full of political,

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[493] Mutlu, *Dinlerarası Diyalog Nasıl Başladı Nasıl Gelişti,* 60-86.

[494] Mutlu, *Dinlerarası Diyalog Nasıl Başladı Nasıl Gelişti,* 101-118.

[495] Mutlu, *Dinlerarası Diyalog Nasıl Başladı Nasıl Gelişti,* 339.

[496] Mutlu, *Dinlerarası Diyalog Nasıl Başladı Nasıl Gelişti,* 265-339.

religious and social traps.[497]

After presenting views of Mutlu, now I now touch on Ali Kemal Belviranlı, a scholar of Islam from Konya and a writer of several books on many issue of Islam. Belviranlı's opinions about friendship with Christians present us an example about rejectionist views of Christian dialogue in Turkish context.

Ali Kemal Belviranlı (1923-2003)

In his book *The Principles of Islam*, we find Belviranlı's views on Christianity and Christians. His views on dialogue and coexistence with non-Muslims present a very traditional Islamic exclusivism. In the chapter "Problems Faced by Muslims in Non-Muslim Countries" he answers questions regarding Islam and Christianity.

In this context Belviranlı believes there is no connection, close or remote, between today's Injil (Gospels) and the pure and undistorted Injil Muslims believe in.[498] Christianity in the contemporary world is a system of worship and beliefs "based on the idolatrous and spiritual interpretations of Ancient Greece, Egypt, India and Rome and the perverted reasoning of the priesthood." Moreover, it has no resemblance or link to Islam.[499] Christians believe in a system of three Gods known as the "Trinity": God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Christians express this as one God, consisting of three. But "even the simplest mind can comprehend that this incongruity has nothing to do with belief in a single God." [500]

After referencing Qur'an (2:120; 3:118-19), which express negative pictures

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[497] Mutlu, *Dinlerarası Diyalog Nasıl Başladı Nasıl Gelişti,* 345-50.

[498] Ali Kemal Belviranlı, *The Principles of Islam* (Istanbul: Marifet Yayınları, 1993), 135.

[499] Belviranlı, *The Principles of Islam,* 136.

[500] Belviranlı, *The Principles of Islam,* 136.

regarding non-Muslims, Belviranlı answers the question whether Muslims can be close friends with non-Muslims as follows: "It is clearly understood from the above verses that followers of Christianity, Judaism and all similar misguided religions and doctrines can never be our close friends, brothers and confidants." According to him, Islamic history is full of many examples of this nature, where Christians and Jews conducted different kinds of base fawning and deception including treacherous plans in every period of history. Even in the most troubled days they mounted against Muslims ugly tyranny, torture, politics and aggression. Their policies and aggression were the same in the political, social, military and economic fields.[501]

"It is for this reason that the attitude of the believers should always be;

Knowing that they will always want to colonise and exploit us;

Sensing the possible treachery behind their false smiles of friendship;

Always be serious and alert

Completely free from submission;

In specific fields we may be their partners, and allies but not friends and confidants.

Knowing full well that no help will come from them, when we are really in need for help."[502]

In short, Belviranlı believes it is impossible for Muslims to have friendship or trust in any Christians, which prevents dialogue at all. He attempts to justify his exclusive views in Qur'anic verses. Moreover, he has a misunderstanding and one-sided perception

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[501] Belviranlı, *The Principles of Islam,* 138.

[502] Belviranlı, *The Principles of Islam,* 139.

regarding Christianity.

Before ending the chapter I should mention Ahmet Mahmut Ünlü. One of the typical misconceptions of interreligious dialogue is the assertion that everyone will go to Heaven regardless of their religious convictions. Acknowledging every religion as an equal path to salvation is usually confused with interreligious dialogue, and therefore interreligious dialogue is rejected by conservatives. A good example would be Ünlü, also known as "Cübbeli Ahmet Hoca" (Thawbed Ahmad Khawaja), a popular religious personality in Turkey. His book is titled "*Yahudi ve Hıristiyanlar Cennete Girecek Diyenler Cennete Giremez"* (Whoever Says "Jews and Christians will go to Heaven," Cannot go to Heaven). At the beginning Ünlü articulates the goal of the book, stating that we have agreement with Jews and Christians in faith credo or that it is not essential to profess the second part of the *shahadah* (Islamic testimony) "Muhammad is the messenger of God," does not only make person *kafir* (infidel), but also makes his readers *kafir* by letting them think in the same way. He aims that faithful Muslims should work to dissuade reformist minded scholars from such views, for the sake of God.[503]

Conclusion

To summarize, as Professor Ali Bardakoğlu, previous head of the PRA, rightly points out there are four basic reasons for development of a moderate perception of religion in Turkish society. First is the tradition of coexistence in Anatolia for many centuries. Second, Islam does not suppress a variety of religious interpretations or differences in tradition. Third, Sufism in Anatolian context encourages love for humanity.

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[503] Ahmet Mahmut Ünlü, *Yahudi ve Hıristiyanlar Cennete Girecek Diyenler Cennete Giremez* (Istanbul: Arifan, 2009)

Last are reforms and developments in the way of democratization of Turkish society.[504]

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[504] Bardakoğlu, *Religion and Society*, 82.

CHAPTER 4: THREE TURKISH PERCEPTIONS OF DIALOGUE

In the second chapter I analyze the development of interreligious dialogue in the official documents of the PRA, governmental and non-governmental organizations, textbooks, and thoughts of individual scholars. As we observed the issue of dialogue is highly differently perceived and responded to by these groups. Showing the vague usage of the term dialogue is beneficial in aiming to develop an objective picture of it. Therefore, in this chapter I will analyze views of the three influential scholars who study interreligious dialogue as case studies. These three scholars – Prof. Dr. Abdurrahman Küçük, Prof. Dr. Mahmut Aydın, and Prof. Dr. Davut Aydüz – are Muslims, Turkish citizens, theologians, and academicians. Here I examine their works on dialogue in order to understand their perception of dialogue and the role of interreligious dialogue in contemporary Turkey in terms of its relationship with Christianity.

I examine the thoughts of Abdurrahman Küçük as representative of rejectionist views; Mahmut Aydın's pluralism based perception of dialogue and his response to the Christian call for dialogue; Davut Aydüz's works as representative of positive views.

Abdurrahman Küçük's Perception of Dialogue

His Life and Works

Abdurrahman Küçük was born in the Erzincan province of Turkey in 1945. He graduated from Ankara University, Divinity Faculty. After working as a teacher in public schools, he taught in Ankara University. He has worked as vice dean and member of the administration board of the Divinity Faculty and the Social Sciences Institution of Ankara

University. He was also selected as Ankara deputy member of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and general secretary of the National Movement Party. He is has been president of the Turkish Association of Historians of Religion (TAHR) since its foundation in 1994. He knows Arabic and French fluently.

His books are all written in Turkish and one of them is translated into English:

1. (*Dönme*s and History of *Dönme*s) *Dönmeler ve Dönmelik Tarihi* (İstanbul: Aziz Andıç, 2005).

2. (History of Religions) *Dinler Tarihi,* 4th edition (Ankara: Ocak Yayınları, 2002).

3. (Armenian Church and Turks) *Ermeni Kilisesi ve Türkler* (Ankara: Andaç Yayınları, 2003).

4. (Heritages from Asia to Anatolia-Resources of National Unity*) Asya'dan Anadolu'ya Taşınanlar (Milli Bütünlüğümüzün Kaynakları)*, with Harun Güngör (Istanbul: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 1992).

5. (Turkey: From Missionary to Dialogue) *Misyonerlikten Diyaloga Türkiye* (Ankara: Aziz Andaç Yayınları, 2008).

6. (Missionary and Interreligious Dialogue) *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog* (Istanbul: Berikan, 2011).

7. (Alawites and Baktashis: from Turkistan to Turkey – an approach from History of Religions) *Türkistan'dan Türkiye'ye Alevilik-Bektaşilik: (dinler tarihi açısından bir yaklaşım),* Abdurrahman Küçük and Mehmet Alparslan Küçük, (Ankara: Berikan, 2009).

8. *The Sources of National Integrity: Remainings from Asia to Anatolia*, Abdurrahman Küçük and Harun Güngör, trans. Pınar Gedikoğlu (Ankara, Atatürk Supreme Council Atatürk Culture Center, 2000).

9. (History of Religions in Turkey) *Türkiye'de Dinler Tarihi (Dünü, Bugünü Ve Geleceği)* ed. Abdurrahman Küçük et al (Ankara, Türkiye Dinler Tarihi Derneği Yayınları, 2010).

10. (About Issues of Turkey) *Türkiye Meselelerine Dair* (Ankara, Berikan, 2011).

11. (Religion and the World) *Din ve Dünya,* Abdurrahman Küçük (Ankara: Berikan, 2010).

12. (Religion and Education) *Din ve Eğitim*, Abdurrahman Küçük, ed. Mehmet Alparslan Küçük (Ankara: Berikan, 2010).

13. (Islam and Turkishness) *İslamlık ve Türklük*. 2nd edition (Ankara: Berikan, 2011).

Some of his articles:

1. (New Mission Understanding, New Approaches and Interreligious Dialogue in Christianity) "Hıristiyanlıkta Misyon Anlayışı, Yeni Yaklaşımlar ve Dinlerarası Diyalog," in *Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları III* (Ankara: Dinler Tarihi Derneği Yayınları), 2002.

2. (Christianity: Past, Today and Future) "Hıristiyanlık: Dünü, Bugünü ve Geleceği," n *Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları III*, 359-85. Ankara: DİB, 2002.

3. (On the other side of Interreligious Dialogue) "Dinler Arası Diyaloğun 'Diğer Yüzü' Üzerine." Türk Yurdu 25:209 (2005): 6-9.

4. (An Imported Project: Turkey without Turk) "İthal Bir Proje: Türksüz Türkiye." *Türk Yurdu Dergisi* 24:208 (2004): 30-35.

5. (A General Overview on Muslim-Christian Dialogue) "Müslüman-Hıristiyan Diyaloguna Genel Bir Bakış," Iin *Asrımızda Hıristiyan-Müslüman Münasebetleri*, (İstanbul: İslami İlimler Araştırma Vakfı, 1993), 45-59.

6. (The Importance and the place of Interreligious Dialogue in the Europe Union Process) "Avrupa Birliği Sürecinde Dinler Arası Diyalogun Yeri ve Önemi," in *Uluslararası Avrupa Birliği Şurası Tebliğ ve Müzakereleri* (Ankara: TDV, 2000), 467-90.

7. (Tolerance of Turks towards Minorities in Anatolia) "Türklerin Anadolu'da Azınlıklara Hoşgörüsü." *Erdem Atatürk Merkezi Dergisi, Türklerde Hoşgörü Özel Sayısı II* 8: 23 (1996): 355- 82.

8. (Missionary and Turkey) "Misyonerlik ve Türkiye," In *Türkiye'deki Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri,* 37-51. Ankara: TDV, 1996.

9. (Some Thoughts on Interreligious Dialogue) "Dinlerarası Diyalog Üzerine Bazı Düşünceler." *Din Öğretimi Dergisi* 27 (1991): 27-37.

10. (What is Missionary)"Misyonerlik Nedir?" in *Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları V*, (Ankara: Dinler Tarihi Derneği Yayınları, 2005)

11. (Why there is need for Interreligious Dialogue?) "Dinlerarası Diyaloga Niçin İhtiyaç Vardır?, *Dini Araştırmalar Dergisi* 1:1 (1998), pp. 31-43

12. (Missionary Activities in Turkey) Küçük, Abdurrahman. "Türkiye'de Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri." *TÜRKAV* 7 (2004): 29-35.

13. (On Views about Futures Studies in the Area of History of Religions in Turkey) "Türkiye'de Dinler Tarihi Sahasında Yapılacak Çalışmalar Üzerine Düşünceler," in *Türkiye 1. Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları Sempozyumu*, 109-16 (Samsun: Kardeşler Matbaası, 1993.

14. (Missionary Activities, Methods in Turkish World and Precautions against Them) "Türk Dünyasında Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri, Metotları ve Bunlara Karşı Alınması

Gereken Tedbirler," in *II. Avrasya Şurası Bildirileri*, 375-409 (Ankara: DIB, 1998).

15. (The Goal of East Issue is to Send Turks back to Central Asia) "Şark Meselesinin Amacı Türkleri Orta Asya'ya Geri Göndermektir." *Türk Yurdu* 26:227 (2006): 26-29.

16. (Religion and Understanding of Religion in the Qur'an) "Kur'an'da Din ve Din Anlayışı," In *Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları II* (Ankara: Türkiye Dinler Tarihçileri Derneği, 2000), 3-13.

17. (Sabbateanism from Past to Today/Approaches to the issue of Dönme) "Tarihten Günümüze Sabataycılık/Dönmelik Meselesine Yaklaşımlar," In *Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları IV* (Ankara: Türkiye Dinler Tarihçileri Derneği, 2004), 127-64.

18. "(Turkish-Armenian Relations under the light of Evidence) Belgelerin Işığında Türk-Ermeni Münasebetlerine Genel Bir Bakış," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 31 (1989), 245-59.

19. (Research on Hypocricy and Dönme) "Münâfıklık ve Dönmelik Üzerinde Bir Araştırma," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 29 (1987): 347-59.

20. (The Dimensions of Promised Lands in Judaism) "Yahudilikdeki Arz-ı Mev'ûd Anlayışının Boyutları," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 33 (1992): 101-11.

General Overview

As we see Abdurrahman Küçük is the author of several books and articles on interreligious dialogue. He has written about dialogue since the 1990s and supervised the first master's thesis titled II Vatikan Konsili ve Diyalog (Second Vatican Council and

Dialogue) on dialogue in Turkey in 1995, by Ali İsra Güngör. Küçük's writings on dialogue are generally related to the subject of missionary activity, imperialism and enculturation. His cautious approach is justified by his nationalistic attitude, which also represents fundamental concerns of Turkish academia and public opinion that reject the dialogue call of Christians. Even though he does not discard the idea of dialogue as a phenomenon and acknowledges the dialogue experienced throughout Islamic civilizations, especially Turkish Islamic civilization, as genuine and natural, he rejects dialogue in the Christian context. Moreover, he attempts to rationalize dialogue in the Islamic context by references from the Qur'an, the life of the Prophet Muhammad and the tradition of Islam. Furthermore, his nationalistic approach forces him to present nationalism as the remedy for the Turkish community against the plots of the Christian West − including dialogue. Since he does not totally reject the concept of dialogue, he draws apart from some ultraconservative Turkish Muslims who not do accept the idea at all by stressing the uniqueness of Islam as the only religion in a close relationship with God and any calls from non-Muslims as dishonest and political maneuvers.

Küçük has co-authored a book with Günay Tümer entitled *Introduction to the History of Religions* that is frequently referenced and taught as a textbook in the universities. His general research area includes pre-Islamic Turkish religions and beliefs, traditional Turkish beliefs and traditions, Christian missionary efforts and interreligious dialogue.

Küçük does not discuss interreligious dialogue systematically. Rather, he presents a superficial overview of historical development, without examining it in the Catholic or

Protestant context.[505] After all, it is important to note that the concept of interreligious dialogue in the two contexts developed partly independently and the two contexts have distinctive features. However, he perceives the Christian call for dialogue as a single component, so his positive, descriptive and Islamic-based dialogue approach is generally overshadowed by his negative attitude toward the West. Since he cannot avoid perceiving any organizational Western Christian movement toward Muslims as centuries-old antagonistic characteristics, it seems that he cannot also be satisfied with any clarification from the Christian side. This attitude makes his dialogue thesis almost impossible to accomplish. He does not fully grasp Christian sincerity about dialogue when missionary work is also advocated by the Church.

At this juncture, the problem seems that Küçük does not separate the different elements of mission, such as dialogue, witnessing, evangelization, enculturation, and proclaiming when assessing the meanings of mission in the West and other contexts such as the official texts of the church, papal encyclicals, official newspapers and periodicals. He usually focuses on a few statements of the popes about mission or evangelization and misses the rest of the positive statements and encouragements about dialogue, understanding and coexistence. Also, he does not make very many specific references to the Christian scholars who are experts on mission and dialogue. He dismisses so many opposite, divergent and alternative views about dialogue from the officials of the Catholic Church to the university scholars, from Catholics in general to adherents of different non-Catholic denominations and from those who advocate dialogue or reject it. Therefore, oversimplification of the nature of the Christian call for dialogue creates insurmountable

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[505] He attempts to do so only once in his book *Misyonerlikten Diyaloga Türkiye*.

difficulties to develop rich and varied perceptions regarding the nature of dialogue.

Küçük and rejectionists usually claim that they have revealed the hidden goals of the Christian call for dialogue: evangelization and imperialism. By doing this they reinforce mission-phobia and preclude faithful Turkish Muslims from developing more constructive attitudes toward dialogue. However, neither Catholics nor the WCC hide any intentions from the public regarding a relationship between dialogue and mission. The evolving understanding of dialogue has been intensely debated publicly in conferences, meetings and workshops. Moreover, Turkish Muslim scholars such as Mahmut Aydın and Mustafa Alıcı have done doctoral dissertations on the history and the nature of Christian-Muslim dialogue, translated some official documents into Turkish and discussed the dialogue-mission tension in meetings. Despite these clarifications, mission-phobia has developed because of previous negative and inappropriate presentations.

Moreover, Küçük's suggestion for dialogue seems unacceptable from the Christian perspective, because Küçük requires Christians to condemn missionary works and evangelization. He does not make any distinction between the different kinds of interreligious dialogue such as dialogue of life, dialogue of theology, dialogue of religious experience or dialogue of action. Therefore, it is not clear which of them if any he is really rejecting. By examining his writings in detail and putting them into systematic categories, I will try to find an answer to this problem.

Küçük collected his articles that were published in several journals and conference presentations on dialogue and missionary in a book "*Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*"

in 2010.[506] His other book, *Misyonerlikten Diyaloga Türkiye* has similar content, so, references will be made mostly from the earlier book. Since he has already gathered his articles into the books, additional references will not be made about the original publications. The bibliography, has a detailed reference will be given.

In *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, Küçük does not sort the articles order such as dates and topics. Since the book was compiled from his articles, there are many repetitions. Generally, articles that approach dialogue negatively are presented first and articles that represent dialogue more objectively are presented later. The sorting of the articles that seems to have the goal of creating an image of dialogue as a new method of the Christian mission.[507] He does not make many references to Western sources when he discusses the relationship between dialogue and mission. For instance, even though he says that studies done in the Vatican link mission and dialogue, all the references he

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[506] Following are the articles in the book: 1. "İthal Bir Proje: Türksüz Türkiye" *Türk Yurdu Dergisi* 24:208 (2004), 30-35; 2. "Şark Meselesinin Amacı Türkleri Orta Asya'ya Geri Göndermektir," *Türk Yurdu* 26:227 (2006), 26-29.; 3. "Türk Dünyasında Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri, Metotları Ve Bunlara Karşı Alınması Gereken Tedbirler" in *II. Avrasya Şurası Bildirileri*, 375-409 (Ankara: DIB, 1998); 4 "Türkiye'de Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri," *TÜRKAV* 7 (2004), 29-35; 5. "Misyonerlik ve Hedef Ülke Türkiye." *TÜRKAV* 12 (2005), 16-19; 6. "Hıristiyanlık: Dünü, Bugünü ve Geleceği," in *Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları III*, 359-385. Ankara: DİB, 2002; 7. "Dinlerarası Diyalog Üzerine Bazı Düşünceler." *Din Öğretimi Dergisi* 27 (1991), 27-37; 8. "Dinlerarası Diyaloga Niçin İhtiyaç Vardır?" *Dini Araştırmalar* 1:1 (1998), 31-43; 9. "Dinler Arası Diyaloğun 'Diğer Yüzü' Üzerine," *Türk Yurdu* 25:209 (2005), 6-9; 10. Akalın, Kâmil. "Prof. A.Küçük ile röportaj," *Bizim Dergah* 5 (1992). 11. "Hıristiyanlıkta Misyon Anlayışı, Yeni Yaklaşımlar ve Dinlerarası Diyalog," in *Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları III,* 359-86 (Ankara: Dinler Tarihi Derneği Yayınları, 2002).

[507] Abdurrahman Küçük, *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog* (Ankara, Turkey: Berikan yay., 2011), 145.

makes are written by Turkish Muslims in Turkish.[508]

In terms of the sensitivity of the subject, Küçük conceives it objectionable that so many people are writing about dialogue and criticizes them for doing so. He asserts that some authors do not consider the subject seriously and are concerned only about business. Rather he claims that professionals who have knowledge about other religious traditions should write about dialogue. Writers also must have deep knowledge about the history of Muslim and non-Muslim relations to analyze the information correctly. Hence, Küçük, as a historian of religions, points out the significance of the discipline of history of religions.[509]

In his book it is observed that Küçük is not careful in using concepts. Occasional wrong typing of non-Turkish concepts shows that he is not meticulous about details. He uses a word differently in the same section without any explanation for instance, Kérygyne or Kéerygyme or Kéryx.[510] He also makes contradictory statements throughout the book. For instance, on page 136 he states that the Western world behaved negatively toward Muslims, Islam, and Turks until the Crusades, when Western hostility reached its peak. After the Crusades, this hostility was partially resolved. However, in the same section he says that dialogue existed from the Prophet to the Abbasid era and ended with the Crusades.[511] Moreover, he uses concepts interchangeably, which create ambiguities for understanding his views clearly. For instance, he uses dialogue-mission and dialogue-

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[508] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 168, 150.

[509] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* v, 76.

[510] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 81.

[511] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 136.

tablig interchangeably.

Four Concepts: West, Turkey, Religion and Crusaders

In order to understand Küçük's understanding of dialogue it is necessary to take into account his views about the West, Turkey/Anatolia, Religion and the Crusaders.

Küçük's perception of dialogue is strongly related to his perception of the West. Even though he does not specify the concept of the West, it is understood from his writing that he means Christian-majority countries in Europe and the Americas. He draws a picture of Western interest in Anatolia and Turkey with very negative language and perceives it antagonistically. For him the essential reason for Western hostility is derived from Turkey's geopolitical-religious-historical position. For centuries Turkey had been a place of interaction between the Eastern and Western worlds and a place of harmony for these cultures, ideas, philosophies and traditions. While blending all these rich elements in its centuries old powerful civilization, it has retained its central geo-cultural role and been an influence on the cultures around it. Therefore, Turkey's crucial role has forced the West to pursue an obligatory familiar relationship with Turkey. Contemporary, technological developments and globalization do not change the old Western hostility toward Muslims; rather, with its growing power, its desire to take control of the rest of the world has been whipped up. Keeping in mind these dynamics Küçük considers the modern discourse of the West related to peace and religious freedom a political step. In this respect, he states that in the current century the foremost goal of the West is not creating a multi-cultural–multi-religious world: its goal is forming a Christian world. The West is profoundly based on Christian culture, so it is a Christian civilization.[512] In this

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[512] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 1.

respect he says "I consider the XXI century as a 'century of creating a monopole world.' This is the mission of the West."[513]

One of the significant issues that Küçük deals with in order to prove Western hostility toward Turkish Muslims and to convince readers about the danger they pose, is the Eastern Question/Issue. He indicates that the politics of the Eastern Question/Issue presented by the Christian West, which operates in the spirit of "alh-salib" (people of the Cross),[514] has three steps: expelling Turks from the Europe/Balkans; expelling Turks from Anatolia; and forcing Turks back to Central Asia.[515] He considers the Eastern Issue a serious threat to the Turkish nation and states that the steps are being carried out successfully and the West is sure to complete its mission.[516] It is seen that he stresses the Christian heritage and character of the West by using the concept ahl-salib that mostly refers to Crusaders.

Known discourse he uses for supporting his thesis is the clash between the Cross and the Crescent. In order to highlight this point several times, he makes a reference to the book titled "*Zulmetten Nura: From Darkness to the Light*" by Şemseddin Günaltan, the eighth prime minister of Turkey.[517] According to Küçük, Günaltan reports that in a

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[513] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 29.

[514] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 37.

[515] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 23, 160. He also states that some marginal fundamentalist movements, in Christianity wanted to send Turks back to the Altai Mountains.

[516] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 10. He consider that if the things go this way, the third step will be accomplished; see 25. See similar reactions from the Turkish Thought Movement in Düşünce Hareketi, *Türk Düşüncesi* (İstanbul: İrfan, 2007), 148.

[517] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 28, 38, 95.

conference in Switzerland, a European scholar in his presentation on "Turkish atrocities in Macedonia" says: "unless the Crescent is removed on earth and the Cross is spread all around the world, humanity will not reach peace."[518] This Cross-Crescent challenge narrative, also known worldwide, plays a significant role in Küçük's perception of the West.

Küçük also uses current political issues to support his argument. He considers ongoing discussions about national values significant in terms of his views about Western interest in Turkey. In his discussion, he considers values such as the Turkish Oath, Turkish National Anthem, and Turkish Consciousness as constituting the Turkish identity. He states that these issues are discussed in order to take the nation away from its core values and make it a gadget of imperialism. In fact, every kind of imperialism means losing self-identity and conscience.[519] His thoughts can be understood better if we look at his views on the relationship between Western desire for domination of the rest of the world and its cultural influence. He points out that the future missionary problem is the Christianization of other civilizations.[520]

In another instance Küçük asserts that regulations made by the Turkish government on 02/01/2003 have enabled religious groups to acquire property. Referring to an allegation in the Turkish media, he states that property acquisition by foreigners has been accelerated in different districts of Anatolia and establishment of churches and

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[518] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 28, 96.

[519] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 9.

[520] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 34.

formation of new Christian communities have reached a "scary dimension."[521] Without analyzing the integrity of the news, it is seen that he simply restates it and uses it to affirm his views. It is inferred from the above mentioned notional assessments that his views are comparable to conspiracy theories, which present the West a very strong, one-sided, unanimous community of states that have always been committing plans against Muslims. Moreover, from his position it is apparent that he perceives the West as a threat and so creates a defensive-exclusivist attitude.

Turkey and Turkishness

The concept of Turkishness is stressed throughout Küçük's writings. As pointed out above, for him the West's primary rival and enemy has always been the Turks.[522] Among the foremost reasons for this hostility is that Turks are Muslims and were the leaders of the Islamic world for a long time. Moreover, Turkey or the Turkish nation is the only country that can lead the Islamic world.[523] (He defines "nation" as a society formed around common values, missions, faith, language, thought and culture.[524])

In terms of geographical location, Küçük stresses that Turkey/Anatolia is also a geographically very important country for the Christian world because of the many places considered holy by Christians.[525] With the Turkish conquests, Anatolia was Islamized and

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[521] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 72.

[522] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 1.

[523] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 1.

[524] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 18.

[525] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 1.

transformed into a Turkish land.[526] This development caused Western Christians to unite against Turks.[527] For the Christian West, Anatolia must not be ruled by Turks, and it is impossible to take back their ancient holy places unless Turks are expelled.[528] For some Western groups, Anatolia is the cradle of Christianity and Western civilization.[529] The conquest of Constantinople accelerated animosity toward Turks.[530] Moreover, there is a significant place for Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Empire in the Christian world. Especially in terms of the religious dimension, it is impossible for the West to overlook the prominence of Anatolia as long as it is ruled by Turks.[531] In this regard he gives an exaggerated narrative about Constantine's choice for the geographical location of the city of Constantinople.[532]

Moreover Küçük thinks that the reason behind the West's apprehension of the Turkish nation is that Turkish nationalists can look at issues in a holistic way and come together to stay away from traps.[533] He is certain that the Turkey and Turkish civilization are key for the Western interests that seek to Christianize other civilizations. Therefore, Western discourse such as "alliance of civilization" is only a veil for their hidden agenda.

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[526] In one instance, he states that Turkey is home to Turks or Turkish clans for seven millennium. See, Küçük, *Garp-Şark Ayrımında İslam Algısı,* (Ankara: Berikan, 2013), 194.

[527] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 122.

[528] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 2.

[529] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 15.

[530] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 203.

[531] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 2.

[532] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 2.

[533] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 17.

The reality behind "alliance of civilizations" is the "challenge of civilizations,"[534] but does not explain or discuss why he uses the concept. His thought prompts the "clash of civilization" narrative, which presumes that wars on civilizational differences will occur in the near future. Therefore, the Turkish bid for the EU is taking a dangerous path: "we have to be careful about the traps on the way of the EU…. Even though today Western people are not motivated [destructive aims] as much as in the past and they have lost their energies, the desires to get back Anatolia are not totally detached. The details of the works that I made push me to think in this way."[535] The following are some of the goals of the West: having a Muslim World without Turks, a Turkic World without Turkey, Turkish nationalism without an Islamic essence, and racism by bringing non-Turkish ethnic identities into public discussion.[536] Some of the titles and subtitles of his articles are very striking and summarize his views about the Western aim: "The goal: Turkish world without Turkey, Islamic world without Turkey, a Turkey away from Islam,"[537] and "Target of Missionaries: Turkic World."[538]

According to Küçük the remedy against the destructive Western interest is Turkish nationalism, which plays a crucial role in being aware of the dangers of the West. Therefore, after mentioning the betrayals and plots of the West, which Turks had experienced in the previous centuries, he states "it will not be a mistake to say that people

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[534] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 30, 82.

[535] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 29.

[536] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 9, 10.

[537] "Bizim Dergah Dersigisinden Kâmil Akalın'ın Prof. A.Küçük ile yaptığı röportaj," *Bizim Dergah* 5 (1992), 49.

[538] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 36.

who are against Turkish nationalism are in betrayal, if not in heedlessness."[539] In another

place, he asserts that those large portions of people who are against Turkish nationalism

clearly or secretly have worked/are working for minority racism/separatism.[540]

Religion

The other term that will be helpful in understanding Küçük's perception of

interreligious dialogue is the concept of religion. He defines religion as "a set of general

rules and behaviors which regulate relationships between people and encourage people to

do good work and live in peace and coexistence."[541] Because religion promotes messages

for people, he thinks that it is rational for a founder or member of a religious tradition to

call/bring people around the values of his/her religious tradition.[542] In reality, for him, all

religions aim to present people peace and happiness, and to let them accept each other as

God's blessed trusts. Despite this fact, there have been many clashes and enmities in the

name of religion throughout history. Moreover, he claims that there is a place for clash

and struggle among people whenever religions meet. When religion becomes a motive for

enmity, it brings fighting and wars instead of peace and happiness. The role of ignorance,

conditioning and obsession is huge when religion is understood in a negative way. An

additional significant factor that makes conflict among people of different religious

traditions is probably the sense of competition and superiority.[543] Furthermore, incoherent

recognition, misidentification and misunderstanding of other religious traditions are

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[539] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 19.

[540] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 17.

[541] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 159.

[542] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 77,128, 65.

[543] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 179.

among the reasons of separatism and conflict. The solution for this hostility is to get knowledge and accurate information about religions and their central ideas.[544]

Consequently, it is seen that Küçük stresses the crucial role of correct information in terms of resolving misunderstandings. He bases his dialogue understanding on interaction of information, mutual tolerance, sincerity and goodwill.[545] In order to support his point he makes references to the Qur'anic verses:[546]

> 29.49. It (the Qur'an) is indeed self-evident, enlightening Revelations (revealed by God, and so able to impress themselves) in the hearts of those endowed with knowledge. None oppose and reject them except wrongdoers (those who cannot determine with justice and so, act arrogantly in response to them).

> 3.113. Yet, they are not all alike: among the People of the Book, there is an upright community, reciting God's Revelations in the watches of the night and prostrating (themselves in worship). They believe in God and the Last Day, and enjoin and promote what is right and good, and forbid and try to prevent evil, and hasten to do good deeds, as if competing with one another. Those are of the righteous ones. Whatever good they do, they will never be denied the reward of it; and God has full knowledge of the God-revering, pious.

> 2.62. Those who believe (i. e. professing to be Muslims), or those who declare Judaism, or the Christians or the Sabaeans (or those of some other faith) whoever truly believes in God and the Last Day and does good, righteous deeds, surely their reward is with their Lord, and they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

> 5.69. Surely, be they of those who declare faith (the Community of Muhammad), or be they of

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[544] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 129.

[545] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 168.

[546] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 199.

those who are the Jews or the Sabaeans or the Christians (or of another faith) "whoever truly and sincerely believes in God and the Last Day and does good, righteous deeds" they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

26.15. (God) said: "Not so, indeed! Go forth, then, the two of you, with Our miraculous signs (with which I have provided you). We will surely be with you all (you and them), listening attentively (to all that is to happen between you).

17.107. Say: "Believe in it or do not believe." Surely those who were endowed before it with knowledge (of the truth and Divine Revelation and teachings, and still follow that knowledge) fall down on their faces in prostration when the Qur'an is recited to them.

18.29. And say: "The truth from your Lord (has come in this Qur'an)." Then, whoever wills (to believe), let him believe; and whoever wills (to disbelieve), let him disbelieve. Surely, We have prepared for the wrongdoers a Fire, its billowing folds encompassing them. If they beg for water, they will be given water like molten metal that scalds their faces. How dreadful a drink, and how evil a couch to rest on!

Crusaders

The other concept that should be examined to help clarify Küçük's perception of interreligious dialogue is the Crusades. He creates a relationship between interreligious dialogue, mission and Crusaders, asserting that dialogue is the new strategy of mission, which was formed after the Crusades and continued for 174 years. According to him, besides Christian writers/scholars provocation for a negative image of Islam and encouraging wars,[547] the principal reason behind the Crusades was the disaffirmation of

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[547] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 136, 163-64. However, he says that the negative result appeared because policies of Christian. 2. In these two paragraphs and certain parts of the previous article, his to positive examples of "friendly relation," contradict with statements that Christians are constantly attacking Islam. He does say that Christianity always clashes with Islam. But on the other hand he mentions friendly

Turkish rule over the holy lands of Christianity.[548]

According to Küçük, the goal of the Crusades was to stop the Turkish conquest and prevent the spread of Islam in the European lands. Moreover, his expressions and stress on Turkishness imply that Turks were the main enemy/target.[549] He expresses that the West was not successful with their united forces in eight Crusades against the Turkish nation.[550] It is remarkable that he does not stress the role of Jerusalem, Arabian rulers and sectarian problems among Christians. Actually, the Turks' role in the Crusades must be questioned. For instance, Saladin Ayyubi's and other Muslim leaders seem to be as important as Turkish leaders. Moreover, it is possible to state that similar to Küçük, in other studies by Turkish scholars about the Crusades, the role of Turks has also been overstressed in comparison to the Muslims in other countries. This general Turkish-centered attitude seems to be normal in the contemporary contexts of the Republic of Turkey, which was founded on the values of the nation-state.

Küçük considers the Crusades a turning point for Christian-Muslim relations. According to him after the failure of the Crusades, Christians looked for a new strategy. The solution was the adaptation of mission according to existing situations instead of physical fighting.[551] And the only way Christians could influence Muslims was approaching them with "love." It is believed that approaching with love would stop the

relations.

[548] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 23.

[549] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, III, 68.

[550] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, III.

[551] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 39.

spread of Islam.[552] Moreover, he points out some contemporary Christian group attitudes toward Turkish lands. He mentions the "Christian society/leading team," who did not get a desired result from the Crusades, without giving specific information about who they were. After the failure this leading team changed their tactics and wanted "to stop Turks, to divide/split Turks, ruin Turks and send Turks back to central Asia and then alienate Turks from Islam."[553] He also mentions some Zionist and missionary groups who are influential in contemporary Western countries and who have destructive desires to get back holy lands or promised lands.

Even though he does not create any links between the groups of the past and today, it is clear that the image of the leading team plays a significant role in his thoughts.[554] Avoiding specific information about the leading team that transformed missionary work into a softer approach forces, his thesis to be understood as an abstract argument. Hence, his argument turns into fear-centered views. Moreover, it is not clear that missionaries would also acknowledge his thoughts about them. Consequently, he attempts to read the intention of missionaries without specific examples to support his ideas. This is a very problematic presentation and description of Christian mission.

Küçük presents Zionists and Christian missionaries as groups collaborating against Muslim Turks during the Ottoman Empire. He asserts that a pre-study was organized by them to separate Arabs from the Ottoman Empire. However, he does not give any specific names of these groups. His stress is on missionaries rather than Zionists.

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[552] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 39, 69.

[553] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 89, 147.

[554] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 15, 95.

The West, with the help of missionaries, brought the Armenian issue to the agenda, while missionaries influenced, and agitated Armenians against Turks, converting some of them to Christianity. Moreover, missionaries influenced Arabs and separated them from Turks by offering a "Great Arab State" to them.[555]

Küçük stresses that the religious motives behind missionaries and Zionists are supported by financial help and intelligence service from businessman and spies. Missionaries and Zionists cooperated for analysis on the geopolitical situation of the Middle East and the Middle Eastern people. Imperialist businessmen and secret agents structured preparatory works.[556] He claims that there are groups from Jewish-Christian Zionists who are influential in the U.S. administration, have a desire for the Promised Land (Turkish: Vadedilmiş Topraklar–Arz-ı Mevud), and are involved with underground sources.[557] These groups are behind Western interest in Turkey. Similar to his general attitude, he does not specify which groups they are. However, in his other article he mentions Sabbateans (crypto-Jews who have protected their Jewishness under cover of Christian Baptists) as influential in U.S. politics.[558] He makes references to rumors and says things such as missionaries have penetrated into some religious groups as spies,

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[555] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 3.

[556] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 26. Moreover, According to Küçük the "Greater Middle East Project" is the common denominator of Jews and Christians. Muslims are also important participants in the implementation of the project: minority Muslim groups who have a "pursuit for legitimacy" and "problem of identity" and "represent moderate Islam." Küçük avoids any reference for this information (69, 95).

[557] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 15, 95. Küçük also points out missioners' desire for Promised Land. He usually presents missionaries as a political movement or political mission (20).

[558] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 68.

earned their trusts and then influenced them.[559] The other example would be that according to a very widely known assertion, some sheikhs' most influential members are *dönme* (Sabbateans) or missionaries.[560] He even states that especially the USA penetrates into the Turkic world through Turkish Muslims groups.[561]

In order to understand his Küçük's views about the secret spies among Muslim communities, it would be helpful to refer to the very widely known narrative among the Turkish public he also mentions. According to this narrative, Theodor Herzl goes to Sultan Abdulhamid II and suggests that he pay the debts of the Ottoman State with the sale of the foundation of the state of Israel.[562] Sultan refuses it immediately. Küçük presents the influential American missionary organization the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM)[563] as an example of a dangerous missionary group active during the Ottoman Empire. He also claims that powerful Western countries such as the United States, France, England, Italy and Germany have adopted mission as a state strategy.[564] By relating this mission with the political interest of powerful western countries, he implies missionary work as having a political base, which is destructive of Muslims.

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[559] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 15, 78, 85.

[560] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 15, 69.

[561] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 16.

[562] Mim Kemal Oke, "The Ottoman Empire, Zionism, and the Question of Palestine (1880-1908)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 14:3 (1982), 330.

[563] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 36.

[564] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 101.

It is not difficult to find Küçük's points regarding the crucial destructive role of missionaries in history as intensifies in modern Turkey and the Muslim world. In order to draw a picture of the dominance and the danger of missioners he gives some numbers. He stresses that after the 1980s, Christianization in Turkey increased,[565] and that according to *Time Magazine* in 2004, only America sent nearly 27,000 missioners to Muslim countries including Iraq and Turkey.[566] His reference to *Time* is problematic because the article, "Mission Under Cover," declares that the numbers belong to the year 2003, and that 27,000 is the number of all missionaries in Muslim countries. One of every two is American and two of three are evangelical.[567] Moreover, he asserts that newspapers claimed around 3,000 missionaries entered Eastern Turkey and especially Mardin in 2003,[568] and that 117 statesmen were missionaries or had relationships with missionaries.[569]

Mission

The concept of interreligious dialogue in the writings of Küçük is strongly related the concept of mission.[570] Therefore, to clarify and understand properly his perception of dialogue, it is necessary to articulate his understanding of mission and missionary activity. In his review of the issue, it is seen that he differentiates three concepts: mission,

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[565] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 221.

[566] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 73.

[567] David Van Biema et al., "Missionaries Under Cover," *Time* 161:26 (2003), 42-51.

[568] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 99.

[569] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 74.

[570] In his widely recognized book *Introduction to History of Religion*. Küçük presents dialogue in the eighth chapter with missionary activities, pointing out items discussed in *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*.

missionary activity and *tablig*.[571]

Definition

Küçük defines mission as activity "to bring people to Christianity by working tirelessly and by using every method, (secret or apparent) in normal conditions or extraordinary situations such as earthquake, storm, starvation etc."[572]

He gives two different definitions of missionaries. The short definition is "anyone who works to spread his/her religious beliefs and thoughts any place."[573] This short definition seems to be a more objective definition than one that explains its religious side. The second definition, limited to Christian missionaries, is "the one who is in charge of missions, who has the duty to bring people of other religions or cultures to Christianity, who works to bring a person to any religion or ideal. Missionaries are the leading force in order to make any country serve his country's policies. Missionaries are also perceived as spy agents."[574] Thus, it is clear he has two different perceptions regarding missionaries.

Basic Features

Küçük describes the basic features of mission as: It is not only a religious activity but an organization that has political and administrative power and ideology. Its tactics are changeable according to time and conditions. It exploits the weakness of communities and waits for a convenient time to be influential for convincing/converting people by abuse/misuse of their hopes in difficult times such as earthquakes or illness. It

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[571] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, V.

[572] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 86.

[573] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 31.

[574] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 85.

deteriorates national identity, transforms people into enemies of their own homeland, religion and state, and alienates people from their community. It is a political organization in the service of the super powers.[575] In a striking example regarding his perception of the Christian missionary, he points out that missionaries do not use the term "Christian" publicly since it reminds people of the Crusades. Instead they use the words "believers of the Messiah."[576] Messiah has a more positive implication for Muslims because it is a Qur'anic name for Jesus the prophet.

Political Missionary

Küçük considers even some non-mission religions as working hard at not losing their followers. Adherents of these religions desire to influence other communities by means of political and cultural power.[577] Therefore, besides religious missionaries, there are also political missionaries who are the most influential, having functioned alongside the other missionary types. He thinks that they are pretty much successful. In terms of mission-imperialism relations, "it is a historical reality that missionaries hold leading roles of imperialism in the USA, Africa etc. for colonization, proselyting and assimilation."[578] And today missionary activity is an ideological cover for Western civilization and capitalism.[579]

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[575] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 92, 67, 78, 80, 86.

[576] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 52.

[577] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 32.

[578] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 14, 20, 79.

[579] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 14, 100.

For him mission is different from non-Chrisitan mission[580] because the goal of Christian mission is to build the Church (Christian community) in a country. In this sense he claims that, whether moral/lawful or immoral, everything and every way is legitimate for missionaries to reach this goal.[581] Converting Muslims to Christianity means not only to convert them from Islam, but also to assimilate them and so weaken the Turkish Front and create a satellite society of the West. Therefore, mission is not an innocent movement:[582] It is an institutional activity operated by privately trained missionaries who act as private officers of some states. He avoids giving any specific names of the states and uses very general statements.[583]

Steps of Mission

Küçük also mentions the steps of mission: carrying the Gospels to pagans; witnessing the Gospel and teaching I; and "introducing the Salvific Function of Messiah to people who do not know.[584] Furthermore, he presents mission as an evolving concept throughout Christian history. So, mission at the time of Jesus is different from the contemporary time. There are nine different periods of mission but I can reduce them into three basic turning periods; time of Jesus, the Crusades and the Second Vatican Council.

The first period was mission as understood in the time of Jesus. In this sense, Küçük considers that mission was perceived very differently by Jesus Christ and later the

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[580] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 79.

[581] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 81, 124.

[582] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 89.

[583] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, V.

[584] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 33.

Apostle Paul compared to contemporary perception. After indicating the ingenious character of mission according to Jesus, Küçük explains the differences between the two periods by using one Islamic and one Christian term: *tablig* and mission. Mission in the time of Jesus and Paul was understood and functioned as *tablig*, an Islamic term.[585] He defines *tablig* as "explaining religion with good intent and sincerity without making any pressure or different maneuvers."[586] It does not have any destructive and sneaky goal. On the other hand, mission is full of traps and harmful intentions regarding others. Therefore, one can conclude that Küçük's perception of mission is an intention-centered view. If a proclamation is practiced sincerely and with goodwill, then it is accepted as legitimate. However, if it is practiced as a political means and has tricky intentions, then it is rejected. Furthermore, in his usage of the two terms, it is striking that while the Islamic term (*tablig*) has positive connotations, the Christian word (mission) keeps negative connotations.[587]

After citing the above stated thoughts, it is thus clear that for Küçük, explaining/proclaiming Christianity to non-Christians, a natural attitude, includes differences between acceptable missions and missionary activity that has political and destructive ambitions. By making differences between mission and tablig, he underlines

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[585] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, V. Küçük states Jesus and Paul presented mission as *tablig*, but contradicts himself on page 87, saying that mission gained a new dimension with Paul's words and works.

[586] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 80.

[587] This perception of *tablig* versus mission is clear also in the writings of Ziya Kazıcı. Similar to Küçük, he states that for missionaries, besides religios goals, their states' political goals are also important, so a missionary is also an agent of his country. Ziya Kazıcı, *Müslüman Hıristiyan İlişkileri Tarihi* (İstanbul: Kayıhan, 2011), 39-40.

that mission is not proclaiming Christianity in a common way.[588] Therefore it is

impossible to identify mission with *tablig*. Missionary activity is not a clear and honest

teaching/expression of faith. It is misleading and full of traps. Missionaries are also secret

spies who take aim at religious and national values and prompt ethnic separation.[589]

Furthermore, among their goals is the Christianization of Asia and removal of Turks from

Anatolia,[590] the gateway/key of Asia.[591]

    Küçük stresses that after Jesus, mission became evolved dramatically with very

political notions. He says that the Crusaders' failure to get the back holy lands from the

Muslims empowered Christians to toward different strategies, and the strategy of

missionary activity, in the modern sense, was founded. A new type of "mission" was

launched by Francis of Assisi and developed and transformed into a much more

influential method by Raymond Llull, who lived in the 14th century.[592] According to

Küçük, the single target of the mission started by Francis and developed by Llull was

overcoming the Turks. Without defeating the Turks it would be impossible to defeat

Islam and control the Muslim world. Thus, it can be stated that Küçük draws the image of

Fransis of Assisi as an anti-Turkish missionary.[593] Moreover, he asserts that Raymond

Llull attempted to revive the Christian background of the Ottoman administrative class,

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[588] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 80.

[589] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 93.

[590] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 93-94.

[591] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 124. He refers to Samuel Colcort Barlett, *Historical Sketch of the Missions of the American Board in Turkey* (Boston: ABCFM, 1880), citesd in Kocabaşoğlu, 29.

[592] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 24, 152.

[593] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 24, 152.

the *devşirmes*. His tactic was partly successful.[594] Another method was approaching Turks pretending to be Muslim.[595]

Küçük's statements regarding development of mission continue to have inconsistencies. He asserts that the new type of "mission" was started by Francis of Assisi after the loss by the Crusaders.[596] However, in another article, he states that after the conquest of Constantinople, Christians understood they could not defeat Turkish Muslims with military power, so they searched for new ways.[597] The conquest of Istanbul occurred in the second half of the 15th century, a century after Raymond Llull. Nevertheless, it can be stated that the Muslim conquests of Jerusalem and Constantinople, two holy places of Christianity, seem to be the most significant factors that developed the nature of the Christian mission. So it can be observed that Küçük's perception of Muslim-Christian relations is a land-focused challenge and struggle. Capturing and ruling over holy places indicate the power of one side. The basic source of the current interest of the Christian West in Turkey is that they cannot yet get holy lands back from the Turks, even though they are the powerful side.

Küçük claims that when a movement is developing it might be perceived positively. But, when it has become larger yet weaker it might be perceived differently.[598] Likewise, when Turks embraced Islam in the 800s and Muslims became much stronger,

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[594] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 24.

[595] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 89.

[596] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 24, 152.

[597] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 35.

[598] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 128.

Muslim-Christian relations became more negative.[599] With the conquest of Istanbul, in meetings he does not identify, Christians adopted alternative strategies regarding mission.[600] The negative attitude was systemized within the concept of missionary work, and missionary activities were directed under the Ministry of Missions that was founded in England (1646) and in the Vatican (1662). Also, he claims that in these countries Kurdology institutes were established in the 1660s.[601] Besides these developments about non-Christians, the Catholics and the Protestants also used mission as a means for proselytizing each other.[602] Furthermore, Küçük claims that the modern mission era started when missionary William Carey stepped into India in order to suppress the Indian revolt in 1793.[603] In terms of his overview of the development of missionary activity, it is significant to state that he does not explain how the concept of mission is understood by different Christian sects. He speaks in a very general way. This general language obstructs his points.

After taking into consideration these developments, Küçük concludes that in the modern time, missionary work has not been understood as *tablig* as in the time of Jesus Christ.[604] In order to stress the missionaries' most significant target, he says: "modern missionaries have made Turks into their central target. In the past the target was Turks

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[599] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 34.

[600] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 35.

[601] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 70, 98. He does not give references or detailed information about Ministry of Missions or Kurdology Institutes.

[602] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 35.

[603] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 123.

[604] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 87, 84.

and today the target is again Turks, because they think that Muslims can be easily defeated if they do not have the help of Turks….It is impossible to beat Turks in wars."[605]

The third significant turning point that influences the nature of mission according to Küçük is the Second Vatican Council. He states that there were many reasons that influenced the Church to hold the council: technical developments, the Enlightenment's effect on intellectuals and the Church and sociopolitical events after the Second World War among the most important.[606] Thoughts, encouragement and suggestions of Christian missionaries and scholars in the Muslim states also affected the discussion topics of the Council.[607]

Küçük considers that Catholics in the Second Vatican Council understood that they could no longer isolate themselves from the rest of the world. He relates that at the beginning of the Council the Pope emphasized the importance of dialogue with non-Catholics. In order to live in a pluralist world, mutual relations are required. As a result of this understanding, the coldness and hostility of the Christian world against Muslims, which began with the Crusades and resumed with missionary operations, needed to be resolved and the opening of a "a new door" begun."[608] Thus, at the council, it was proposed that they create good relations with other Christian denominations by forgetting the hostility in the past.[609] Also, relations with the members of other world religions were

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[605] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 89.

[606] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 166.

[607] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 54, 154.

[608] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 165, 166.

[609] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 165, 169, 192.

discussed. However, instead of the relations among the religions, the relationships between the members of religions were the focus namely, in the Second Vatican Council it was decided that Christians should talk about Muslims rather than Islam.[610] It was recommended in the Second Vatican Council that the hostilities with Muslims be forgotten. In this sense, some documents that encouraged dialogue with members of other religions had caused advent of more positive approaches among Catholics toward Muslims.[611] Among the most significant documents, the *Nostra Aetate*, the existence of cultural and social values in other religious traditions is accepted.[612]

Despite these objective and moderately positive pictures of the Second Vatican Council, Küçük asserts that it did not have innocent/positive goals toward Muslims at all. Mission was also discussed and the idea of transforming mission according to the conditions of the new century was adopted.[613] In this context, he asserts that the modern discourse of the contemporary Church is to proclaim the Gospels in a more moderate way. Evangelization, the Church's indispensable element, was associated with the concepts of culture, social justice and interreligious dialogue. After the council, a link between dialogue and enculturation was created by Pope Jean Paul II.[614] According to Küçük, the desire of missionaries and their supporting countries reaches out most when Turks or Turkey is the subject. For him, it would not be wrong to state that "modern

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[610] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 154.

[611] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 169, 146.

[612] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 169.

[613] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 169. This idea has been a "new turning point" for the Catholic Church as well as other Christian Churches/groups.

[614] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 83, 121.

missions," transformed into interreligious dialogue, were created against Turks.[615] In terms of basic characteristic, he states that the Second Vatican Council is a missionary council.[616] However, among the most significant purposes, rendered from classical understanding,[617] was stopping disagreement with other churches and hostility among Christians.

Even though Küçük considers the Second Vatican Council the turning point for the Christian West's approach to other people, he mentions conferences as a preparatory event for the ecumenical movement. By referencing the Turkish weekly newsletter, *Sebilürreşad*, he claims that in 1925, the "Association of Interfaith Peace of Society" constituted a committee that gathered representatives from several religions to find a possibility for a conference. The Geneva conference in 1928 included 191 delegates and 11 representatives from religious traditions. However, the next conference, planned for 1930, could not be performed until 1948, and its goal was collaboration against Communism. According to Küçük, among the purposes of the conference was a need for dialogue.[618] Moreover, he states that in these meetings, religious institutions and religious officials did not stay silent about human catastrophes. Individuals felt they had the power to work together and use the opportunity to benefit humanity. Religion could be used for humanitarian benefits and religions could cooperate to stop the movements that create

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[615] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 68, 94.

[616] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 170. He emphasizes the importance of the missionary council by giving examples (171, 164).

[617] Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog, 124.

[618] Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog, 177, 195. Küçük references (144) "Dinlerarası Konferans," *Sebilürreşad* 1 (1948): 9-11.

disorder of peace in communities. This could be achieved through good relationships, good goals and dialogue. Consequently, it is seen that he Küçük appreciates peace initiatives against communism and finds good intentions in the meeting. However, he does not give specific information about the conference, and what organization held it.[619]

Political Powers

Küçük also points out the crucial role of the clash of powers in the nature of Christian missionary activity. In this context the essential issue is about the power.[620] Today, where religious differences are among the most challenging and important factors,[621] one of the things that prevents the understanding of tolerance between religions is equating religion with the Western desire of cultural and political dominance.[622] We see similar reflections from other Muslim, Turkish theologians such as Şinasi Gündüz and Mehmet Bayraktar. They present readers with a clash between the power of Western hegemony and the power of Islam. Küçük indicates that Western hegemony has been using/operating missionaries to accomplish its purposes in religious, diplomatic, political and cultural settings.[623]

In this respect, Küçük claims that missionary works against Turks have intensified in the current century, wrapped in political tactics. He asserts that there has been an immense role of missionaries behind political issues such as the Armenian and Kurdish

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[619] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 196.

[620] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 8.

[621] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 219.

[622] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 198.

[623] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 14.

issues, and terrorist groups such as the ASALA and the PKK. Moreover, he emphasizes that through propaganda such as "Jesus calls Kurds" and Kurdology Institutes, the West and missionaries work on people who feel aneed for sympathy (he does not cite any specific Kurdish or Kurdology Institute in the Western countries). According to him, the West's goal is clear: throwing Turks out of Anatolia, becoming a leader of the Islamic world, preventing unification of Muslims and alienating Turks from Islam as much as possible.[624] He asserts that enemies of Turkey, inside and outside, have been campaigning to show Turkish Alevites/Bektashis as minority groups.[625] He considers any attempts to stress religious and ethnic diversities such as Sunni-Alevite, Turkish-Kurdish, Çerkez-Boşnak and Gürcü-Abaza artificial divisions and plots. He refers to more than one million Peace Corps[626] volunteers in the region who work for missionaries, without giving detailed information.[627] Furthermore he asserts that missionaries have been abusing minority issues in order to make ethnic and religious separatism among the Turkish communities. He thinks the differences should be observed as a source of richness and goodness.[628] The umbrella of Turkish nationality can embrace anyone who

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[624] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 4, 99.

[625] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 21, 70. Küçük considers that 99 percent of Alevis/Bektashis are Turks and Muslims.

[626] Küçük states that, with a secret agenda, the Peace Corps has come to Turkey by helping charities and people after natural disasters s. Such plans go back to the 1640s, and the main goal has been to destroy the Turkish nation (70)..

[627] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 101, 99.

[628] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, IV, 36.

feels he/she belongs to this nation and Turkey.[629] In this context, he uses the phrase of "Kurdish origin Turks."[630]

To show more about the Western political goals and missionary connection, Küçük expresses that the Christian West has been training people who know Islamic philosophy, Arabic and religious sciences to gain knowledge about Turks. One of the ways to make the influence long-lasting is through intellectuals' thoughts and works.[631] By using these people the West wants to stop the development of Islam and keep Turks in their place. The next step would be to remove Turks from Anatolia.[632] Moreover, he thinks that the primary goal is not converting all Muslims to Christianity, because, for him, it is impossible for a Turk, a person who truly believes in Islam, to become Christian.[633]

To summarize, first, Küçük, throughout his works, draws a very negative picture of missionaries, who are also strongly related to interreligious dialogue. In general missionaries have been in the service of their countries' political ambitions, which creates grave danger for Muslims and especially Turks. He claims that today, missionary activity is perceived as serving Western interests to affect any country's religion, politics and cultural plans,[634] and as an "ideological cover of Western civilization and capitalism's

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[629] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog* 21.

[630] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 70.

[631] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 5.

[632] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 3.

[633] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 5.

[634] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 79.

expansionism."[635] Missionary organizations have been attempting to convert members of other religions and then to alienate them from their nation, even making them enemies of their nation by using every way, strategy, secret and obscure method.[636] In this sense, the process of Turkey's entrance into the EU creates a significant opportunity for missionaries to be active without facing obstacles.[637]

Second, Küçük makes a difference between a ordinary follower of a religious tradition and a missionary, indicating that all Christians are not missionaries. He makes a difference between normal Christians and Buddhists and missionary Christians and Buddhists. However, he does not deeply explain what he means by normal Christian and missionary. Even though he mentions that all Christians are not Christian missionaries, he does not give any positive examples.[638] He considers that any systematic proclamation of Christianity indicates missionaries who have dangerous intentions, and the Catholic call for dialogue is a new missionary tactic. He does not make any solid differences between normal and missionary proclamations of Christianity. Küçük seems to attempt to direct the reader into a very negative understanding of dialogue from the start. He just adds some words to convince the reader that he is objective by stating that there are some good Christians also. If he distinguished between missionary and normal Christian proclamations of the Bible, then the reader could perceive dialogue much more positively. However, he begins by stressing that Christians are the enemy of

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[635] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 79.

[636] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 78, 80, 86, 92.

[637] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 67, 78.

[638] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 100.

Turks/Muslims, so the reader is easily convinced. It seems that he adds some positive expressions in order to avoid the criticism of being biased and not-academic.[639]

Third, he does not explain how the concept of missions is understood by different Christian sects. He speaks in a very generalized way. Yet, it is a very anti-dialogue manner to use this very general language. Supporters of dialogue also make the same mistake. Talking on differences makes dialogue much stronger and healthier.

Last, according to Küçük, the West has not defeated Turks in battle and could not move them from Anatolia. After organizing meetings and arguments, a strategy to defeat Turks was found: reaching Turks with love, weakening and separating the Turkish nation by means of minorities and diversities. He generally mentions supporting claims for this theory without clearly specifying them.

Dialogue

As stated above, Küçük, in principle, does not reject the notion of dialogue and indicates its necessity many times in his works. Therefore, it is significant to articulate his perception of dialogue before discussing the relationship between dialogue and mission in his thoughts.

Definition

According to Küçük, dialogue is "a conversation between two or more people, with agreement and conversation between people of different races and cultures in a civilized manner."[640] He offers several definitions for the term "interreligious dialogue."

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[639] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, V.

[640] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 145.

In one instance, he defines it this way: "Without trying to impose beliefs and thoughts on each other, people from the same religion and different religions look at each other with warmth and tolerance, talk about common issues, discuss and collaborate."[641] In another instance, he defines it as "conversation on common issues without imposing beliefs and thoughts on people of different religions, discussion and collaboration."[642] In yet another instance, he says that coexisting through "good relations" means having dialogue in which religious rules can be freely practiced.[643] Furthermore, Küçük stresses that when the purpose of religion is perceived properly as peace and tranquility, dialogue will be next on the agenda naturally.[644]

In terms of ongoing discussion about the Turkish use of the term *"dinlerarası diyalog"* (interreligions dialogue) or *"din mensupları arası diyalog"* (dialogue among followers of religions), Küçük considers that dialogue meetings "must be defined as 'din mensupları arası diyalog' because of the fact that they have been happening among members of different religions."[645] However, since *dinlerarası diyalog* is widely used and a shorter expression, Küçük also uses it.

Necessity of Dialogue

In order to stress the significance of interreligious dialogue Küçük states that in the contemporary world, capturing the essence of religions depends on the recognition

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[641] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 192.

[642] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 145.

[643] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 191.

[644] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 191.

[645] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 163.

and accurate knowledge of other religious traditions. For him, this is possible only through dialogue, which also reveals the necessity of scholars who study interreligious dialogue. They are able to observe the justness and sincerity of others because they are aware of the goals of different religions.[646]

Küçük thinks that in the developing and changing world, in order to understand the message of religion in the twenty-first century it is necessary to review and reinterpret the purpose of religions. In terms of finding new insights about and new approaches to the messages of religions, the role of "interreligious dialogue" is greater than ever.[647] Also, it is also necessary to come together on the common points, which possess the mutual spirit of tongues, rather than diversities of tongues.[648] In terms of the commonalities of religious traditions, he states "even though details are different, it is possible to realize that the purpose and essence is the same."[649] He also stresses that the original and deeper messages of religions have no points of conflict. Studying the original messages of religions would pave the way for revealing the true and real face of dialogue.[650] Therefore, in such dialogue, it is necessary for Muslims to take care, to share and experience commonalities with adherents of other religions.[651]

Küçük is also hopeful in terms of the role of dialogue in world peace. In this

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[646] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 180.

[647] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 144, 139.

[648] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 141.

[649] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 141.

[650] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 159, 208, 220.

[651] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 158.

respect, he says "interreligious dialogue will open the door to cultural, political, economic, and sportive dialogues, among others; it will accelerate the cultural, informational, and technological exchanges in the modern world; people will come to the aid of each other without fear. People, who consider each other God's servants, will approach each other in a friendly, cooperative environment with peace and tranquility, which is the common aim of religions."[652] Moreover, according to him, through dialogue and good relations, ethical norms of religions that lead to peace and happiness can be experienced by people.[653] He states that interreligious dialogue plays an important role in knowledge of cultures and continents. In this sense, he mentions Mircea Eliade, who says that for dialogue to be efficient and fair, it should not be limited to empirical expression. Real dialogue should carry the values of the culture center of each participant.[654] Moreover, according to Küçük the growth of technical facilities is the basis for entering into dialogue and gathering.[655]

Küçük considers that in the process of EU accession, accurate understanding of religion will be helpful. Mutual understanding will let each side learn from the other and develop relationships between people of the EU countries.[656] He says, "Dialogue is a great necessity in the developing and the changing world. In the EU process, this dialogue will be the door to other dialogues; cultural exchanges in the civilized world and

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[652] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 144.

[653] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 128.

[654] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 130.

[655] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 132.

[656] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 144.

the exchange of technology will increase. People who enter into dialogue will rush to the aid of each other without any concerns or expectations."[657]

In this context, Küçük stresses the necessity of dialogue in eighteen points.[658]

Dialogue is necessary because:

1. In the contemporary world there is a need for an atmosphere in which any person can live according to his religious values.

2. As faithful members of various religions, in order to demonstrate religions' contribution to social projects and world peace, dialogue is needed.

3. In order to develop a sense of mutual confidence, people must exchange religious experience and intimate bonds of friendship.

4. For people to explore commonalities in the era of technology, dialogue is necessary.

5. Through dialogue, the horizon of people's opinions expands, new doors open, people see themselves through the eyes of others, and people learn how to self-criticize.

6. In order to fight against problems such as threatening illnesses, opiates etc.

7. In order to annihilate sectarian hostility.

8. For the establishment and maintainance of social justice, peace, human rights, and freedom of religion and conscience.

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[657] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 144.

[658] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 211-14.

9. Civilizations are natural outcomes of dialogue. So, dialogue plays a crucial role for the development of civilization.

10. Reform that caused the appearance of Protestantism is also a result of Muslim-Christian dialogue.

11. Developments in the Islamic world are also largely related to its dialogue with the West.

12. Further developments in international relations, economics, trade, tourism, etc.

13. In medieval times citations and translations of Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Aristotle, Plato and so on are the result of dialogue

14. The need for peace rather than war. "The way to peace is through a genuine dialogue. To explain yourself and to let others recognize your case internationally also seems to depend on dialogue." In order to support his approach, he gives the example of the Dalai Lama, whose advocacy of dialogue affected his being awarded the Nobel Prize.

15. "The formation of mutual trust in relations to determine the parties' sincerity in inter-religious dialogue also depends on the practice of dialogue."

16. For a common stance against terrorism. This should be the most important and concrete matter in interreligious dialogue meetings, this attitude must be specified in the final declaration of meetings.

17. Dialogue between faithful people is an undeniable fact and this is a humane and moral attitude. "Honest, sincere and genuine dialogue has so many benefits for members of every religion as well as for Muslims. It is because Islam has *tablig*. *Tablig* is

the way to convey Islamic principles to both Muslims and non-Muslims." He lists the following verses as references in the Qur'an: 42.15; 16.125; 29.46. He links *tablig* to dialogue.

18. The Qur'anic verse, "me is my religion, you is your religion,"[659] and Yunus Emre's words, "We like creatures for the sake of the creator," outline Küçük's opinions about the concept of dialogue.

At the end of the eighteenth point, Küçük stresses that it is the task of the Christian "Interfaith Dialogue Secretariat" to correct the improper image of dialogue. It is a minimum requirement that the secretariat declare, with sincere and clear language, that "Interfaith Dialogue is not a missionary activity and we condemn those who see it as such. We condemn oppressors by standing beside those who are persecuted, without making distinction between members of any religious traditions."[660] Thus, we see that he advises missioners to give up their work in Muslim communities and especially among Turks if they want to bring people to their religion. People from every religious tradition should initiate an atmosphere of "peace" and "tolerance" and "love of creatures for the sake of the creator." For him, interreligious dialogue should be evaluated in this context.[661]

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[659] Qur'an 109:6.

[660] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 221.

[661] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 66. It is also possible to find his detailed views about Turkish tolerans (hoşgörü) toward Christians. See "Türklerin Anadolu'da Azınlıklara Dini Hoşgörüsü" in *Milli Bütünlüğümüzün Kaynakları.* (Istanbul: AKM, 1992), 19-55.

Two Faces of Interreligious Dialogue

One of the original notions Küçük formulates to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable kinds of dialogue is the "two-faced interreligious dialogue" concept. This description is a very simple, dualistic picture of dialogue. He thinks that there are two faces or sides of interreligious dialogue: the positive and important face, and the unseen and negative face. The apparent face is what is desired and necessary in the contemporary world. Hence, the positive face is acknowledged as the actual side. On this face, dialogue is a religious and humanitarian requirement, and, there is integrity, honesty, sincerity and openness. This is needed in accordance with the principles of dialogue.[662] Küçük asserts that the apparent or frontal face is appreciated by everyone according to his/her knowledge capacity.[663] The other unseen and dark face is full of dangers, traps, deception, hidden agendas, malevolence and illusion, and it is the last stage of the missionary in the twenty-first century.[664] This is the face of hypocrisy, and thus people should be careful, cautious, and unrushed in the process of dialogue.[665] Moreover, the back or dark side of interreligious dialogue is known only by experts in this area, and the Christian officials who brought the issue of dialogue to the agenda of the Second Vatican Council.[666] According to Kucuk's two-face classification, the dialogue call of the Catholic Church and World Council of Churches is clearly not included on the positive side.

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[662] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 158, 181, 209.

[663] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 215.

[664] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, V,158, 181, 209.

[665] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 158, 181, 209.

[666] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 215.

History of Interreligious Dialogue in Turkey

Noted above, according to Küçük, even though historally dialogue was practiced in a natural and spontaneous way, formal dialogue was created after the Second Vatican Council.[667] However, he considers some developments before the Council as preparatory work toward an interreligious dialogue movement. He stresses that the conference held in 1948 in Europe was a significant attempt at peace among the adherents of world religions. The common areas of concern of this dialogue meeting were technical developments, the increasing religiosity of people, political events and the struggling against Communism.[668]

Küçük states that the main reason for the efforts by the Roman Catholic Church to initate dialogue was the mistakes of the Crusades, effects of which lasted for centuries.[669] He asserts that although the Christians' main views toward non-Christians have not changed and the dialogue was realized as a means of missionary advancement, in the document *Lumen Gentium*, the salvation of members of other religions, including Muslims, was acknowledged.[670] The positive influence of the documents that support dialogue appeared in the writings of Catholic theologians. And more moderate commentaries on the Bible have been written. Consequently, besides exclusive approaches toward non-Catholics, some "pluralistic approaches" were also developed.[671] While these crucial changes were happening in the Christian world, some developments

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[667] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 162, 192.

[668] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 178-79.

[669] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 165.

[670] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 137-39.

[671] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 138.

were experienced in the Muslim world too. Nevertheless, Küçük's focus is on the developments in Turkey.

Regarding the Turkish context, Küçük states that the Roman Catholic Church had tried to find ways to dialogue with Turks after the 1980s. The gate to dialogue was found with Cardinal Arinze's visit in 1978. In 1988, colloquia were organized at the Faculty of Theology with the participation of twelve scholars from the Vatican and Turkey. A conference was held in Istanbul on September 10-14, 1989.[672] Küçük also claims that in Turkey widespread dialogue initiatives started in the 1990s when missions were overtaken by interreligious dialogue, though this was perceived suspiciously as a new type of mission by the Turkish public.[673] Hence, we observe that he presents efforts at organized dialogue within the framework of his dialogue-mission understanding. Moreover, his negative perception of interreligious dialogue seems to have intensified after the AK Party's (Justice and Development Party) rise to power. He criticizes the AK Party's attitude and regulations after 2003 as permissive of missionary work in Turkey. He asserts that the Christians alteration of the perception of mission with the role of dialogue has influenced the AK Party. New regulations have opened up free spaces for missionary propaganda. Through these regulations, the image of missionaries is presented in the context of the *tablig/dawa* and the Turkish public opinion's sensitiveness is reduced.[674]

Moreover, he does not consider Pope Benedict VI sincere regarding his positive

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[672] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 147.

[673] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 102.

[674] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 102.

statements about Turkey's bid for the EU, in his visit to Turkey in 2006.[675] Küçük is sure that the pope's only desire was to develop reconciliation with Orthodox Church and support the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate (Turkish: Fener Rum Patrikhanesi) in political and religious issues.[676] In this context, he considers pope's common prayer with Mufti of Istanbul only a promotion of Christianity.[677]

Consequently, it appears that Küçük had a partially positive approach toward dialogue until the AK Party government and Gülen community engaged seriously in dialogue. It appears that the EU process after 2003 impacted his opinion about dialogue in a negative way and he perceived it as a treacherous game.[678] Even though he stresses the negative sides of the process, he nevertheless expresses that Turks must be ready to engage in dialogue with well-educated Turkish scholars, and he is sure that there is no benefit for Turks to stand outside this dialogue movement.[679]

Islamic Imperative for Dialogue

Küçük claims that the common goals of all religions are: a) faith in the oneness of God; b) having good relationships internally and with members of other religions; and c) avoiding conduct harmful to society, such as killing and adultery.[680] Despite the existence of these common goals, the fundamental reasons behind the clash between adherents of different religions are lack of correct information, misrepresentation and prejudice. In this

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[675] Küçük, *Dini Azınlıklar ve Türk Hoşgörüsü,* (Ankara: Berikan, 2010), 316-334.

[676] *Dini Azınlıklar ve Türk Hoşgörüsü,* 327.

[677] *Dini Azınlıklar ve Türk Hoşgörüsü,* 332.

[678] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 147.

[679] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 221.

[680] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 65-66.

sense, he stresses that the degree of knowledge and information about "the other" also determines perception/treatment of "the other." Also, one cannot know the truth in religion unless one knows others' religions. Without knowing the other religious traditions, one cannot respect them; so, if one expects respect from others, first one has to respect others. Küçük concludes that "if anyone desires respect for his/her own sacred beliefs; he/she must also respect others' sacred beliefs." He makes reference to the Qur'an to support his argument:[681]

> 6.108. And do not (O believers) revile the things or beings that they have, apart from God, deified and invoke, lest (if you do so) they attempt to revile God out of spite, and in ignorance. Thus have We made their deeds seem fair to every people; then to their (true) Lord is the return of all of them, and He will make them understand what they were doing (and call them to account for it).

According to Küçük, Islam offers an exemplary attitude toward dialogue. In order to show Islamic roots for dialogue, he makes reference to the statements of the Qur'an that order the Prophet Muhammad to call people to God's path with a beautiful warning.[682] Moreover, for Küçük, verses such as, "Call people to your Lord's way with good advice" and "The only thing that the prophet should do is call" make a distinction between mission and *tablig*.[683] Küçük points out the Qur'anic term "People of the Book" (Ahl al-Kitab), an important concept that encourages Muslims to explore people of other religions.[684] The concept of "Ahl al-Kitab" in the Qur'an regards adherents of every

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[681] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 193.

[682] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 56.

[683] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 65.

[684] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 148.

religion, except idolaters, as believers. This concept also encourages Muslims to explore people of other religions and construct bilateral relationships. He states that God says that those who are the closest to Muslims are those who say, "We are Christians," and "are not arrogant."[685] By pointing out not being not arrogant as the key concept, he stresses that scholars and monks are also not considered arrogant.[686] Hence, from this perspective the Islamic style of "dialogue" could be dated back to the early expansion of Islam.[687] In this sense, he says: "The Qur'an calls people of the Book to come together on 'the common word' (monotheism), to worship no one other than Allah, and not to obtain any partner or any god besides Allah."[688]

In the context of Islam-based dialogue, he refers to the following verses:

17.107. Say: "Believe in it or do not believe." Surely those who were endowed before it with knowledge (of the truth and Divine Revelation and teachings, and still follow that knowledge) fall down on their faces in prostration when the Qur'an is recited to them.

18.29. And say: "The truth from your Lord (has come in this Qur'an). " Then, whoever wills (to believe), let him believe; and whoever wills (to disbelieve), let him disbelieve. Surely, We have prepared for the wrongdoers a Fire, its billowing folds encompassing them. If they beg for water, they will be given water like molten metal that scalds their faces. How dreadful a drink, and how evil a couch to rest on!

2.62. (The truth is not as they the Jews claim, but this☺ Those who believe (i.e. professing to be Muslims), or those who declare Judaism, or the Christians or the Sabaeans (or those of

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[685] Qur'an 5:82

[686] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 133.

[687] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 148.

[688] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 148.

some other faith) whoever truly believes in God and the Last Day and does good, righteous deeds, surely their reward is with their Lord, and they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

5.69. Surely, be they of those who declare faith (the Community of Muhammad), or be they of those who are the Jews or the Sabaeans or the Christians (or of another faith) whoever truly and sincerely believes in God and the Last Day and does good, righteous deeds they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

He proclaims that these verses of the Qur'an give a clear indication about how to behave and live with non-Muslims. In this sense, regardless of a person's religious tradition, his good actions will not be denied. Hence, these verses, at some point, end the debates and encourage everyone to do good deeds.[689] However, he does not put ideologies such as humanism and Marxism into the same category of religions in his evaluations of religion. He defends his views by assertimg that these are two leading worldviews that attack religions and religious practices.[690]

After pointing out the verses of the Qur'an, he supports his perspective by presenting proof from the life of the prophet of Islam. In this context, he claims that the Prophet Muhammad, in light of these verses, established good relations with members of other religions. In his letters to heads of state, the prophet held the "middle way," and he conducted what can be called "dialogue" when he invited people to come together based on the common belief in not accepting any deity other than Allah. When he discuss tolerant attitude of the Prophet Muhammad he uses dialogue and tolerance with similar

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[689] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 134, 201.

[690] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 194.

meanings.[691]

For Küçük, the first official "Muslim-Christian dialogue" began with the Prophet Muhammad's agreement with the Najranite Christians.[692] Moreover, he considers some events in the history of Islam, from the conquest of Mecca to Umar's conquest of Jerusalem and the conquest of Istanbul, to be the foundations of Islam-based dialogue. In this sense, he stresses that the best instances of tolerance were exhibited by Muslims.[693] Moreover, Turks especially were the best example in terms of dialogue, because even in the worst periods Turkish rulers demonstrated tolerance toward those who embraced different religions.[694]

We observe that Küçük does not explore detailed examples in the life of the Prophet Muhammad to support his arguments. He basically cites the prophet's dialogue with Najranite Christians without mentioning other Christian and Jewish groups. He handles the historical events very superficially, without discussing the nature of the natural dialogue.[695]

Consequently, Küçük essentially, unlike ultraconservative thinkers, does not claim that a theological dialogue and Islamic-based dialogue is impossible. According to him, this kind of dialogue occurred throughout Islamic history. However, he directly rejects the phenomenon of dialogue imposed by Western Christianity in contemporary times.

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[691] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 134, 201.

[692] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 148.

[693] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 134.

[694] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 190.

[695] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 163.

Küçük's attitude usually reflects a nationalistic approach. If dialogue is Islam-centered and *tablig*-based, then it is recognized and welcomed. However, if it is offered by Western Christians, then it is a tactic of the missioners, and therefore motivated by hatred of Islam. Last, Küçük stresses that "dialogue" as experienced in history, most often Islamic history, is very much needed in today's world.[696] He says: "Today, we believe that dialogue…is useful among faithful people. This is a humanitarian and ethical behavior. There will also be benefit from an honest, sincere and genuine dialogue for Muslims, because in Islam there is *tablig*. *Tablig* is the way that conveys Islamic principles to Muslims and non-Muslims."[697]

Interreligious Dialogue in the Original Messages of other Religions

Besides discussing Islamic-based interreligious dialogue, Küçük also asserts that the original messages of other religions also hold positive views regarding dialogue. In this sense he focuses mostly on Judaism and Christianity, which he thinks are the two religions that have minimal differences with Islam. He points out three essential principles in these religions: *tawhid* (oneness of God), the hereafter, and the Ten Commandments.[698] However, he points out that basic creeds and values in these religions are called by different names and symbolic visions. This negatively affects interreligious relations among adherents of different religions. Furthermore, political situations, relations between states and communities, and future prospects are other causes for

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[696] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 145, 164, 219.

[697] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 155. Küçük contradicts himself because in the next page he states Muslims should not carry their thoughts into dialogue. Moreover, he states there is nothing to fear from true dialogue.

[698] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 132, 179.

clashes between members of religious traditions. Therefore, he stresses that similarities instead of differences must be highlighted, in order to make dialogue more fruitful.[699] Religious intolerance and monopoly are based on interpretations and misrepresentations of the sacred texts. In his view, in-depth research on the holy texts of religions and comparative studies would reveal that in every religion there are rules that pave the way for tolerance.[700]

Küçük asserts that in some religions, freedom of religion is not clearly stated, or statements regarding freedom of religion were added in later meetings/councils. However, in the Islamic tradition, freedom of faith was ensured from the beginning. The Qur'an and the hadith, which are the main sources of the religion, present a much more tolerant attitude towards different religious beliefs, thoughts and life styles.[701] Furthermore, the Qur'an, after indicating the path of truth and righteousness, delivers its message to all people, who are then free to accept or reject it. The Qur'an also expresses that having faith and doing moral deeds is beneficial. As a result, after determining the principle of "You have your religion, and I have mine," it describes the criteria for the contemporary notion of "dialogue" in a concise way.[702]

After Islam, Christianity is the first religion that Küçük assesses with regard to dialogue. Even though he stresses that the message of Christianity is mission-focused, he also mentions the original message of the New Testament to keep more positive

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[699] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 132, 199, 220.

[700] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 202.

[701] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 136, 191.

[702] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 156.

discourses.[703] Thus, he makes reference to statements in the Bible as he presents its positive approach, which envisions tolerance and love:

Matthew 5.44-45. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Mark 3.32-34. A crowd was sitting around him [Jesus], and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

1 John 3.18 Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth

1 John 4.7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

Galatians 3.28-29 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

He thinks that these statements show that God's benevolence is for everyone, not just for Christians. Whoever wants to fulfill the will of God is the brother or sister of mankind.[704]

Moreover, after the Second Vatican Council, Christians' call for dialogue opened a new door for dialogue. The Council conducted dialogue as an organizational action and approached non-Christians with warmth and love. Christian experts were trained in this

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[703] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 137.

[704] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 202.

field, and after passing through various checks, their declarations were published and implemented.[705] After mentioning the Vatican's emphasis on dialogue with other religions, Küçük says that dialogue has been on stage around 15-20 years.[706]

In his examination of the original messages of world religions toward each other, Küçük proclaims that it is also possible to find tolerance in Judaism, because it too is a celestial religion (*Semavi din*). Although the rhetoric expressed from Judaism is limited, the deep meaning of it is universal, as in every divine religion.[707] Jewish scholars consider non-Jews Noahide and state that they will be questioned according to their faith and deeds.[708] In this respect he refers to Maimonides' words that "by means of Jesus of Nazareth and the Ishmaelites the hope of the Messiah, the Torah and the Commandments has been spreading."[709] Küçük suggests that today's Jews also should promote and perceive as a beneficial approach these positive approaches to dialogue with members of other religious traditions.[710] As an example of a positive Jewish approach, he notes the conference presentation of Istanbul Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Havelaar titled "Interreligious Dialogue, World Peace, Culture and Element of Tolerance."[711]

Küçük also focuses on some positive elements of religious tolerance in religions

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[705] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 149.

[706] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 149.

[707] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 139, 204.

[708] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 139, 207.

[709] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 140.

[710] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 141.

[711] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 142.

such as Hinduism and others.[712] Moreover, for Küçük historians of religion have a great responsibility in terms of correctly understanding and interpreting religion for the benefit of the people. The study of the history of religion opens new horizons that let people look from in different perspectives; it shows the two sides of the coin, offers an opportunity to see the "filled side of the glass," and, most important, stresses "the love for creatures because of the creator."[713]

Significantly, Küçük does not mention negative statements in holy books that create obstacles for dialogue. He feels that Holy Scriptures preserve values that bring people together. Superficial differences obscure the real commonalities. However, there are also statements that pave the way for religious absolutism and exclusivism. His attitude would be more objective if he assessed both negative and positive statements in the religious texts. Nevertheless, Küçük claims that disagreements occur because of interpretations and presentations of religions, not because of the founders of religions or religious texts. He rejects dialogue as a means of colonial aims and interest. However, it is very difficult to specify exactly, so it appears that such a distinction is impossible.

Suggestions

Küçük stresses that if one considers the contribution of dialogue to world peace, possible idea related to missionaries must be avoided.[714]

Küçük claims that when considering the essential message of the sacred books, "It

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[712] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 142.

[713] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 144.

[714] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 181.

is possible to say "Dialogue is what religions want."[715] He makes suggestions about dialogue in several places; his suggestions about interreligious dialogue appear under the subtitle "Proposals for Dialogue and Interreligious Dialogue."[716]

1. In dialogue, sneaky secrets and political purposes must be avoided. Instead, sincerity should be adopted. Dialogue must not be seen as a new method for missions and this kind of image of dialogue should be eliminated.

2. Extreme/unrestrained interpretation of religions should be avoided in dialogue meetings every religion should be presented as it is. The principle "You have your religion, and I have mine," must be stated.

3. During dialogue meetings, focus should be on every kind of religious worship, transaction and moral principle and message. The daily problems people face should also be discussed. The subject of dialogue should not be limited to topics such as love and tolerance.

4. Intrareligious dialogue is necessary before entering into dialogue with adherents of other religions.

5. Participants should take a common attitude in dialogue organizations against missionary work in Muslim countries, particularly in Turkey.

6. Partners should stand beside communities who face persecution without paying heed to religion and nationality.

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[715] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 181, 220.

[716] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 188-189.

7. Dialogue should be held in equal conditions and on equal ground. Experts who represent all religious communities and who have specialized in the field of interreligious dialogue should attend dialogue meetings.

8. Dialogue, should not remain only in words; it must display itself in practice also. Real intimacy must be based on mutual respect and love.

9. Dialogue should be about finding common points and also understanding different religions, beliefs and moral values.

10. Participants in dialogue should consider that people on the opposite side also have confidence that their religious conviction is accurate and that it covers the reality and the truth.

11. Members of a religious tradition should be able to treat members of other religions as co-religionists without making concessions from their own religion.[717]

12. In dialogue, people should be careful to interact equally not only with to dialogue partners, but also with members of all existing religions.

13. The relationship among scholars and institutions of religious traditions that, take part in dialogue should be strengthened and they should act together against immorality.

14. In the case of Turkey, if people desire dialogue/interfaith dialogue to be influential and fruitful, it must be organized within the framework of an official policy, and should be carried out by an official institution because the Christians engage in

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[717] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 189.

dialogue within an official policy. An Interreligious Relations (dialogue) and Research Institute or Center[718] should be established. In this center, tasks should be given to experts on the History of Religions who know Islam as well as Christianity and other religions. Experts also should be educated and taught at least two languages.[719]

Instead of stating "theologians" as experts, Küçük usually mentions "historians of religions." Actually, he should say that in order to create a fruitful center, there is a need for experts in humanities, history and sociology-psychology. Studies of interfaith dialogue should be done in the context of a very far-reaching investigation of all aspects.[720] After training such experts, dialogue can take place on equal terms, and common opinions and judgments can be formed.

Moreover, the issues and agenda of the next meeting should be determined at the previous meeting. It should be made to impose unilaterally. Participants should take a common attitude regarding termination of missions in Muslim countries. Experts representing all religious traditions should be involved in the dialogue. Furthermore, he to have a real sense of dialogue, nobody should seek to weaken others.[721]

In summary, Küçük believes that despite all the negative meanings ascribed to

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[718] Küçük is not sure about the form of the center. For instance, he also states that the Dialogue Institute should be autonomous or established at the Faculty of Theogy in Ankara University. See *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 157, 214, 221; in another instance he states it should be established within the Turkish Religious Affairs or Turkish Religious Association, 63.

[719] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 63.

[720] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 189.

[721] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 157, 181, 214.

dialogue, "a genuine dialogue/ interreligious dialogue is possible."[722] However, misuse of interfaith dialogue by missionaries undermines its importance.[723] According to Küçük, in genuine dialogue, everyone should remain within the borders of his own religions and should not seek to abuse the weakness of others. Also, dialogue should not be used as missionary propaganda.[724] Moreover, he points out that; political reasons are the hidden and actual reasons behind religious reasons. The following statement by Küçük summarizes his thoughts: "We are convinced that if dialogue has no sneaky, secret, political purposes, and is sincere, human, humane as well as civilized, and is not a new method for missions, then 'dialogue/interreligious dialogue' will be helpful. Otherwise it will be harmful."[725]

Küçük does not discuss dialogue very much in a theological sense such as religious pluralism. Rather, he emphasizes sincerity in dialogue. He rejects and criticizes the sincerity of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches in terms of the missionary-dialogue relationship. These two institutions have organized mostly social/activity-oriented dialogue activities. And since they also represent a huge body of communities, they naturally became involved in political issues. It is impossible for such international organizations to avoid taking political stances in the international arena. Therefore, Küçük's theory that sincerity is the only criterion does not explain dialogue comprehensively. And because he believes that the Vatican and the World Council of

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[722] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 162.

[723] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 190.

[724] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 210.

[725] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 190, 157.

Churches are not sincere, there remain very few groups or individuals who are considered sincere. This model does not present an applicable dialogue model and therefore falls apart. We can see that he does not attempt to create active dialogue organizations.

Mission-Dialogue Tension

In Küçük's writings, mission-dialogue takes a crucial place. His perception of interreligious dialogue is strongly linked to the concept of missionary activity. He thinks that missionary activity and interreligious dialogue have a direct relationship in the Christian context and an indirect relationship in other religious traditions.[726]

It appears that he makes a distinction between those who consider mission *tablig* and those who consider it "missionary." The ones who perceive it as *tablig* desire only to practice the messages of their holy books. They proclaim their religion with good intentions and transparency, avoiding any political ambitions. In this context, Küçük claims that Islam is a *tablig*-based religion and the Qur'an presents the message that people are free to accept any religious view with the verse: "You have your religion (with whatever it will bring you), and I have my religion (with whatever it will bring me)."[727] Therefore, Islam essentially acknowledges and commands Muslims to practice *tablig*. He states that some Christian communities/sects have a similar understanding, without giving any specific names or details of their particular perceptions of *tablig*. However, the majority of Christians consider the statements of the New Testament in terms of their call to missions.[728] Küçük includes interreligious-international dialogue as the eighth stage in

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[726] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, III.

[727] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 85.

[728] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 47.

the nine-stage Christian, missionary focus. The dialogue portion occurred in the years 1695-2004 and the last stage of missionary activity is creating a world monopole in the twenty-first century by a method of inculturation. If the last stage is accomplished, world domination by Western civilization would be ensured.[729] Küçük stresses the reasons that forced the Church to engage in dialogue: fundamental changes in the world, modernism and the hierarchical structure of the church, and a negative attitude toward Christians.[730]

It is striking that he considers every kind of organized and institutionalized Christian activity a missionary activity, including dialogue. So, because interreligious dialogue has been practiced among these organized institutions, they are inevitably perceived as missionaries who harbor devious intentions toward Muslims. Within the framework of these thoughts, he believes that gaining a foothold from dialogue meetings is the new strategy of missionaries. Because missions have developed negative associations in the minds of today's Muslims and people of other religions, the term "interreligious dialogue," a gentler concept, has been adopted by Christians.[731]

Küçük perceives the Second Vatican Council as a turning point in the relations between Christians and others. Even though the dialogue hand was played in the Vatican, mission was not abandoned. On the contrary, the notion of mission was transformed into the notion of dialogue. In this context he reports the words of Pope Paul VI: "Gospel means going all around the world in order to preach the Gospels. I am adding; new ways,

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[729] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 88. Küçük's inconsistency is clear. He explains dialogue as the eighth stage of mission, but on p. 125 he states that dialogue is perceived as the last stage.

[730] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, IV, 166.

[731] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 103, 168.

new methods and new implements should be prepared for the missionary.[732]

Küçük also explains why Christians chose dialogue as a new missionary method. "The negative attitudes toward missionaries forced Christians to find new ways, new methods. Warming Muslims' hearts toward Christians, reaching Muslims with love and honesty, and respecting their faiths are among these methods."[733]

Küçük does not make any distinction between Christian groups and is not specific when referencing a particular Christian denomination's perception about dialogue. He generally perceives the views of different sects about mission and dialogue together and uses them interchangeably. This creates an ambiguous situation in understanding the Christian call for dialogue. Because Küçük does not discuss the call for dialogue of different Christian groups/sects distinctively and in detail, his rejection of the dialogue call turns into an entire rejection. It is striking also that he does not specify Christian groups who reject dialogue. His perception of the Christian call as a singular call causes a distortion of the rich nature of dialogue. Here I will examine four of his references. William Paton's book *Jesus Christ and the World's Religions* is mentioned in several places in his writings. Paton was the secretary of the International Missionary Council whose center was in London. However, several problems and inconsistencies appear in Küçük's references. First, he ignores the fact that Paton wrote this book in 1916, with the third edition in 1938. Thus the first edition was written almost 50 years before the

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[732] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 52. Küçük makes reference to Mehmet Aydın's book *Hıristian Genel Konsiller*i, 80. However, Aydın here does not give clear reference to this quotation.

[733] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 53, 126, 153. On p. 152, Küçük brings it back to thirteenth-century to Saint Francis.

Vatican's decision to engage in interreligious dialogue. Second, he simply cites the text without expressing or discussing the historical contexts. Moreover, he does not analyze the historical evolution of the Catholic understanding of dialogue and attempts to understand the declaration's nature by depending on a book written fifty years earlier. Third, Paton was not a Catholic but a Presbyterian theologian. So it seems that Küçük uses a non-Catholic's opinions about missions to support his thesis that dialogue was accepted as a new method of missions in the Catholic council.

One can easily state that Küçük's thesis is insufficient and arguable. I observed that he repeats this incorrect attitude throughout his works. For example, in another instance he mentions Erich W. Bethmann to support his views about dialogue as a new method of missionary activity.[734] However, he does not state that Bethmann wrote his book *Bridge to Islam* in the 1950s, almost ten years before the Second Vatican Council. Besides, Bethmann is also not Catholic; he was an Adventist. Another significant, problematic case is Küçük's reference to John B. Taylor's 1975 article in Islamochristiana.[735] Taylor states that "Those engaged in mission among Muslims also acknowledged the validity of dialogue, not as an alternative to mission but as the proper mood and even one proper mode of mission."[736] However Küçük reports this sentence in Turkish as "missions (missionary works) among Muslims showed the importance of dialogue. Dialogue here does not serve as an alternative to missions but is a new mode for

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[734] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 53.

[735] John B. Taylor, "The Involvement of the World Council of Churches in International and Regional Christian-Muslim Dialogue," *Islamocristiana* 1 (1975), 97-102.

[736] Taylor, "The Involvement of the World Council of Churches."

missions to various situations."[737] Küçük thinks this statement by Taylor shows "how dialogue should be understood." However, examining the original article, we notice that Taylor does not present his own ideas here, but shows the opinions of missionaries in Muslim lands.[738]

Last but not least, in order to express the nature of the Catholic missionary, he makes reference to an article by James E. Ditte, "The Christian Mission and Turkish Islam."[739] It is significant that Ditte does not include dialogue among the other methods of mission. Similar to Bethmann's work, this article was written ten years before the Second Vatican Council. In fact, the article does not mention dialogue among missionary methods.

Therefore, in the framework of these factors, we can state that detailed research should be done to understand the missionaries' methods and the place of dialogue. Clearly, if dialogue was recognized as a new missionary method, missionaries also would include it in their activities and consider themselves dialogians. However, we notice that for the Christians who support proclamation, dialogue embraces the missionary. This is because dialogue is practiced in every step of life and is a humane activity. Mission, on the other hand, is a much more limited and special phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is very normal that Christians create links between dialogue and mission.

Küçük's perception of dialogue-mission tension is also strongly related to the

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[737] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 54, 127, 155, 219.

[738] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 55.

[739] Cited in *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 43. James E. Dittes, "The Christian mission and Turkish Islam." *The Muslim World* 45:2 (1955), 134-144.

Turkish bid for the EU. We observe that he views interreligious dialogue, the EU process, and even scientific developments as means used by the West to harm the Turkish identity from the Muslim Turks and remove them from Anatolia.[740] He thinks the EU as a strong Western community is a Christian union, and that its aims and goals have not changed much since the Middle Ages. Perceiving interreligious dialogue as a modern missionary strategy will encourage us to be more careful against its dangers.[741] In this sense, he states "Today, scientific studies, technical developments…the EU process as well as the Vatican Dialogue Agency officials describe 'interfaith dialogue' as 'mission adapted to new conditions' and a tool to Christianize Muslim Turks or break 'Turkish identity' as well as remove them from Anatolia."[742] This case shows us that he perceives and presents interreligious dialogue as a political instrument.

The Reasons Küçük Approaches Interreligious Dialogue with Suspicion

Küçük lists the basic reasons for his suspicious approach to the dialogue call of Christians:[743]

1. The statements in the documents of the Second Vatican Council about Interreligious dialogue are the basis for suspicion. In this context he makes reference to Lumen Gentium and the Pope's speech during his visit to the Council, and the understanding of Paul on dialogue.[744]

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[740] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 16.

[741] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 14.

[742] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 71, 104, 124.

[743] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 181.

[744] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 182, 210.

2. People who have taken part in activities of dialogue, previously and personally served as missionaries.[745] For instance, Cardinal Pignedol, before coming to the office of the Secretariat of non-Christians, was secretary of the Congregation of Christianization of People. Fr. Couq, head of the Department of the Secretariat for Islam, was a member of the White Fathers.[746] He asserts that other officers also had backgrounds as missionaries.[747] After stating these points, he asks, "Is it possible for them to get rid of their missionary identities?" and answers, "In the light of the activities done so far, it is not possible to answer this question affirmatively. As such, steps to resolve doubts have not been made and that means it is merely a show."[748]

3. Dialogue is seen as a new form of proselytization.[749] For Küçük, both dialogue and missionary activity were mentioned in the Vatican documents.[750] He does not perceive the dialogue call of the Protestant or Orthodox Church as sincere either.[751]

4. Some Christians leak incorrect information to the public that certain Muslims, who are in reality not Muslims, converted to Christianity because they were not satisfied with Islam. Küçük's assertion is that this is a method of missions. Therefore, it appears

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[745] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 185.

[746] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 185.

[747] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 186.

[748] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 186 and 218.

[749] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 186.

[750] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 187.

[751] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 187.

that he uses the two terms interchangeable.[752]

The other point he argues in this context is that the financial support of the Western countries promotes dialogue as a new strategy of missions. This strong support of the West also causes suspicion and ensures the perception of dialogue as a political instrument.[753] In this context, he thinks interreligious dialogue can be perceived as the expansion of the West: domination by the Christian world, increasing the numbers of Christianity, converting members of other religions, a new instrument of imperialism and a new mode of Christian missions adapted to modern conditions.[754] Moreover, the fact that some Western institutions and organizations have not given up their missionary activities also reinforces the perception of dialogue as a new cover for missions.[755] Furthermore, the silence of Christian institutions about the persecutions in Palestine, Iraq and Azerbaijan shows their insincerity.[756]

Conclusion

Similar to the other classifications of the Turkish reaction to interreligious dialogue, Küçük also notes three different groups in Turkey. The first group, without questioning the actual nature of interreligious dialogue, joins dialogue positively. The second group, because of different concerns and negative experiences, approaches dialogue negatively. The last group, because of deep research, information and

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[752] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 187.

[753] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 188.

[754] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 216.

[755] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 190.

[756] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 221.

documentation, observes the development of interreligious dialogue/activities and therefore approaches dialogue cautiously. He claims that this cautious approach is the proper attitude and calls it the "middle way doctrine in dialogue." According to this doctrine, all members of religious traditions should strive until the nature of dialogue reaches the proper position. This cautious approach focuses essentially on three points: expressions in Vatican documents, missionary background of dialogue participants, and apprehension of dialogue as a new form of missions.[757] Therefore, we notice that his essential concern is mission-dialogue relations. He also makes a distinction between the normal proclamation of a religion and misuse of it. In the Christian context he speaks of different concepts as essentially being opposite notions.

In terms of the nature of the Christian call for dialogue, Küçük differentiates between two kinds of proclamations by using two concepts. *Tablig/dawa* takes the place of mission for him, without concentrating on two different sets of religious traditions. He does not say what the normal proclamation of Christianity is, but only mentions superficially that there is one. However, if Christianity is proclaimed by an organization linked to Western imperialism, then he considers it a missionary means. In order to be more convincing, he should give an example of normal missions in order to present objective and enlightening points.[758] Moreover, he claims that Christians who engage in dialogue are previous missionaries. But he does not explore the background of these Christian supporters of dialogue or articulate whether they were ill-intentioned missionaries or not. Besides, he makes very general statements regarding the nature of the

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[757] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 216-17.

[758] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 80.

Christian call for dialogue and the issue is not evaluated in detail but with more general instances.[759]

We observe that he attempts to show that mission and *tablig* are not identical. However, some problems appear at this point. First, he does not deeply discuss how Christians define and present missions. From his position he asserts that Christian missions have links to exploitation, imperialism and so on. Second, he should also discuss how Christians understand Islam and *tablig*. He does not do this.

I notice that the majority of Christian scholars present the same reaction as Küçük about jihad. The fear of jihad is instigated and a negative image of exaggerated. It seems that both sides reach out to the other in hostile ways and present the other's religious call as destructive and untruthful. Hence, misunderstanding stands as a clear fact. Muslims in general, and Turkish Muslims in particular, consider that the majority of Western scholars present jihad in a wrong and biased way, and therefore believe they must work to restore the incorrect image of jihad. Muslims defend the notion that one of the main reasons for prejudice is radical groups in Muslim countries who have misunderstood and misrepresented jihad. Muslims usually appreciate Christian scholars who approach the issue objectively, as much as possible, and who say that jihad should be examined in terms of religious freedom. According to these scholars, radical Muslim groups misrepresent the Muslim world and Islam. In a similar way, Muslim scholars should agree that Christians should be free to express their religion publicly and that every missionary is not radical and destructive. It is clear that these Muslims will contribute to

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[759] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 218.

justice and peace in the world. In the West, there are many books that decry Islam and *tablig* jihad, and few that encourage dialogue and understanding with Muslims. The situation is not so different in the Muslim world. However, I can argue that Muslims' reactions have more legitimate grounds than Christians'. Western colonization of Muslim lands for centuries and wars/pressure against Muslim communities are the main grounds for these reactions. Nevertheless, Christians' grounds are also strong when they point out despotic leaders in the Muslim world, majority states, and their pressured Christian communities. In addition to political and economic reasons, there are ideological reasons, especially behind Muslims' attitudes. Basically, the significant points are presented in this dissertation in the context of Turkish, Muslim scholars.[760]

Note that Küçük criticizes people who write about dialogue. It is interesting that in a book about dialogue, people are criticized for giving their views about dialogue. Because dialogue is an opportunity to learn from each other by writing/stating opinions, it is a misfortune for Küçük to put these negative statements at the beginning of his book. Additionally, he does not exclude or include any people and makes very general statements about who is professional and who is not. It seems that he criticizes theologians who do not study the History of Religions, sociologists, and columnists. If these people do not write about dialogue, then who will? And how will dialogue be perceived and people be convinced at the grass roots? The fact that Küçük does not work to promote an application/practice of dialogue or find new methods to present it to the public shows that he does not believe there will be any such dialogue in reality.

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[760] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 77.

From his writings, I also observed that he mentions dialogue after discussing in detail the West's plans for Turkey. Therefore, an image of dialogue is presented to the reader in a very chaotic and negative environment. This helps Küçük present the Christian call for dialogue as insincere and to assume its underhanded goals.[761] For instance, it would be helpful to state that dialogue is among the instruments of Western goals. Küçük lists these instruments as: Western civilization and technology, political and religious missionaries, academic studies, military operations, inculturation activities, notions of "interreligious dialogue," human rights, democracy and religious freedom.[762]

We notice that Küçük claims that the original messages of the holy books contain positive statements about creating interreligious relations with adherents of other religions. However it seems that his treatment of the Qur'an and the Bible is not objective. At first glance opposite statements can be found in both scriptures. Nevertheless, followers of these religions understand them differently.

We also observe that in some articles he presents a more objective discussion of the notion of dialogue. For instance, in "Hıristiyanlıkta Misyon Anlayışı, Yeni Yaklaşımlar ve Dinlerarası Diyalog" (New Mission Understanding, New Approaches and Interreligious Dialogue in Christianity), he presents a more moderate and positive attitude toward dialogue and discusses its postivie and negative aspects. His positive expressions

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[761] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 11.

[762] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 30. Küçük does not discuss interreligious dialogue in this article, "Şark Meselesinin Amacı Türkleri Orta Asya'ya Geri Göndermektir"; nonetheless, he includes it in *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*. The only relevant statement about dialogue is that he cites it among the instruments of Western goals. Throughout this article he stresses Western imperialism.

show that dialogue is not one-way (mostly negative); there is also a positive dialogue.[763] Here, I observe some inconsistencies, because his previous statements about the danger of entering the EU contradict his views here about the positive role of dialogue in this process. It appears that even though he understands interreligious dialogue as the product of Western imperialism, nevertheless he acknowledges it as a good concept. It is clear that the basic reason for this complex understanding about dialogue lies in his usage of one concept for different connotations/meanings. Since he does not clearly differentiate the concept of dialogue or offer a particular concept for different/opposite contexts, his presentation and perception of dialogue become very complicated. Therefore, comparing his writings, it is clear that he has two mutually exclusive perceptions of dialogue.[764] His formula of two-faced dialogue seems to be an appropriate notion in terms of his perception. However, I observed that he does not always use this classification, and at times discusses the term interreligious dialogue as a single unit.

It appears that he generally understands dialogue not as a religious issue, but as a political fact. The reason behind this understanding is that he does not examine history in a religious context but examines and apprehends it in a political framework (mostly based on clashes between Islam and the West). However, dialogue is different from political fact. Even though he sometimes points out the religious side of dialogue, he mostly deals with the political side. It is striking that he does not point out any difference between the political scope and the religious nature of the West. According to him, the West and Christianity are identical and the West does not want Turks. They feel continuous

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[763] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 144.

[764] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 144.

malevolence and enmity toward Turks, and the Catholic Church always works to destroy Turkey. Western people clearly are not honest in their call for dialogue. It is remarkable that he does not give examples of Christians who practice honest and normal dialogue. Even though he occasionally states that these kinds of dialogue can occur and should be practiced, he always thinks people who ask for dialogue have a hidden agenda. Thus, dialogue becomes impossible in practice.

One of the significant points Küçük stresses is that in the Second Vatican Council, on the one hand dialogue is stressed, but on the other hand missionaries have been sent everywhere to create Christian communities. These two opposite actions by Christians have created a relationship between missions and dialogue.[765] This inconsistent situation has become a subject of discussion among Christian scholars and even supporters of dialogue. Muslim scholars also acknowledged this controversy.[766] Not only Muslims, but also Jews and members of other religious traditions also question similar points. Moreover, the fact that all these debates have been going on shows many that people are aware of the subject and problems. If even Christians debate the structure/goals of dialogue and whether it is a kind of mission or not, then clearly not all Christians agree on its mission character. Küçük should make a distinction between the radical and mainstream Christian perceptions of dialogue. According to his presentation, the majority of Christians view dialogue as a new method of missions.

In short, Küçük's thoughts regarding more applicable dialogue can be summarized in his words: "in order to achieve the aim of dialogue activities and to obtain

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[765] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 53, 126, 149, 183.

[766] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 53-54.

its prospected goal, sneaky, secret and political purposes, should not be adopted; the principle of sincerity should be adopted; images of dialogue as missionary activity or propaganda should be eliminated."[767]

Mahmut Aydın's Perception of Dialogue

His Life and Works

Professor Dr. Mahmut Aydın was born in Samsun in 1968 and graduated from Ondokuz Mayıs University Faculty of Theology in 1990. He started at the same faculty as a research assistant, and he earned his master's degree in the department of History of Religions. He was sent to Birmingham University Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in 1994 by his university. He completed his doctoral dissertation titled "Modern Western Christian Theological Understandings of Muslims since the Second Vatican Council"[768] in 1998 and returned to Ondokuz Mayıs University, receiving an assistant professor position in 1999, associate professor in 2003 and full professor in 2010.[769] He is among the influential scholars of dialogue in Turkey and author of many publications in Turkish and English. His books and book chapters include:

1. (Interreligious Dialogue Nature, Principles and Discussions) *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar* (Ankara: Pınar Yayınları, 2008).

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[767] *Misyonerlik ve Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 214, 219.

[768] Mahmut Aydın, *Modern Western Christian Theological Understandings of Muslims since the Second Vatican Council* (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2002).

[769] http://www3.omu.edu.tr/prof-dr-mahmut-aydin-9072-html/ reached on 25.07.2014

2. (From Monologue to Dialogue) *Monologdan Diyaloga* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu, 2001).

3. *Modern Western Christian Theological Understandings of Muslims Since The Second Vatican Council* (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2002).

4. "A Muslım Pluralist, Jalaledin Rumi," *The Myth of Religious Superiority*, edited by Paul F. Knitter, 220-36 (New York: Orbis Books, 2005).

5. (Religious Pluralism in Wilfred Cantwell Smith) "Wilfred Cantwell Smith'de Dinsel Çoğulculuk," in *İslam ve Öteki,* edited by Cafer Sadık Yaran, 83-126 (Istanbul: Kanüs, 2001).

6. (The Future of Muslim-Christian Dialogue) "Müslüman-Hıristiyan Diyaloğunun Geleceği," in *II. Din Şûrası Tebliğ ve Müzakereleri: (23-27Kasım 1998),* volume 2, 96-105 (Ankara: DİB, 2003).

7. (The emergence of view of dialogue and reconciliation toward 'Other' in the Chrisitan World: The case of Nicholas of Cusa) "Hıristiyan Batı Dünyasında "Ötekine" Yönelik Diyalog ve Uzlaşma Düşüncesinin Ortaya Çıkışı: Nicolas of Cusa (1401-1464) Örneği," in *İslam-Türk Medeniyeti ve Avrupa Sempozyum*, 11-25 (Istanbul: ISAM, 2007).

8. (Religious Pluralism Model and Islam) "Dinsel Çoğulculuk Modeli ve İslam," in *Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları IV: Müslümanlar ve Diğer Din Mensupları*, 307-24 (Ankara: Dinler Tarihi Derneği, 2004).

9. (Theoretical Basis of Interreligious Dialogue) "Dinlerarası Diyalogun Teorik Temelleri," in *Polemik Değil Diyalog*, edited by Hayreddin Karaman et al., 155–

65 (Istanbul: Ufuk, 2006).

Some of his articles are:

1. (The Prophethood of Muhammad according to some Contemporary Christian Scholars) "Bazı Çağdaş Hıristiyan Düşünürlerine Göre Hz. Muhammed'in Peygamberliği," *Diyanet İlmî Dergi Peygamberimiz Hz. Muhammed Özel Sayı,* 271-96 (Ankara. 2000).

2. (From one Christian Salvation Theology to Salvation Theology of Religions) "Bir Hıristiyan Kurtuluş Teolojisinden Dinlerin Bir Kurtuluş Teolojisine Doğru," *Divan* 2 (2000): 133-50.

3. (An anatomy of an Exploitation: A Critical Analysis on the Davut Aydüz's book Interreligious Dialogue Throughout History) "Bir İstismarın Anatomisi, Davut Aydüz'ün Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog Kitabı Üzerine Eleştirel Bir Analiz," *Milel ve Nihal* 3:1-2 (2005-2006): 175–90.

4. "Contemporary Christian Evaluations of the Prophethood of Muhammad," *Insights* 1:3 (2009): 105-37.

5. (A Survey on Religious Pluralism) "Dini Çogulculuk Üzerine Bir Mülahaza," *İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi* 14:2 (2001): 291-305.

6. (On Interreligious Dialogue) "Dinler Arası Diyalog Üzerine," *Tezkire* 23 (2001): 128-41.

7. (Did Interreligious Dialogue come edge of failure?) "Dinlerarası Diyalog İflasın Eşiğine Mi Geldi?" *Eskiyeni Dergisi* 3 (2006): 5–11.

8. (Is Interreligious Dialogue is New Face of Missionary?) "Dinlerarası Diyalog Yeni bir Misyon Yöntemi mi?" *Islamiyat* 5:3 (2002): 18-22.

9. (Interreligious Dialogue: Trap of Vatican) "Dinlerarası Diyalog, Vatikan'ın Tuzağı," *Anadolu'da Vakit Gazetesi*, 27 March, 2006.

10. (Some Thoughts on the Contribution of Religious Pluralism on Living Together with Other) "Dinsel Çoğulculuğun Öteki ile birlikte Yaşamaya Katkısı Üzerine Bazı Mülahazalar," *Milel ve Nihal* 6:2 (2009): 9-30.

11. (Religious Pluralism Model and Islam) "Dinsel Çoğulculuk Modeli ve İslam," *Sivil Toplum* 2:5 (2004): 47-60.

12. (Dialogue Occurs among Members of Religions) "Diyalog Dinlerin Mensupları Arasında Olur," *Türk Yurdu Dergisi* 209 (2005): 45-49.

13. "Is There Only One Way to God? A Muslim View." *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 10:2 (2000): 148-59.

14. (The Way for Intercivilizational Peace: Universal Ethics) "Medeniyetler Arası Barışın Yolu: Evrensel Ahlak." *İslamiyat* 8:2 (2005): 39-54.

15. (The New Name of Paradigm: Religious Pluralism) "Paradigmanın Yeni Adı: Dinsel Çoğulculuk." *Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi* 4:14 (2002): 95-119.

16. "Reconciliation in Islamic Theology." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 39:1-2 (2002): 141-150.

17. "Religious Pluralism: A Challenge for Muslims—A Theological Evaluation." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 38:2-3 (2001): 330-52.

18. "Towards a Theological Dialogue between Christians and Muslims." *Islamochristiana* 26 (2000): 1-31.

General Overview

Dr. Mahmut Aydın generally stresses that cohabitation/coexistence is the common

destiny of humanity. It is a factual truth that a human-nature, balance exists.[770] The notion of a global village indicates the significance of dialogue and understanding.[771] For Aydın the following main factors necessitate living together: the explosion of information, ease of access to information, ease of travel, experience of the world, intensive migration, multi-cultural cities, spread of mass media.[772] In such a diverse world people need dialogical relations with the people they encounter to be just and forbid what is erroneous.[773]

Mahmut Aydın, represents theological dialogue in Turkey. It is possible to find his views on dialogue in his two Turkish books, *Monologdan Diyalog* (from Monologue to Dialogue) and *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar* (Interreligious Dialogue Nature, Principles and Discussions). His first Turkish book is the publication of part of his doctoral dissertation in which he analyzes development of interreligious dialogue in the RCC and the WCC. In his evaluation of the interreligious dialogue within institutional Christian context, he evaluates their attitude according to criteria of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. He basically does not believe that the institutions present pluralism. Rather, both keep views between exclusivism and inclusivism. He is happy to hear that both institutions no longer ues exclusivist discourse of "no salvation outside the Church," so keep inclusivism, however he considers that their documents keep indications concerning Jesus as the only way to salvation.

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[770] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar*, 138.

[771] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 137.

[772] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 138.

[773] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 10.

Besides, it is in his second book we can find his views after returning to Turkey. He collected and modified his foremost writings on interreligious dialogue with the title *Interreligious Dialogue: Nature, Principles and Discussions*. He attempts to develop an Islamic-based dialogue model, to analyze dialogue in the thoughts of prominent individual scholars and official organizations of the Christian world, to answer difficulties of dialogue in the Turkish context, and the nature and meaning of dialogue. However, there seems a basic problem in the title of the book: Aydın uses a general title but focuses only on Christian-Muslim dialogue. This generalization negatively affects the distinctive context of every specific interreligious dialogue. It also creates an image of Christian call dialogue as representative of universal dialogue. Moreover, the specific problems concerning Christian Muslim relations might also influence the perception of the reader regarding the general dialogue. Therefore, in this sense, it might be stated that the title is inappropriate. Moreover, although the book is about interreligious dialogue, it touches very little on its social aspects, but usually discusses dialogue in the framework of theological matters. Therefore, to avoid such problems, a general title should be avoided.

Ageneral three-type classification (reject, caution and accept) of Turkish reaction to the Christian call for dialogue, Aydın considers that there are two dominant groups in Turkey in terms of dialogue. The first group consists of those who stress the necessity of interreligious dialogue, no matter the cost, because they think dialogue needs to be done. The second stresses that dialogue is a missionary method with the goal to Christianize our country.[774] These two groups play a negative role that confuses the meaning of the

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[774] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 9.

concept of dialogue:

> members of these two groups use the terms of "dialogue" and "tolerance" while missing the meanings and using them in any platform within the general meaning, which instigates public confusion and doubt in terms of approaching these two concepts that have vital role in world peace.[775]

It is seen that Aydın is highly concerned with the problem of objectiveness and scientific method when discussing the issue of dialogue, where he asserts that he will handle it with strong evidence. It is significant that he does not consider himself as different from these two groups and he strives for presenting his approach as more objective attitude. In this respect he states:

> "Our basic objective.... neither being fan of dialogue within the framework of blind submissive understanding nor being against inter-religious dialogue in some hallucinatory way and without having clear knowledge…Our sole purpose, in today's world where religion is perceived as a market commodity, first, is to practice our faith, then to offer it to people around the world in the best way."[776]

Thus, considering these factors and ambitions, Aydın states that he aims to inform readers what dialogue really is or is not, whether it is necessary or not, and what kinds of benefits it offers for Muslims. Moreover, he proposes to overcome the information pollution and respond to the questions of Turkish people concerning interreligious

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[775] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 10.

[776] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 10.

dialogue.[777]

It is not surprising that Aydın stresses that technological advances have transformed the world into a small village. With the help of these technological developments, it is possible to communicate easily from any part of the world. At the same time the globalization also forces people to have global conscious and dialogue.[778] Moreover, he underscores that if we want to live in a peaceful world, we should strive to meet each other, teach each other, learn from each other and in parallel to them develop accordingly in order to have a more tolerant attitude.[779]

After stating the crucial role of globalization in respect to dialogue, he also stresses the fact that Christians-Muslim dialogue is not something that happened suddenly in the last two centuries. Rather, it has very strong roots throughout the history of Christian-Muslim relations. In this sense, he believes the Andalusian experience plays a significant role for contemporary Muslim-Christian dialogue initiatives.[780] In addition, he also mentions the views of Medieval Christian scholars when he mentions Andalusian experience. He presents views about Islam by William Malmesbury and Otto of Freising, even though he thinks them as anti-Islamists, as a partly proper perception of Islam.[781] He

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[777] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 13.

[778] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 18. He mentions these points among the foremost factors that force Christians to have more pluralistic views regarding others. Aydın, "Paradigmanın Yeni Adı: Dinsel Çoğulculuk," *Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi* 14 (2002), 97.

[779] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı,* 76.

[780] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 54.

[781] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 55.

also stresses the works of Peter the Venerabl, who considered learning the Qur'an a requirement for influentially opposing Islam. Therefore, he thought that the Qur'an should immediately be translated into Latin.[782] Hence, it seems that Aydın attempts to show interests of Christian scholars concerning Islam as historical basis for the contemporary dialogue call of Christianity.

From his writings about Peter the Venerable, we observe that Aydın, although he does not believe Peter was creating a new method for mission, states that his translation of the Qur'an was best way to fight Muslims. He also mentions Francis of Assisi: "Assisi encouraged his followers to stay away from fighting and squabbling and to join Muslim community for living with them."[783] It is striking that Aydın does not remark on the missionary background of the writings of Assisi.

Besides these personalities, he stresses the friendly manner of Christian individuals such as John of Trebizond, who promoted harmonious relations with the Muslim community. Aydın does not explore whether his intention was to create a new missionary method. Rather he stresses his challenge for creating good relationships with Muslims. Hence, according to Aydın, on the one hand the crusades were continuing; on the other hand some individual Christians like "John of Trebizond and John of Segovia as well as some individual Christians as Assisi were claiming that there is a need for friendly and harmonious relations with Muslims to let them to like Christianity."[784]

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[782] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 55.

[783] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 57.

[784] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 58.

Aydın reports that John of Segovia, in his specific letter to German philosopher Nicholas of Cusa, claims that it is not possible to overcome Islam and Muslim through war and violence, therefore Christians must create peaceful relations with Muslims. After mentioning the letter of John, Aydın examines the answer of Nicholas and considers his response and other works as turning from Crusades to dialogical relations for reassuring non-Christians to love Christianity.

Hence, Aydın considers the opinions of Nicholas of Cusa as a dialogic approach in contemporary discourse.[785] Considering Nicholas' approach dialogical, Aydın mixes the meaning of dialogue as "learn" with "peaceful relations." Therefore, a problem appears: if Aydın calls the partly positive approach of individual Christians toward Muslims a dialogical attitude, he contradicts himself since he defines dialogue as a "the process of coming together to communicate with people of different faiths, religious traditions and convictions, to get more information about the Absolute Truth [Creator] and to learn from each other."[786] Use of the concept of dialogue for two different and moderately opposite situations creates difficulties in understanding Aydın's perception of dialogue. Nevertheless, it seems that he acknowledges the image of dialogue as a new method of mission. Although Aydın does not mention direct ill-intention of Christians in dialogue activities, he stresses the indirect intention to persuade others for conversion. Another point is that Aydın conceives individual Christian approaches not as sneaky missionary maneuvers but as more positive statements that could be recognized as dialogical attitudes in today's sense.

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[785] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 59.

[786] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 22.

Hence Aydın considers that some Christian theologians' desire for good relations with Muslims is different from mission. In this respect he states that John of Segovia, similar to Raymond Llull and Francis of Assisi, who started the first systematic mission movement, was claiming that conflict between Islam and Christianity can be solved by peaceful approaches instead of clash and fighting.[787]

Moreover, Aydın points out that John of Segovia, in his letter to Nicholas of Cusa, thought it necessary that Muslim and Christian leaders come together in a conference or dialogue meeting where Christian theology is discussed in today's terms, instead of a mission type that presents the Gospel theoretically, which John thinks would not be successful to convert Muslims.[788] According to John, if Muslims can be persuaded as a result of such debates, then it would be possible that they can be Christians. The other case Aydın considers that John keeps a dialogical attitude appears in his work *De Pace Fidei*. In this work John, after stating that Logos, Peter and Paul, imaginary personalities, are doing a question-answer debate, John answers these questions in the form of dialogic relationships that is conversation. It is seen here that Aydın perceives dialogue in John's writings as a kind of conversation.[789] Hence, from his analysis, we see that Aydın understands dialogue as a conversation and discussion/debate.

One may point out a contradiction in Aydın's perception of dialogue and the same mistake for which he criticizes other theologians. For instance, he aptly states that Davut Aydüz perceives almost every positive Muslim-Christian relation during the time of

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[787] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 59.

[788] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 59.

[789] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 63.

Prophet of Islam as dialogue.[790] Similar to Aydüz, we observe that Aydın considers the partly positive approach of medieval Christians as dialogical. Therefore, it is seen that he contradicts himself.

After presenting John of Segovia he focuses on his case study of the works of Nicholas Cusa.[791]Aydın considers that some original thoughts of Nicholas keep core features of the contemporary discourse of Christian call for dialogue. For him, Nicholas formulated the thought of Paul that "rituals are different but faith is the same 'into' there are different rituals within a single faith." While Nicholas argued this claim, he underlined that this single faith is Christian faith and other religious traditions are different impacts or rituals of this faith.[792] Thus, Aydın considers that although Nicholas considers Christianity as the only religion and accepts some points from Islam to adapt to Christianity, nonetheless he took a positive step in terms of Christian perceptions of other religions.[793] Hence Aydın thinks that Nicholas by implying that non-Christian religious beliefs also contain good and beautiful things, goes beyond the dogma that salvation outside the Church in any form is not possible. In this way his views would be the first step to inclusivism from exclusivism in the Catholic Church.[794] Moreover, for him, Nicholas claims that a genuine revelation of God is presented to humanity only through Jesus Christ perfectly, and the truth in the other religions are only reflections of the

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[790] Mahmut Aydın, , "Bir İstismarın Anatomisi, Davut Aydüz'ün Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog Kitabı Üzerine Eleştirel Bir Analiz," *Milel ve Nihal* 3:1-2 (2005-2006), 178.

[791] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 54.

[792] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 64.

[793] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 65.

[794] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 65.

genuine revelation. Hence, Nicholas separated from the Catholic exclusion with the idea that other religions may contain truth.[795] In this context Aydın states that the Christian theologians' desire to know Islamic world has gained new momentum at the end of the Crusades and loss of spirit of the Crusaders.[796]

Aydın thinks that the works of Nicholas were not written to reject the Qur'an altogether, unlike other previous works about Islam.[797] According to Nicholas, the Qur'an was formed largely from the Old and the New Testaments. Aydın, by making reference to thoughts of Nicholas about the formation of the Qur'an, asserts that contemporary Christians' perception about the Qur'an in their dialogue meetings has been developed from the thoughts of theologians as Nicolas of Cusa.[798]

According to Nicholas, Christian scholars who read the Qur'an in the light of the knowledge of the Bible can easily explore Christian truths between the lines in the Qur'an. Moreover, according to him, God allowed certain truths to exist in the Qur'an since he wanted that, when wise people read the Qur'an, they could move toward the perfect truth.[799] Aydın also states that Nicholas interprets the verses of the Qur'an that rejects the incarnation in the framework of Christianity.[800] In this sense, Nicholas of Cusa accepts some verses of the Qur'an which are not a problem to his understanding and

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[795] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 66.

[796] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 67.

[797] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 67.

[798] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 68.

[799] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 69.

[800] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 70.

ignores other parts, similar to Bektashi sense.[801] Moreover, Christians should encounter Muslims and the Qur'an, their holy book, without totally rejecting it, they should read it in the light of Christian truth and should detect the points that are compatible or opposite to it.[802] According to Aydın, Nicholas' understandings is also the prototype for many contemporary Christians about dialogue. Non-Catholics, especially Protestants, were affected by *Nostra Aetate*, which had an attitude similar to Nicholas, and so prepared similar documents in their official institutions.[803]

All in all Aydın considers the views of medieval scholars who examined Islam more positively as prototype/sources for the contemporary Christian call for dialogue, which has a more inclusive attitude.

Mission

Aydın points out the exclusive attitude of the Church throughout the history of Christianity. This exclusivist conduct, formulated as "there is no salvation outside the Church" goes back to second century and became a much accepted attitude with the influence of Augustine. The exclusive attitude of the Church is mostly related to its perception of missionary. In this sense it became generally accepted that because there is only one way to salvation, people must be brought to salvation.[804]

Another point that should be discussed before delving into Aydın's views about mission is the image of mission as a notion that dialogue puts aside the differences and

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[801] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 70.

[802] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 71.

[803] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 86.

[804] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 84.

unites all religions into a single religion. This misrepresentation of dialogue is usually related to the West's desire for hegemony over the other cultures and religious traditions of the world. Therefore, mission, dialogue and collaboration of the West/Christians are usually perceived with the notion of political dominance over the rest. It is not difficult to express that this negative apprehension is strongly linked with Western colonization and world wars. Aydın does not agree with such a view by stating that dialogue essentially does not presuppose such implication and that such unity would lead to a very dangerous position. Hence it is seen that he does not agree with scholars who considers Western call for dialogue as a means of Western hegemony.[805]

Similar to the general attitude of Turkish scholars, Aydın considers the crusades as a turning point in the nature of Christian mission. For instance, when he explores works of Nicholas of Cusa in terms of dialogue, he states that "after the Crusades it is realized that it would not be possible for Christians to make others, namely non-Christians, love Christianity. So, in order to present Christian theology to non-Christians more influentially, the idea of necessity to have dialogical relationship with them has taken the attention of the Christian world."[806] In this context, as I discussed earlier, he considers the dialogue call of the official institutions of Christian world as a continuation of this attitude as a new method of missionary. Moreover he states that when the decisions of the Second Vatican Council are examined, the idea of Nicholas of Cusa centuries before that "there are different rituals in one faith" takes place there.[807] In this context he states:

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[805] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 24.

[806] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 72.

[807] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 74.

When we look at dialogue activities of the formal Christian institutions including especially the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, after the 1960s, we can state that; upon fail of missionary which is identified with the western imperialism and colonialism brought dialogue as a new method of the mission in order to offer Christianity to non-Christians more influentially and fruitfully. [808]

We also observe that Aydın considers that Protestants and Catholics accelerated missionary activities in the 19th century, with the motto of "Christianization of the all the world," but was not successful. They even received many negative reactions from non-Christians, so they explored new mission methods. Because of this necessity, the idea of dialogue was adopted by Christians.[809] In this respect, we see that Aydın creates a link between contemporary dialogue initiatives of the Christian official institutions and the failure of imperialism and colonialism.

Aydın underlines that; since mission activities with exclusive character to non-Christians, which enjoyed all facilities of imperialism and colonialism, were failed, contemporary Christian institutions developed an understanding that embraces non-Christians in the name of interfaith dialogue. Besides, he points out the political and economic intentions in the missionary activities as obvious fact.[810]

According to Aydın's general argument regarding mission, we can state that he

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[808] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 72.

[809] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 76.

[810] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 73.

perceives the official Christian call for dialogue as the new method. By abandoning the exclusive approach, Christians desire to bring about other religions' perfection through the only truth and right religion, Christianity. Reaching non-Christians with the notion of dialogue would make it possible to practice mission. According to Aydın, this idea of dialogue also is an imperialistic dialogue of the West that aims to digest Islam entirely.[811]

Dialogue

Definition

Aydın defines dialogue as "the process of coming together to communicate with people of different faiths, religious traditions and convictions, to get more information about the Absolute Truth [Creator] and to learn from each other."[812] In another place, he gives an additional definition: "the process of communication with followers of other religious traditions to learn their religious traditions and life styles (how their religions influence the understanding of humanity and their religious communities) with mutual respect, understanding and trust."[813] He understands dialogue as a communication that has the goal to minimize points of conflict between the participants in order to build better relationships.[814] For him, dialogue is certainly not a form of discussion; rather, it is exchanging information, and adapting the new information into attitudes and behaviors for various situations.[815] Since dialogue is risk-taking work, participants also should be ready to be influenced by each other during this process and as a result act/change

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[811] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 76.

[812] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 22.

[813] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 22.

[814] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 20.

[815] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 22.

accordingly.[816] He moreover states that the concept of dialogue evokes in the mind meanings such as "conversation", "coming together," "consultation" and "exchange of views."[817]

Aydın, making reference to American theologian Leonard Swidler, states that mutual learning is essential in dialogue.[818] Starting from this point, Aydın claims that a dialogical relationship is crucial in order to know, to learn others as they are and to present ourselves to them by creating the most appropriate relationship with them. We observe that he focuses on presenting/explaining oneself before learning from others, with the goal to open new doors to experiencing more sublime truths.[819]

Moreover, Aydın speaks of ambiguity regarding the concept of dialogue. He considers that *din mensupları arası diyalog* (dialogue among followers of religions) would be an appropriate concept, but since *dinlerarası diyalog* (interreligious dialogue) is succinct, he also prefers to use it.[820] He also suggests an alternative concept that could be used in lieu of dialogue. For instance, he presents the Qur'anic phrase of *taaruf* that is mentioned in the surah of Hujurat as an Islamic concept that can be used by Muslims.[821]

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[816] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 22.

[817] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 22. However, the fact that the concepts such as "understanding," learning", "listening" and "producing ideas" are not expressed so much, it showed dialogue is not fully understood by him.

[818] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 20.

[819] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 11.

[820] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 295.

[821] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 295.

Aydın does not come up with a conclusion that dialogue must be addressed by experts or historians of religions. Nevertheless, it appears that he is uncomfortable with obscurity and believes that everyone writing about dialogue is doing so in a subjectively and partly biased way. Hence, it is his goal to approach the issue as objectively as possible.[822] He emphasizes that his purpose is to eliminate the information pollution of interfaith dialogue and to approach it as unbiasedly as possible.[823]

The significance of dialogue lies at the very beginning of its implications: peace and understanding between people. Therefore Aydın correlates dialogue with the notion of the golden rule. In this regard, he states that major world religions should keep the golden rule.[824] At the end of this chapter his perception of the golden rule in the context of interreligious dialogue will be discussed in detail.

Moreover, Aydın considers conversion as one of the risks of dialogue; however he does not consider it as a hazardous handicap for Muslims. For him Islam does not have any weaknesses that could be revealed during dialogue with non-Muslims. On the contrary, from this perspective, the risk would be greater for non-Muslims when Muslims practice their faith properly and have deep knowledge of Islam.[825] In his article which was published in Türk Yurdu, he states that through dialogue Muslims can even influence non-Muslims to develop critical thinking toward their religions and convert to Muslims,

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[822] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 13.

[823] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 291.

[824] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 19.

[825] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 21.

or at least develop tawhid (oneness of God instead of trinity) in Christianity.[826] It seems that from these statements Aydın encourages his fellow Muslims to engage in dialogue. However, handling dialogue in terms of gaining followers and influencing dialogue partners contradicts the very meaning of dialogue and creates unsurpassable challenges. Even speaking of these thoughts would easily create doubts in the minds of non-Muslim dialogue partners. Indeed, even though Christian scholars stress the fact that dialogue partners can be enriched by learning from others, Muslim scholars I have studied are concerned mostly with the idea of influencing each other.

It is seen that Aydın does not agree with the idea that dialogue should be applied to Islam as Christians have handled it.[827] However, when examining his model for *Islam-based* dialogue, he is influenced by contemporary Christian intellectuals such as John Hick, Leonard Swidler, Raimund Panikkar, Paul Knitter and Hans Küng. It is also seen that he attempts to apply some models of dialogue developed by Christians into his Islamic model for dialogue.

Principles of Dialogue

Aydın lists the principles of dialogue as follows.

1. The main purpose of dialogue is to let the participants listen to each other, to try to understand and learn from each other, to change, to develop through understanding and comprehending the Absolute Truth and to act in parallel with these developments.[828] In dialogue everyone should be open to teach something to and learn from the other.

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[826] "Diyalog Dinlerin Mensupları Arasında Olur," 48-49.

[827] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 11.

[828] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 26.

Participants acquire the following benefits through dialogue: recognition of dialogue partners, removing prejudices, adopting things learned from each other, and acquiring a positive and constructive attitude.[829]

He exemplifies these gains as follows. On the occasion of dialogue, general biases associated with Christians will be demolished. Participants will learn that Jesus is not accepted as the son of God by every Christian.[830]

2. Dialogical relations should be perceived as a two-way communication process that occurs between different religious traditions as well as within each tradition.[831] He speaks of the importance of intrareligious dialogue also. For him, intrareligious dialogue should be the priority of interreligious dialogue. He stresses this point because if one cannot communicate with co-religionists and learn something from them, one would not be able to benefit from dialogue with members of other religions.[832]

3. Those who will participate in the process of dialogue should sit at the dialogue table with a full sense of honesty and sincerity.[833]

4. One should not compare his/her ideals with practice of the dialogue partner.[834]

5. Each participant must define his/her faith.[835]

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[829] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 26.

[830] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 27.

[831] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 28.

[832] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 28.

[833] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 29.

[834] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 29; *Paradigmanın Yeni Adı*, 109.

6. Dialogue partners must be equal in all aspects of the process of dialogue. One of the important reasons that cause the failure of the Muslim-Christian dialogue is that Muslims who engage in dialogue are not equal to their Christian dialogue partners in many ways. Since dialogue is put forth by Christians, they have a monopoly in dialogue activities. Moreover, Muslim participants usually attend dialogue meetings as guests and do not represent large official institutions. Besides, because the official language in the dialogue meetings is English, non-English speaking Muslims cannot express themselves effectively and so they cannot make significant contributions to the final version of the meeting declarations.[836]

7. Those who participate in the dialogue process, should have self-criticism or at least be partially critical toward their own religious traditions as well.[837] If there is no self-criticism, there is no dialogue. Self-criticism, in addition to teaching something to the dialogue partner, also lets one learn from the dialogue partner. And so self-criticism is one of the imperatives of the notion of dialogue. The absence of self-criticism pushes to monologue.[838]

8. Dialogue partners must be gentle toward each other and must be attentive to the

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[835] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 31. In this respect he references to Cantwell Smith: "I have a belief that if the other one said a word about faith, such as, if it is not acceptable to have faith, then what he said is not true."

[836] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 33.

[837] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 34.

[838] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 35.

partner's thoughts and sensibility.[839]

From these statements regarding dialogue, it might be concluded that even though Aydın critiques the application of Christian dialogue in the Muslim context, nevertheless he cannot avoid repeating the Christian scholars' perception of dialogue, where he often makes references.

Besides these principles, Aydın points out significant points that participants of dialogue should take into consideration. In this context, we observe that he speaks of the fact that interfaith dialogue should focus on the following moral principles of religious traditions: environmental protection, disarmament, creating a better environment for the future generations and letting all people live with dignity and honor.[840] Furthermore, when people of different religions come together in dialogue meetings, the main objective should not be the distinction between them. Rather, the objective should be on common understandings. In terms of theological issues the following common points should be talked: not worshiping other gods than one God and not attributing divinity to other than God. And in terms of society the objective should be on working together on social points such as peace, rights and freedom.[841] Last but not least, followers of different religions and beliefs should remove all kinds of misunderstandings toward each other, should delete unpleasant memories and prejudices, should fight against all kinds of criminal organizations, both social and individual, should eliminate all kinds of hate and harmful things, should reinforce their unity by emphasizing their commonalities and should work

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[839] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 37.

[840] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 185.

[841] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 186.

for more concrete initiatives for mutual reconciliation.[842]

Religious Pluralism as Precondition of Dialogue

Mahmut Aydın considers religious pluralism a precondition for healthy and genuine interreligious dialogue.[843] He thinks that participants who keep their exclusivist approach to members of other religions cannot prevent themselves from trying to convert their dialogue partners. In this context, he underscores that dialogue is not a tool for mission or *tablig*; rather it is a process of mutual learning, listening and then changing accordingly.[844] As for the inclusive approach, he thinks it is no more than a person's striving to look pleasant for others because he/she considers his/her religious faith as the only faith that saves. Referencing John Hick, he says inclusivism is an attempt to let religious superiority live longer by softening its radical religious discourse of uniqueness. It is also similar to a cold war, instead of accepting independence of all states.[845] Therefore, as a remedy toward such inclusive and exclusive views he advocates pluralism as the correct viewpoint for healthy interreligious dialogue event. He also states that pluralism – in contrast to exclusivism and inclusivism – presumes a more just God, who gives equal chance for everyone.[846]

It is significant that Aydın perceives interreligious dialogue and religious

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[842] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 186.

[843] Dini Çoğulculuk Üzerine Bir Mülahaza, İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi 14:2 (2001), 297, 305. Also see "Is There Only One way to God?" Studies in Interreligious Dialogue 10:2 (2000), 157.

[844] "Paradigmanın Yeni Adı: Dinsel Çoğulculuk," 103. Yet, he contradicts himself when he focuses that dialogue will let Muslims make *tablig*.

[845] "Paradigmanın Yeni Adı: Dinsel Çoğulculuk,"105.

[846] "Paradigmanın Yeni Adı: Dinsel Çoğulculuk,"113.

pluralism as two significant components of coexistence. It appears he considers these two components as mutually inclusive and mutually effective. He thinks that when Christian scholars meet people from other religions their exclusive and inclusive perceptions regarding them are also changed gradually.[847] Additionally he believes that a person who has pluralistic view can engage in dialogue most fruitfully. Therefore, Aydın underscores the necessity of a pluralistic mode in the contemporary cosmopolitan world. He also considers the pluralism model not as an assumption that all religions are right in all aspects, but rather as having faith that all religions keep "a predictable similarity" and each religion draws a unique way for salvation.[848]

Moreover, with a pluralistic approach, people will be able to share convictions, faiths and experience in a better way. Another significant outcome of interreligious dialogue is that participants develop self-criticism done in a mutual way. This criticism paves the way for creating genuine global theology instead of rejecting each other.[849]

Humanum

After stating essential principles of interreligious dialogue, Aydın also stresses the concept of *humanum* as a general criterion in terms of assessing religious traditions.[850] He defines *humanum* as the "religious beliefs, practices and the values, which protect all qualities in order to keep, to develop and to improve human dignity, honor, human values

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[847] "Paradigmanın Yeni Adı: Dinsel Çoğulculuk,"109.

[848] "Paradigmanın Yeni Adı: Dinsel Çoğulculuk," 110-13.

[849] "Paradigmanın Yeni Adı: Dinsel Çoğulculuk," 110-14.

[850] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 39.

and the perfect human (*insan al-kamil*)."[851]

Road to Peace among Civilizations

Similar to other Turkish Muslim scholars, Aydın also believes that the West presented Islam after the Cold War as a new enemy.[852] He considers that the clash of civilizations thesis could occur in many ways and that it deeply influences the peace of the world.[853] In this respect, the best way of finding an end to direct or indirect effects of religious conflict and clash will be a peace established between religions.[854] The attempts of the World Parliament of Religions as a significant step for this goal in its manifesto in 1993, in which commonalities are emphasized.[855]

Moreover, Aydın states that any intention to establish a new world order or a universal civilization is not enough, if it is based only on diplomatic initiatives, humanitarian aid, military intervention or international law. Instead, it should be based on a new, binding and unifying morality that depends on common visions, ideals, objectives and criteria for all individuals independently and a strong sense of responsibility for their leaders.[856] For him, the universal morality does not mean that all religions, ideologies, and cultures are combined.[857] Rather, he underscores that the universal morality is a set of basic attitudes and behaviors, models/rules and common values, where faithful or not-

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[851] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 41.

[852] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 166.

[853] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 167.

[854] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 168.

[855] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 169.

[856] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 170.

[857] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 170 and 185.

faithful people can live together in their own differences.[858]

Moreover he claims that despite the dogmatic and theological differences that cannot be denied or ignored, there are values that religions can accept called universal moral rules.[859] In this universal morality, people try to find the dynamics of living together while maintaining differences.[860] Furthermore, it is not a static and uniform moral system, but a set of minimal moral values, unchanged standards, basic attitudes, behaviors and criteria.[861] Last, for him, laws and regulations should be based on a moral ground.[862]

For Aydın the main reason for the conflicts, even more than identity and political problems, is that religious beliefs are used to justify them to provoke the parties against each other, and that this is still continuing.[863] He states that today, the universal problems that threaten humanity require a joint action formed by everyone coming together.[864]

In the chapter entitled "Towards Universal Morality" Aydın presents the reader with the basic features of universal morality as a basis for dialogue.[865] He states that the religious traditions, by equating these moral precepts to the truthful religious life,

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[858] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 171.

[859] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 171.

[860] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 171.

[861] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 173.

[862] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 174. According to Aydın, Küng is a significant scholar who invites believers and nonbelievers to accept these moral rules and live accordingly, without making anyone separate.

[863] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 172.

[864] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 173.

[865] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 182.

acknowledge them as the second main element, after faith in God or Divine Presence, which is a requirement for final liberation.[866] Thus, we observe that he reaffirms the connective role of moral principles of religions in dialogue.

Lastl, according to Aydın, the prophet Muhammad is a model of dialogue in the Qur'anic sense, not in its 20th century meaning.[867] He says that the prophet is not a dialogue model in its contemporary meaning, which moves between institutional and individual dialogue.[868]

Golden Rule

Aydın stresses the positive role of the golden rule in all religious traditions, as a significant means for dialogical relationships.[869] Moreover he considers the lives of the founders of great religious traditions significant tools that would keep universal morality in addition to the golden rule.[870] When one looks at the teachings of these religious personalities, one can say that their lives were based on four main principles:[871]

The idea of being respectful to humanity – do not kill

The idea of being just – do not steal

The idea of being reliable – do not lie

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[866] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 185.

[867] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 300.

[868] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 300.

[869] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 175.

[870] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 180.

[871] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 181.

The idea of equality – do not engage in illegitimate relationships.

In terms of an Islamic basis for universal morality, he states that Islamic teaching's relationship to the universal moral teachings is strong. He reaffirms that from this perspective the awareness of exercising social tasks to eliminate all kinds of problems such as oppression and conflict in the world that threaten social justice, is an integral part of Islamic religious teachings.[872]

Dialogue in Islamic Context

Mahmut Aydın boldly handles the issue of dialogue in the Islamic context. He considers dialogue a very sensitive issue by comparing Muslims who consider marriage with other religions.[873] In fact, Aydın is sure that both the Qur'an and the Prophet appeal to Muslims to act together in common issues with non-Muslims under all circumstances. Islam basically encourages people to come together in order to worship only God and not to attribute divinity to any other entity or object.[874] Moreover, in the process of Muslim-Christian dialogue, Muslims and Christians should stay away from infidelity and abusing each other's weaknesses as they try to share their faith with one another.[875]

General Attitude of the Qur'an

We observe that when Aydın makes his reflection on the Qur'anic imperative for dialogue, he basically assesses the verses as Meccan and Medinan verses. For him, the verses revealed during the time the Prophet was in Mecca largely focus on belief in the

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[872] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 182.

[873] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 23.

[874] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 11.

[875] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 21.

one God and have positive statements about pre-Islamic religions that keep faith in one God. When examining its positive statements about so-called religious traditions, it is possible to state that the diversity of religions is a factual reality that is acknowledged by the Qur'an.[876] He moreover asserts that according to the Qur'an, it is God himself who allows multiple religious communities in the world. Had Allah wished for humanity to exist in an opposite way, he would have created people in a one nation/religious community. Following these verses that acknowledge the differences, he mentions verses that, according to him, explain the purpose of religious diversity[877]:

> Qur'an 5:48. We have sent down to you (O Messenger) the Book with the truth (embodying it, and with nothing false in it), confirming (the Divine authorship of, and the truths that are still contained by) whatever of the Book was revealed before it, and guarding over (all the true teachings in) it. Judge, then, between them by what God has sent down (to you), and do not follow their desires and caprices away from the truth that has come to you. For each (community to which a Messenger was sent with a Book), have We appointed a clear way of life and a comprehensive system (containing the principles of that way and how to follow it). And if God had so willed, He would surely have made you a single community (following the same way of life and system surrounded by the same conditions throughout all history); but (He willed it otherwise) in order to test you by what He granted to you (and thereby made you subject to a law of progress). Strive, then, together as if competing in good works. To God is the return of all of you, and He will then make you understand (the truth) about what you have differed on.

> 5.118. If You punish them, they are Your servants; and if You forgive them, You are the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Wise.

> 16.93. Had God so willed, He would have made you all one single community (with the same faith

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[876] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 139

[877] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 139.

and religion), but He (has granted you free will with the result that He) leads astray whomever He wills, and guides whomever He wills. You will certainly be called to account for what you used to do.

26.8. Surely in this there is a sign, but most of them are not believers[878]

Depending on these verses, Aydın states that the Qur'an, on the one hand, acknowledges religious diversity as a reality that is clearly stated and impossible to deny. On the other hand, in the same verses it articulates the responsibilities of humanity within their diversity.[879]And reflecting on Qur'an 91:7–8, he expresses that God bestowed on humanity information and skill to behave according to the purpose of the creation, that is, *fıtrat*.[880]

According to Aydın, in the Meccan verses, the following considerations on polytheists were enacted. Injustice is a result of lack of faith in the oneness of God. And unless faith in God and obedience to his will is followed, communities will collapse. In the first verses of the Qur'an, for instance, lack of faith in and obedience to a single creator is presented as the main reason for social chaos.[881] He also points out the importance of practice of religious and moral values in people's life as the Qur'anic commandment. For him, this teaching also supports Küng's following opinions: After the principles of faith, before focusing on worship and laws (*muamelat*), Muslims should keep the qualities such as turning the face from redundant works, being gracious, faithful

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[878] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 139.

[879] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 140.

[880] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 140.

[881] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 140.

to promise, and just, getting rid of evil with goodness and being humble, as well as many other moral principles.[882]

Another point Aydın uses in terms of Islamic-based dialogue is the concept of "covenant," which all three religious traditions (Islam, Christianity and Judaism) made with God. The covenant is considered as the criterion for dialogue between followers of the three religions. The requirements of their covenant with God form the common basis for a healthy dialogical relationship.[883] In this respect, Aydın examines the notion of covenant/testament in the sacred books of Semitic religions. The idea of "covenant/testament" forms the essence of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Moreover he discusses the Qur'anic attitude toward the Jewish and Christian testaments. In this respect it points out a misunderstanding of the term. According to the Qur'an Muslims' covenant with Allah does not give them any privileges: the testament with any religious community does not make it privileged. After pointing this out, Aydın asserts that the Qur'anic affirmation of the testament can be the common basis for dialogue among the Semitic religions. Accordingly, the testament with the Jews "to be chosen to be God's people" is a quality/feature that is gained, not through certain theoretical arguments, but only through being faithful to God and his commandments.[884]

He asserts that Christians, just like Jews, have expressed consistently that through Jesus Christ, God has made a special covenant/agreement with them; therefore they

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[882] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 141.

[883] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 141.

[884] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 141.

gained a privileged situation and are the only ones who will be saved.[885] He does not go into details in respect to the Christian covenant.

After determining his perspective of covenant in the context of Judaism and Christianity, he examines the response of the Qur'an to the Jewish and Christian understanding of the testament.[886]

> Qur'an 62:6: "O you who are Jews! If you claim that you are the favorites of God to the exclusion of all other people, then wish for death, if you are truthful (in your claim)."[887]

According to Aydın, Jews have named themselves the children of God and called Ezra (Qur'an Uzair) the son of God to whom they owe the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament. And thus he believes that, just as Christians have exceeded the borders of religion by deifying Jesus, Jews also have exceeded the borders and damaged the *tawhid* covenant.[888]

Aydın states that the Qur'an says that Jews believe they will be forgiven at the end even if they are caught up in the temporary pleasures of the world and keep committing sin.[889] Moreover, Qur'an 2:91 is critical of Jews for considering only themselves as being chosen. The results of the thought of being chosen are listed in the Qur'an: justifying colonialism against non-Jews, superiority over other people and groups, being the only

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[885] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 141.

[886] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 141.

[887] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 141.

[888] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 146.

[889] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 146, referrng Qur'an 7:169.

people who deserve paradise.[890]

An unusual usage of the term for the "people of the book" appears in Aydın's translation of Qur'an 4:171. He translates it as "Oh audience of Gospels." This bold attempt to determine the Arabic word "book" as the gospel seems to represent of his understanding of the Qur'anic perspective about Christians. However, he does not discuss this issue deeply in the Christian context.[891]

According to Aydın, the Qur'an, after mentioning that Jews and Christians did not act according to their covenant with God because of their own interests, underlines the fact that their clergy, without keeping the covenant, exploited people by preaching messages even though they were not in the Holy Book.[892]

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[890] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 147.

[891] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 147.

[892] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 147-50. In this respect he cites the verses: Qur'an 9:34. "O you who believe! Many among the rabbis and monks do indeed consume the wealth of people in legally invalid, wrongful ways (such as changing the Book's commandments in return for worldly benefit, bribery, and using religion as a means of worldly gain) and bar them from God's way. Those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in God's cause (to exalt His cause and help the poor and needy): give them (O Messenger) the glad tidings of a painful punishment"; Qur'an 5:18. "The Jews and Christians assert, "We are God's children and His beloved ones." Say: "Why, then, does He punish you for your sins? No. You are but mortals that (just like others) He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills. To God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and to Him is the homecoming"; Qur'an 4:49. "Do you (O Messenger) not consider those who regard themselves pure and sanctified? No! Rather, it is God Who makes pure and sanctifies whomever He wills (considering the free will of each), and none is wronged even by as much as a tiny hair."

After exploring the Qur'anic critiques of the Christian and Jewish selfish attitude in terms of salvation, Aydın discusses the Qur'anic response to selfish Muslim ideas about being chosen, under the subtitle "The Qur'an's Understanding of Covenant."[893]

He stresses that according to the Qur'an, no society has the right to claim any privileged position near Allah.[894] The Qur'an describes humanity as one nation and emphasizes God's universal guidance, unlike the exclusionary claims of Jews and Christians.[895] Besides, it stresses that God has made a covenant with all people by sending prophets to all and not only to a single nation.[896] For him the statement, "am I not your Lord?" in Qur'an 7:172 indicates that God has made a special covenant with each individual.[897]

Moreover, by referencing Qur'an 49:13 he stresses that this verse, which indicates separating of tribes, implies that God wants people to know each other.[898] Also, Qur'an 30:30 calls people to act in accordance with their nature. He speaks of the issue of *fitrat*,

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[893] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 150.

[894] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 151.

[895] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 150.

[896] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 151.

[897] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 151-53. Qur'an 7:172: "And (remember, O Messenger,) when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their offspring, and made them bear witness against themselves (asking them:) "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes, we do bear witness." (That covenant was taken) lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "We were indeed unaware of this (fact that you are our Lord)."

[898] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 23.

an Islamic virtue.[899] Furthermore, he states that the term treaty (*misak*) is expressed with the terms of the covenant and commandments. God's universal covenant contains God's demands from people in four main areas: theological, social, behavior, reward-punishment.[900] This universal covenant stated in the Qur'an must be absolutely acknowledged by everyone regardless of affiliation with any religious traditions.[901]

In this respect he states that whatever religion one follows, to be accepted by God one must follow these principles: faith in God, faith in revelation, gratitude and thanksgiving, to be compassionate and to prevent persecution in social relationships, to call for goodness and righteousness, to avoid fraud-interest. These principles are also called the core covenant.[902] The Qur'an, after mentioning God's universal covenant and that all people are responsible to this covenant, says that "any society is not superior to the others due to a covenant with God, and it implies that superiority depends only on fulfillment of these covenant."[903] Aydın also states that the Qur'an expresses that God blesses the person who not only believes in the covenant, but also fulfills its requirements:[904]

> Qur'an 4:123-124. "It is not according to your fancies, nor according to the fancies of the People of the Book. (No one has a privilege in God's sight by virtue of being nominally a Muslim, or Jew, or Christian. Rather, the truth is this:) Whoever does an evil will be recompensed for it, and he will not

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[899] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 151.

[900] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 151.

[901] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 153.

[902] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 153.

[903] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 155.

[904] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 156.

find for himself, apart from God, a guardian or a helper (to guard or help him against the consequence of that evil). And whoever does deeds of righteousness, whether male or female, and is a (true) believer such will enter Paradise, and they will not be wronged by even so little as (would fill) the groove of a date-stone."

Aydın states that the Qur'an makes clear that becoming a distinguished tribe/group, a chosen umma/society, does not depend only on allegations. Rather it emphasizes that becoming privileged near God is only possible when one fulfills the requirement of the covenant."[905] Moreover, the Qur'an evaluates the status of other religions in the framework of their connection to the core covenant. This core covenant that Aydın speaks of sometimes is expressed by the term "universal Islam" Qur'an 5:65–66.[906]

By citing Qur'an 5:68 he also claims that the Qur'an explains whether people will be saved according to their loyalty to the core covenant: [907]

> O People of the Book! You do not stand on anything valid (in God's sight) unless you truly observe the Torah and the Gospel, and all that has been sent down to you from your Lord (and doing that, you would believe in me and the Qur'an, and follow my way)." However, what is sent down to you from your Lord surely increases many of them in rebellion and unbelief. But grieve not for the disbelieving people.

Moreover, the Qur'an says that there are Jews and Christians, who stay loyal to the core covenant with Allah and look positively to the Qur'an:[908]

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[905] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 156.

[906] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 156.

[907] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 157.

[908] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 157.

Qur'an 5.83-85: "When they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes brimming over with tears because they know something of its truth (from their own Books); and they say, "Our Lord! We do believe (in Muhammad and the Qur'an); so inscribe us among the witnesses (of the truth in the company of his community). "Why should we not believe in God and what has come to us of the truth? And we fervently desire that our Lord enter us among the righteous people." So God (judged that He would) reward them for their saying so with Gardens through which rivers flow, therein to abide. Such is the reward of those who are devoted to doing good, aware that God is seeing them.

Moreover, he states that there are some points that distinguish these Jews and Christians from other Jews and Christians who see themselves as superior: faith in and worship of God, the afterlife, ordering goodness-truthfulness, righteous deeds, confirming the truth, true and beautiful things in the religions/faiths other than theirs.[909] He also claims that according to the Qur'an if Jews and Christians not only lived according to the core covenant, but also become Muslims, surely our Prophet would be very happy, because there were Christian and Jewish converts in this way.[910]

For him, the Prophet did not prompt Christians and Jews, who had not displayed these qualities, but urged those who obeyed the core covenant to become his nation by all means. He speaks of two main tasks of the prophet: Let them accept Allah as the creator and obey his will, "by fixing the mistaken beliefs of pre-Islamic religions which were sent in divine message/books and exceeded the boundaries of God, especially the Jews and Christians."[911] The people the prophet has corrected are not people of the book who

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[909] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 157.

[910] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 158.

[911] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 158.

have remained loyal to the core covenant, but the ones who were arrogant and exclusive. So, Aydın underscores that the Qur'an strongly denies all kinds of theoretical claims and exclusionary allegations in terms of relationship with God, such as being chosen and being saved.[912] For instance by referencing Qur'an 2:124,[913] he claims that all kinds of alleged superiority are rejected by God.[914] Furthermore, regardless of religious communities, whoever does not obey the commandments of God and is not just, is out of the covenant. Hence, the Qur'an declares that salvation does not come with sheer claims, but comes with faith and righteous deeds. In addition, according to the Qur'an in all religions there might be people who are accepted by God.

The following other verses are presented for supporting his argument:[915]

> Qur'an 2:62. (The truth is not as they the Jews claim, but this:) Those who believe (i. e. professing to be Muslims), or those who declare Judaism, or the Christians or the Sabaeans (or those of some other faith) whoever truly believes in God and the Last Day and does good, righteous deeds, surely their reward is with their Lord, and they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

> Qur'an 5:69. Surely, be they of those who declare faith (the Community of Muhammad), or be they of those who are the Jews or the Sabaeans or the Christians (or of another faith) whoever truly and sincerely believes in God and the Last Day and does good, righteous deeds they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

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[912] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 158.

[913] "He (Abraham) pleaded: "(Will You appoint imams) also from my offspring?" He (his Lord) answered: (I will appoint from among those who merit it. But) My covenant does not include the wrongdoers."

[914] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 159.

[915] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 159.

For him, these verses declare that salvation is not related to any religion but is related to faith in God, faith in the hereafter and righteous deeds.[916] Thus going to heaven is not related to being affiliated to any religious tradition, but it depends on the core covenant. Furthermore, he does not accept that salvation is not the monopoly of a particular religious community. He argues that according to the Qur'an no one belonging to any religion, including Muslims, can claim that they are the only chosen and guided ones and will attain liberation. The verses also underline that Muslims are a society among other religious communities.[917]

Aydın considers differences as sources of richness in his perception of Qur'anic imperative for dialogue. So, Qur'an 5:48[918] points that differences are not for clashes, they are opportunities for competition in achieving better and more beautiful things.

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[916] He references to Muhammad Asad's translation of the Qur'an.

[917] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 159.

[918] Qur'an 5:48: We have sent down to you (O Messenger) the Book with the truth (embodying it, and with nothing false in it), confirming (the Divine authorship of, and the truths that are still contained by) whatever of the Book was revealed before it, and guarding over (all the true teachings in) it. Judge, then, between them by what God has sent down (to you), and do not follow their desires and caprices away from the truth that has come to you. For each (community to which a Messenger was sent with a Book), have We appointed a clear way of life and a comprehensive system (containing the principles of that way and how to follow it). And if God had so willed, He would surely have made you a single community (following the same way of life and system surrounded by the same conditions throughout all history); but (He willed it otherwise) in order to test you by what He granted to you (and thereby made you subject to a law of progress). Strive, then, together as if competing in good works. To God is the return of all of you, and He will then make you understand (the truth) about what you have differed on.

Religious differences must be considered as a part of divine wisdom.[919] However, Aydın's view creates inconsistencies with the general outlook of the Qur'an's criticism toward the inadequacies of other religions. We observe that Aydın ignores the following points and questions. How are the concepts that are criticized by the Qur'an, such as the Trinity, seen as divine wisdom? There must be tension between faiths in the Christian and Islamic context. The teachings of Christianity that are rejected in the Qur'an cannot be accepted as common faith. Thus he must articulate his position regarding theological dogmas the Qur'an rejects.

Aydın also claims that as a Jew, a Christian or a Muslim, the things one needs to do are to trust the guidance of God as it is expressed in the framework of the covenant of God in our holy books and not to become slaves of desires, passions and whims.[920] He asserts that as a result of his proposition, concerning the Qur'an's attitude toward Jews and Christians, there is not a static, a standard or a single type of Muslim theology of religions. There should be a dynamic theology of religions that creates alternative attitudes toward religious others. For this reason, Muslim researchers must look forward to developing some new understanding according to information in the Qur'an's attitude toward others regarding this core covenant.[921]

Aydın's core covenant thesis appears to contain some internal problem. This very comprehensive approach excludes details and contrasting points in religious traditions. One might claim that in other religions, core covenant might not be *fitrat*-centered as in

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[919] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 161.

[920] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 161.

[921] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 161.

Islam. For example, in Buddhism and Shintoism, instead of a covenant, there is a more karma-centered understanding that is dominant. It seems that Aydın attempts to generalize the Semitic covenant-centered religions in order to justify it as a basis of dialogue. In addition, Aydın also should question, apart from the theological understanding regarding a covenant with God, how this covenant-centered perspective could be applied to the traditional Islamic understanding.[922]

Dialogue in Christian Context

Roman Catholic Church and Dialogue

According to Aydın, at the beginning of the Second Vatican Council, the Church Fathers did not intend to radically reinterpret the exclusionary attitude of the church or take a more positive attitude toward non-Christians.[923]

He states that Pope John XXIII, when call for discussing dialogue in the Council, initially desired to dialogue only with Jews. But, because of the insistence of Christian representatives from Muslim lands and to avoid Muslims' reactions, especially in terms of recognition of Israel, the document was created known as *Nostra Aetate* in later days.[924] He says: "As it is seen, the RCC began to build dialogic relationship with members of religions other than Jews as a result of conditions – just as a strategy."[925]

He considers the texts declared in the council as playing a crucial role in the relations. Among the many texts he reaffirms *Nostra Aetate* as the manifestation of

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[922] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 161.

[923] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 85.

[924] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 284.

[925] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 284.

interreligious dialogue.[926] The second sentence of *Nostra Aetate* answers the question what kinds of relationships the Catholic Church wants to establish with members of other religions and what purposes are anticipated from this new relationship. Here, he points out the fact that the responsibility is given allegedly upon the Church in terms of developing a sense of friendship in interpersonal relations. "This call clearly places the Roman Catholic Church into the leadership and guidance of others when it joins dialogical relations with followers of other of religious."[927] Moreover, he considers that the "truth" mentioned in *Nostra Aetate* is the Christian truth.[928] The claim is that nice and holy things from other religions are true if they are nice and holy according to the Christian truth.[929] Aydın asserts that *Nostra Aetate*'s main purpose, instead of exclusionary, mission understanding, which is almost impossible in a world that has been turned into a small village, is to accept and to establish inclusive, missionary understanding that acknowledges that there are some good and holy things in other religions (not as many as in Christianity) but they would be more perfect through Christianity. Therefore, it can be easily stated that interreligious dialogue appears as a new method of mission.[930]

In this respect Aydın states: "when Christians encounter non-Christians, they are firstly encouraged to enter into a dialogical relationships, secondly in this framework, to

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[926] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 74.

[927] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 86.

[928] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 74.

[929] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 88.

[930] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 91.

cooperate with them in matters related to practical life such as world peace, human welfare and social justice and finally to convey their own faiths and their life styles which is the new missionary."[931]

He conceives statements of the other Second Vatican Council document, *Lumen Gentium*, as a positive indication regarding creating strong relationships with non-Catholics and non-Christians.[932] He also thinks that Pope John Paul II implies in his expressions in all his official circulars that Catholics are spiritual leaders not only of Christians but of everyone. Pointing to the funeral of John Paul, where Muslim leaders participated, Aydın argues that it could be an indication of the wish of the Pope.[933]

Similar to Küçük, Aydın references the expressions of Pope John Paul in the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*[934] and the document *Dialogue and Proclamation*.[935]

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[931] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 88.

[932] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 88. *Lumen Gentium* 16:1 states that "whatever right and truth may exist in non-Christian religions, they are considered the preparation for the Gospel by the Church."

[933] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 86; See also, Aydın, "Diyalog Dinlerin Mensupları Arasında Olur," *Türk Yurdu Dergisi* 209 (2005), 46.

[934] The statement goes: "55. Inter-religious dialogue is a part of the Church's evangelizing mission. Understood as a method and means of mutual knowledge and enrichment, dialogue is not in opposition to the mission ad gentes; indeed, it has special links with that mission and is one of its expressions. This mission, in fact, is addressed to those who do not know Christ and his Gospel, and who belong for the most part to other religions. In Christ, God calls all peoples to himself and he wishes to share with them the fullness of his revelation and love."

[935] "2. Proclamation and dialogue are thus both viewed, each in its own place, as component elements and authentic forms of the one evangelizing mission of the Church. They are both oriented towards the

According to Aydın the statements in them articulate that one of the main tasks of the church accomplished by engaging in dialogical relations with non-Christians is to proclaim the message of the Gospel and thus Jesus Christ. It is striking that he perceives and translates the statements of the documents as "Christianization". Therefore he does not affirm the documents and strongly criticizes them.[936]

He finds the statements in the document *Dominius Iesus* also sound evidence for supporting his objections. For him the document stressed that interreligious dialogue, an integral part of the evangelization policy of the Church, should be used as the means of spreading the message of the Gospel. Then it is stressed that non-Christians, in order to be saved, must have a relationship/link with the Church and Jesus Christ in some way.[937]

Aydın declares that there are also very positive and constructive expressions in the documents in which dialogue is proclaimed as a new method of mission: dialogue is the means for mutual learning and enrichment, both sides must make self-criticism, and thus be ready to change and evolve. Because of these statements the Church should be appreciated. He continues, "But unfortunately these positive and constructive expressions are overshadowed by the Church's discourse that we mentioned above with examples about dialogue, these positive expressions do not take much attention."[938]

Moreover, Aydın perceives that the Second Vatican Council, instead of

communication of salvific truth."

[936] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 92.

[937] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 92; "Diyalog Dinlerin Mensupları Arasında Olur," 47.

[938] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 93.

developing/creating a new theology concerning RCC relations with non-Christians, revived ideas of Christian intellectuals in the past.[939] For instance, in the writings of Pope John Paul II such as *Redemptor Hominis*, the Pope stated that some points about the "truth" are found in other religions. According to Aydın these types of statements have the same parallel points with Nicholas of Cusa's thoughts. Nicholas was also presuming that there is only truth and other beliefs are reflections of it.[940] Moreover, Aydın considers that Nicholas intended to stop Muslim conquests and then explain Christian doctrines to non-Christians in detail and finally show them that Christianity is the only true belief.[941] Besides, Nicholas' intent in dialogical relations, instead of fighting and war, is based on the following reason proposed by Aydın: to stop the rule of the Ottoman Empire against the West.[942] Thus, reading Aydın's presentation of the thoughts of Nicholas as early views of contemporary Christian discourse, one would link his positive views to stop Muslims (his ambition/anxiety about Turkish/Muslims) and the contemporary dialogue call of Christians as having a hidden agenda to stop the growth of Islam. In this context the other significant point is that Aydın considers the perception of Nicholas of the Qur'an similar to today's perception of Christians: "This approach of Nicholas of Cusa which stresses the Christianization of Islam has been continued today by Church officials, Catholic scholars such as Giulio Basetti-Sani and Robert Caspar, and

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[939] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 74.

[940] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 75.

[941] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 76

[942] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 75.

Protestant scholars such as Kenneth Cragg."[943]

Hence, Aydın stresses that in the dialogue program launched by Catholics it is aimed first to establish friendly relations and then to learn/recognize them as much as possible, establish friendships with them and finally present/offer Christian faith to them appropriately.[944] Thus, we clearly observe that, for him the primary goal the Catholic Church envisaged in dialogical relations with non-Christians is to find ways to present/proclaim the message of the Gospel in a more efficient and effective way.[945]

Even though Aydın does not ignore positive developments after the Second Vatican Council, he nevertheless considers the new attitude of the Church as the new method of mission: "Envisaged, dialogical relations and co-operation with non-Christian actually is nothing other than a new method of conveying Christian faith to non-Christians."[946] He claims that in the process of the envisaged dialogical relations and cooperation, in which the Catholic Church has a leading role, the Christian truth is accepted as the absolute right truth and revelations. And the other religious traditions are partial reflections of the absolute truth of Christianity, and so partners in the process of dialogue should accept the Christian faith.[947]

In summary Aydın perceives that until the Second Vatican Council, Christians were

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[943] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 75.

[944] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 90.

[945] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 90; Also see his daily newspaper interview, Aydın, Mahmut, "Dinlerarası Diyalog: Vatikan'ın Tuzağı," *Anadolu'da Vakit Gazetesi*, 27 March 2006.

[946] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 89.

[947] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 89.

aiming "to overcome other religious traditions by baptizing their members to Christianity but with the Second Vatican Council their focus was to complete, to consummate, and thus to exercise the non-Christian religions through Jesus Christ."[948] His response to the speech of Pope Benedict XVI in 2006 in Germany is striking, and clearly shows his perception of institutional Catholic call for dialogue. Aydın refers to his speech as an indicator of the attitude of medieval Christianity, which used to show Islam as the source of violence, and is followed by today's Christian officials.[949] Aydın conceives the Pope's statements as hatred and disgust against Islam and questions whether interfaith dialogue has come to the brink of ruin.[950]

Referring to the document *Dominus Iesus*, Aydın states that the Pope emphasized that dialogue should not be used outside the missionary purpose. Otherwise it must be abandoned. After the pope's statemetns in 2006 it is clear that they do not want to establish more dialogue with Muslims.[951] He asks: can statements of the Pope about respecting Muslims and the Prophet save dialogue from ruin?

Aydın moreover asserts that in his 2006 speech, "Pope Benedict XVI clearly showed that he has no respect toward Muslims."[952] Furthermore the Pope "struck out the grudge and hatred in his inner world" against them.[953] The Pope was not sincere after Muslim

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[948] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 93.

[949] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 77.

[950] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 277.

[951] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 279.

[952] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 280.

[953] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 280.

reactions, since he expressed his sorrow to Muslims, not to Islam and not to the prophet.[954] Aydın presumes that the answer to the following question articulates his insincerity in dialogue: How sincere can the Pope be when he hurts Muslims by using expressions of anti-dialogue people?[955]

According to Aydın, even before being elected Pope, Joseph Ratzinger opposed Turkey's bid for the EU.[956] His conversations in 2006 indicate that there is no change in his ideas after he came to office.[957] Aydın states that unless the Pope apologizes for his words, his words that he respects the sacred of Muslims have no value. It is also naive to expect such a thing from him, he says and adds that expressions of the Pope's esteem "are political maneuvers."[958]

He wonders whether those who have engaged in dialogue with RCC will continue to dialogue meeting after this conversation. And in response he says: [959]

As long as Pope and the other senior Catholic Church officials, with support from the clergy, continued to attack Islam and its sacred values, Muslim society expect from these people [Muslims who are active in interreligious dialogue] to publish a

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[954] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 281.

[955] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 281. According to Aydın, after the harsh responses from Muslims, the Pope did have to emphasize that he is not anti-dialogue.

[956] He pointed to the following words of Ratzinger: "If Europe (civilization) really wants to continue its existence, it must persist to connect with its Christian roots."

[957] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 285.

[958] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 286.

[959] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 286.

declaration that "as long as Christians attack shamelessly to Islam and its beloved prophet, and in this way offend Muslims we will not enter into institutional dialogue with you." Here he pressures on Muslims who are active in dialogue. [960]

Aydın also attempts to respond to the question how Muslims can positively respond to such an argumentative Pope.[961] According to Aydın, it is necessary to evaluate the pope's statements in the context of the general attitude of the Catholic Church, that Jesus Christ is the only savior and the purpose of dialogue is to proclaim Jesus Christ to the other. He stresses that since the beginning the Vatican has not been sincere even toward non-Catholic Christians.[962] The title of the daily newspaper *Anadolu'da Vakit,* "Dinlerarası Diyalog, Vatikan'ın Tuzağı" (Interreligious Dialogue: The Trap of Vatican) clearly summarizes his stance toward the RCC call for dialogue.

World Council of Churches

Besides, we observe that Aydın separates Christian denominations and scholars when he examines Christian attitude toward non-Christians.[963] Aydın explores dialogue in detail in the documents of the World Council of Churches, which represents the majority of non-Catholic Christians. Aydın asserts that the WCC evangelical and orthodox voices from America are quite powerful and influential.[964]

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[960] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 286.

[961] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 282.

[962] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 283.

[963] "Diyalog Dinlerin Mensupları Arasında Olur," 46; "Dinlerarası Diyalog Yeni Bir Misyon Yöntemi mi?" İslamiyat 5:3 (2002), 47-48.

[964] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 94.

According to Aydın, Protestant churches in the 18th and 19th centuries did not get what they expected from a missionary effort and searched for better ways to proclaim the Christian message more efficiently in the 20th century. The idea of dialogic relationship emerged in these meetings. The concept of "interfaith dialogue," posed as a new method of mission in the western churches and developed by studies and published documents, has become a concept used worldwide.[965]

Aydın considers that in the non-Catholic world, the idea that there should be dialogical relations with the followers of non-Christian, religious traditions for the first time emerged for the first time in 1910, at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, in order to find a new missionary method to proclaim the message of the Gospels to non-Christians, in a world where mission methods were becoming increasingly ineffective.[966] He states that according to the official writings of the World Council of Churches, interreligious dialogue is part of the mission and must be practiced by all Christians.[967] At all these meetings, the main purpose of the dialogic relationship with members of other religious traditions is to Christianize non-Christians by presenting Christian faith more effectively and efficiently, and at the end to defeat non-Christian religious traditions completely.[968]

According to Aydın, with the arrival of Indian theologian Stanley J. Samartha to head the WCC sub-unit Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies, a more

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[965] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 291.

[966] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 95.

[967] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 95.

[968] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 96.

positive attitude was seen. In 1979, principles of dialogue were published in a document entitled "Guidelines on Dialogue with Living Beliefs and Ideology." According to Aydın, these principles "recommend Christians to not accept the assumption that they are superior to dialogue partners at the dialogue table." Furthermore, Aydın says these principles of dialogue are a phenomenon, and therefore it is a necessity to live in peace with the members of other faiths.[969] With these dialogue principles, even though the WCC is seen to abandon the focused policy that Christianity should take the place of non-Christian religions, it did not pass beyond the traditional theological understanding that Christianity should incorporate non-Christian religious traditions.[970]

WCC officials insist that Christians should enter collaboration and dialogical relations with the followers of other religious traditions, they should strongly avoid giving positive theological assessments about non-Christian traditions. In this context he considers that the traditional understanding of mission still remains among non-Catholic Christian churches.[971]

According to Aydın, while evangelicals conceive dialogue with Muslims as a betrayal of Jesus, some Muslim groups say that dialogue is a trap that takes Muslims away from Islam and even Christianizes them. Moreover, for Aydın, in order to avoid clash over dogmatic differences among religions, cultures and civilizations, there needs to be adopted a universal morality founded on minimum commons.[972] After stating these

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[969] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 96

[970] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 97

[971] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 98.

[972] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 168.

negative factors regarding interreligious dialogue in the official Christian churches, nevertheless, Aydın stresses that he is not against dialogue: "our goal here is not to express that even though initiatives of institutional dialogue, which have been conducted by the Churches, are the new mission method, that they must be avoided. In contrast, our aim here is to let participants of dialogue know what is the real intention of these institutions under the name of dialogue."[973] Moreover, he believes that Muslims by getting accurate knowledge about dialogue-tension within Christian context, should develop their own distinctive ways to convey message of Islam to non-Muslims. In this sense, he stresses that dialogue should be used for conveying faiths to others better.[974] Lastly, he is sure that through dialogue Muslims can even influence non-Muslims to develop critical thinking toward their religions and convert to Muslims, or at least develop tawhid (oneness of God instead of trinity) in Christianity.[975]

In order to observe Aydın's perception of Christian call for dialogue it will be helpful to explore his use of the categories institutional and individual dialogue:[976] "There are significant differences between the methods and objectives of the dialogue activities" between the studies of individual dialogue and institutional dialogue.[977] Therefore he believes individual and institutional dialogue should be dealt separately.[978]

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[973] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 128.

[974] "Diyalog Dinlerin Mensupları Arasında Olur," 47.

[975] "Diyalog Dinlerin Mensupları Arasında Olur," 47-49.

[976] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 81.

[977] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 82.

[978] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 127.

Institutional Dialogue

As we discuss in detail Aydın's perception of the development of interreligious/interfaith dialogue in official documents of the Church, we observe that for Aydın both the RCC and the WCC when encourage entering into the dialogical relations, on the other hand, instead of developing theology of religions convenient for dialogue, by making some manipulations in theory they have been trying to keep their traditional theologies. For example, on the one hand they give up the claim that Christianity is the sole means of salvation, but on the other hand they continue to portray Jesus Christ as the unique and sole means of salvation not for only Christians but for all humanity.[979] So, he believes the understanding of absolute revelation in the Christian context is not changed. From this perspective, "traditional interreligious dialogue's main objective is by establishing friendly relations with non-Christian through proclaiming them Jesus Christ and in this way, bringing them to Christianity, if not directly, doing this indirectly."[980]

According to Aydın, especially in official Church documents in the 1990s, dialogue has been expressed a new method of Christian mission and an integral part of it.[981] Moreover, three areas he examines in the thoughts of individual scholars (philosophical-historical, religious-mystical, moral-practical) are also referred in the documents of the RCC and WCC.[982]

In sum, taking into account the developments after the Second Vatican council,

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[979] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 127.

[980] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 128.

[981] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 128.

[982] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 129.

Aydın claims that the Vatican has not been sincere since the beginning of interreligious dialogue; rather it has sought to create dialogical relations especially with Muslims just because of the requirement of emerging worldwide conditions – as a strategy. For instance, the reason John Paul II, the Pope of the Cold War period, has given importance to the dialogue is to Christianize Asia in the third millennium "because, he has planned first by establishing dialogical relations to build sympathetic relationships with non-Christians and them to proclaim Christianity to them and win them."[983] Pope Benedict XVI came to the office after the Cold War period, time of global fight against terrorism and hatred of Islam. So, he has spent effort to re-Christianize Europe rather than Asia, and chose to alienate/isolate Muslims.[984] So, he Aydın considered the Pope's 2006 speech as the ruin of the institutional dialogue:[985] "The Pope's expression shows that institutional dialogue with the Catholic Church is on the edge of ruin, the interreligious dialogue is not."[986]

Moreover, according to Aydın, institutions consider interreligious dialogue as "a mission method, and using it for this purpose, individual dialogians and civil society institutions consider dialogue as means to a better world to live in peace where people regardless of culture, religion or group maintain all human differences."[987]

Institutional dialogue activities are intended to "teach, even to impose" to dialogue

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[983] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 284.

[984] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 285.

[985] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 286.

[986] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 286.

[987] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 297.

partner. In addition he asserts that at meetings "the same things are discussed and debated all the time and any progress has been taken."[988] Moreover he claims that neither the Vatican nor the WCC prevents the wars and flowing tears, which shows that they are not sincere; they are in favor of dialogue just for politics.[989]

After drawing this negative picture of dialogue in the context of Christian official institutions, he suggests Muslims engage dialogue with individual theologians: "We consider that Muslims who carry the excitement of entering dialogue with Official Christian Institution to reconsider/review their dialogue with Vatican especially with the Catholic Church, by aware of this fact.[990] Moreover he underscores that "instead of entering dialogue with people who have exerted aggressive, disrespectful and arrogant words as the Pope does, we consider joining dialogue with Christians such as Küng and John Esposito, who respects to dialogue partner and not only desires to teach, but also wants to learn from him/her, is necessary, even let us known through dialogue it is inevitable."[991]

Moreover, Aydın believes that in the dialogue meetings the RCC and WCC usually invites and engage with different Muslim participants as a strategical move. He thinks that it is because these institutitons no longer invite the scholars who understand the real intentions of Christians. Instead of engaging with official institutions, Christians want to engage with religious groups by inviting their leaders because they want to get their

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[988] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 297.

[989] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 298.

[990] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 286.

[991] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 286.

sympathy and spread their message more people.[992]

In short, Aydın thinks that the possible reason for engangement of the RCC and the WCC into dialogue never was to minimize clashes between people of different religions and create peace.[993] So, in the context of the RCC and WCC, "the interreligious dialogue initiatives that started in 1960s, are not anything than the new method of directly and indirectly proclaiming Christian message to non-Christians by creating better relationships with them."[994] Last, he emphasizes the main problem in terms of interreligious dialogue among institutions is sincerity. Because some of the participants keep hidden agendas, sincerity is not built.[995] He considers this fact valid for both insitituonal and individual dialogue understandings.

Individual Dialogue

We observe that Aydın approaches negatively the institutional dialogue call of Christians. Yet he appreciates individual initiatives and thoughts of prominent Christian scholars who approach Muslims in the theology of religious pluralism. He articulates that beside the institutional dialogue, dialogue is also practiced by various nongovernmental organizations and scholars, individual or organizational.[996]

Aydın states that since the 1970s, by taking into account the factual requirements/realities of religious and cultural pluralism, various models have been

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[992] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı*, (Ankara: TDV, 2006), 74-75.

[993] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı*, (Ankara: TDV, 2006), 73.

[994] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 128.

[995] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı,* 74.

[996] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 296.

developed to facilitate gathering Christians and non-Christians in the name of dialogue.[997]Academicians focus on the following points for establishment of an atmosphere of more efficient dialogue to meet the requirements of religious pluralism:[998]

1. What should Christians do to enter into more authentic and efficient dialogic relationship with the followers of other religious traditions?[999] He uses dialogic relationship in different meanings.

2. How healthy environment of dialogue in equal conditions can be created. Theologians need to have in mind two points in terms of healthy environment for dialogue: Diversity is supposed to be protected existence of the common points must be accepted.[1000]

3. The issue of how to understand the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. "A real and fruitful interreligious dialogue is possible when all dialogue partners are ready to teach to each other anything and ready to learn really anything."[1001]

According to Aydın, as noted above, individual theologians have taken three basic stances: philosophical-historical, religious-mystica, and practical-moral approach.[1002]

Philosophical-Historical Approach

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[997] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 98.

[998] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 99.

[999] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 99.

[1000] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 101.

[1001] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 101-3.

[1002] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 103.

Here Aydın summarizes John Hick's pluralistic view.[1003] For Christian theologians who adopt the philosophical-historical approach to avoid the weak ground of relativism, the guiding signs and measure that help us to evaluate other religions is moral rather than doctrinal and empirical.[1004] It can be known whether any religious tradition is superior to any other religious tradition only when the trip ends (death comes), when the peak is reached and worldly life ends. Nothing which can be known in the hereafter should not make our mind busy in our journey in this world.[1005]

Religious-Mystical Approach

Religious-mystical approach essentially is based on the argument that Divine Presence, many devout people believe, is experienced by individual persons differently and so exists in every mystical experience. Here he summarizes Panikkar's expressions.[1006] Those who embrace the religious-mystical approach draw attention to the Divine Presence in the mystical and religious experiences in the life of members of all religious traditions. Differences in religions cannot drain the flow that supplies different deep religious wells.[1007]

Moral-Practical Approach

Some theologians want to reach pluralism by crossing the Rubicon, by adopting a

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[1003] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 105.

[1004] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 112.

[1005] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 112-13.

[1006] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 113.

[1007] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 113-14.

moral-practical approach, and in doing so opinions are expressed in the framework of the two approaches we saw above. That they also admit there is mystical experience incorporate them above their differences, which are limited in terms of historicity. However, they give priority to cooperation of all religious traditions to work together to find solutions to the emergency problems of humanity. Therefore, they prefer the moral-practical approach to stress moral issues and responsibilities. He is talking about the principle of 'You know them by their fruits.'[1008] If Christianity theology does not encourage morality there is "a serious weakness." In attitudes toward other religions, without taking into consideration doctrinal and theological side, the moral side must be considered first.What makes a faith valuable is not its theology; it is more its attitude toward others. In Christianity also it manifests as love thy neighbor.[1009] In terms of moral-practical approach, the history of Christian attitudes toward others, which has kept an exclusive and inclusive attitude, is not a case to be proud of. It is because non-Christian theologies with these characteristics were colonized by dominant imperialist powers in the past.[1010]

Aydın moreover stresses that according to individual theologians, the things that all the religious traditions of the world face and cannot deny or neglect are pain, anguish and suffering that all mankind face. So, in the process of interreligious dialogue if the partners cooperate for solving current problems before sharing their religious experiences and beliefs with each other, they can find opportunity to share religious experiences and

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[1008] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 119-20.

[1009] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 120.

[1010] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 121.

beliefs more successfully. Instead of interreligious theological differences, interfaith dialogue established that encourages joint cooperation for the solution of common problems would be more efficient and healthier. If the followers of different religious societies come together to answer the call of marginalized people in their societies and the pain and suffering from both their own societies and other societies, their association would be fruitful and complete.[1011]

Aydın furthermore considers that dialogue is not only a process established among experts, but also should be a process to find solutions for pain and suffering and the problems of marginalized peoples.[1012] Hence in the process of dialogue related to social-environmental-humanitarian problems, the participants' main purpose, no time should be spent on dogmatic claims that their religions are complementary to other religions, their understanding of God is superior to others, their savior and means of salvation are unique and single and their proposal for salvation more effective than others. Rather, they should be in collaboration with others and work together for solutions to human problems. In this respect he believes such dialogue would be very fruitful.[1013]

For Aydın, practicing dialogue by basing it on morality keeps partners from falling into the relativist, inclusive and exclusive approach by presenting acceptable criteria for everyone to make evaluations among different religious traditions. It is because, the basic criteria for Christians who have this kind of approach to assess dialogue partners are not

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[1011] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 122-23.

[1012] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 124. I wonder if it is not the dialogue the church is talking about. He does not mention this type of reviews of the church.

[1013] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 125; *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı*, 75.

issues such as acceptance of Jesus as savior or desire to be baptized covertly or openly, but issues their religious traditions and faiths serve for bringing more peace, justice and unity.[1014]

Aydın also considers that according to advocates of ethical dialogue, the next step of moral dialogue is religious dialogue.[1015] When they make an "effort for moral dialogue, they see themselves as each other's friend."[1016] He even thinks they go further to pray together and to start to use each other's religious resources to increase their spirituality.[1017]

As a result of these reflections Aydın states that contrary to the official church authorities, he conceives individual theologians as showing more intensive effort to create more realistic, constructive and more efficient environment for interfaith dialogue.[1018]

He examines the thoughts of Christian scholars such as Montgomery Watt, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Hans Küng, Paul Knitter, Raimund Panikkar and John Hick, and appreciates them for making positive statements regarding rationality of Islam, Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an.[1019] We observe that he criticizes their views often by arguing that they do not fully express objective manners, by not accepting prophet Muhammad as

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[1014] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 126-27.

[1015] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 126.

[1016] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 127.

[1017] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 127.

[1018] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 128.

[1019] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 207, 212, 213, 217, 219.

prophet of Islam and the Qur'an as the full revelation of God. Yet, he finds their opinions sincere attempts. However, I should state that Aydın keeps opposite views regarding sincerity of individual scholars in various statements. For instance in the symposium Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı (Contribution of Religion to World Peace) he states that insincerity exists among participants of dialogue and gives Watt's views as insincere. He states that the things Watt asks from Chrsitians do not harm Christianity, yet the things he asks from Muslims affect the nature of Islam.[1020] Moreover, he does not find official Vatican statements very sincere. This stance seems to be a contradictory situation, because the points on which he criticizes individual scholars are almost same points he underlines for the Vatican.[1021]

He stresses that the general aims of the individual supporters of dialogue are: The faith in supreme creator, no truth of one true religion, moral life, living truthfully, work for peace and justice.[1022] Moreover he underlines that only pluralist practice dialogue rightly-perfectly.[1023]

Aydın states that since no religious tradition, revelation or redeemer represents God's revelation absolutely and finally. Christians should not see their beliefs, and therefore Jesus Christ, as God's sole-absolute revelation that is binding for all people; instead they

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[1020] *Dinin Dünya Barışına Katkısı*, 74-75.

[1021] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 220.

[1022] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar*, 296. In another instance he presents principles common to individual scholars' dialogue understanding as: "the belief in the ultimate transcendent being", "singularity and uniqueness", "you know them by their fruits," true deeds and world peace, 130.

[1023] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 296.

should see their beliefs and religious figures as one among many beliefs and religious figures.[1024] Moreover, for individuals, dialogue cannot be practiced with exclusionary claims.[1025] Hence, we observe that Aydın's attempt to find a Qur'anic basis for dialogue finds a pluralism parallel to individual Christians.[1026]

Aydın mentions that due to these fundamental differences between institutional and individual dialogue meetings, "we think that the institutional dialogue activities to be maintained as a courtesy and politics, individual dialogue activities to be supported together to be strengthening further."[1027] Therefore, "institutional dialogue activities should be done only politically, individual dialogue, which aims change and effort for change." However, he misses the point that the positive attitude of institutional dialogue paved the way for individual dialogues.[1028]

A point of discussion: Prophethood of Muhammad

The other point Aydın discusses with the issue of dialogue is acceptance of the prophethood of Muhammad by Christian theologians. Aydın considers acceptance of Muhammad as a prophet a crucial turning point that would also represent sincerity of Christians in dialogue with Muslims. This approach appears to have unsurpassable problems. Aydın, similar to general Turkish Muslim scholars, anticipates affirmation from the Christian side by presupposing the fact that Muslims already accept Jesus as a

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[1024] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 129.

[1025] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 131.

[1026] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 128

[1027] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 297.

[1028] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 298.

prophet and respect him, without accepting him as son of God in the Christian context. He considers any intention from Christians for Muslims to believe Jesus as the son of God to be a sneaky means of mission. However, by asking a similar affirmation from Christians, he does not avoid the same mistake. A Christian who accepts Muhammad as a prophet in the Islamic sense has to reject fundamental creeds in Christianity. This rejection pushes her/him to leave his religion. Similarly, a Muslim who believes in Jesus in the Christian context must reject essential pillars of the faith. Therefore, even though Aydın explores the idea of some prominent pluralist Christian scholars and affirms their acceptance of Muhammad as a prophet of God, he does not consider them fully sincere because they do not accept Muhammad in the Islamic context. For Aydın, a genuine dialogue can occur only with Christians who do not believe Jesus as the son of God.[1029] This impossible request of Aydın seems to be creating an unsurmountable challenge for him to create dialogical bridges between Muslims and Christians.

According to Aydın, the orientalists, who have stated that Muhammad cannot be a prophet in every occasion, were impressive until the first half of the 20th century and still continue to be effective.[1030] He expresses that throughout history the prophet was always misrepresented.[1031] He repeats Watts' opinion that "in the West, none of the major historical figures were considered/presented as bad and unsuccessful as Muhammmed.[1032]After the second half of the twentieth century there were some positive steps in the Christian world, but this positive movement does not appear in official

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[1029] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 323.
[1030] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 192.

[1031] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 190.

[1032] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 190.

institutions. Since the beginning of the dialogue process in the Vatican, the official Christian offices have been silent in terms of Muhammad's prophethood. Aydın strongly criticizes this attitude and emphasizes his sympathy on individual theologians. According to Aydın, Hans Küng and especially Norman Daniel, in this regard, should be considered as a pioneer since he implies that the prophethood of Muhammad should be accepted.[1033]

It appears that Aydın considers some individual attempts among Christian theologians in terms of the affirmation of the prophethood of Muhammad as extremely vital in Christian-Muslim dialogue.[1034] In this context, he welcomes Cardinal Emilio G. Aguilar, Archbishop of Madrid, for his encouragement of people to respect the Prophet. In addition in this context he names scholars such as Karen Armstrong, Martin Forward and Lamin Sanne as representing spositive attitude.[1035] He underlines that Muslims, rightly, have been asking about the prophethood of Muhammad in their dialogue with Christians.[1036] The reluctance of Christians to accept the prophethood of Muhammad, by almost all today's Christians in Muslim-Christian dialogue, has caused a lack of healthy dialogue.[1037]

Moreover, he states that early Islamic sources should be accepted as authentic and

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[1033] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 193.

[1034] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 194.

[1035] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 194.

[1036] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 189.

[1037] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 190.

reliable by Westerners.[1038] In this way, Western scholars could perceive Islamic virtues and norms more accurately. A fair and reasonable approach to the Qur'an must be phenomenological, because a phenomenological approach entails Christians and Muslims in dialogue that is empirically and critically expressed, analyzed and reconstructed. He concludes that Watt, Küng and Smith no longer apprehend the Qur'an as just a book, but as a holy book.[1039]

Conclusion

Mahmut Aydın explores the issue of interreligious dialogue in many different aspects in a convincing and scholarly method. His views have deeply influenced Turkish scholarship concerning the Christian call for dialogue especially because of his education in the UK and his doctoral dissertation on dialogue in the Christian context. His translation of his doctoral dissertation and some of the books on dialogue by Christians remarkably influenced both Turkish academicians and the public mind. Also, his attempts for developing the concept within Islamic and Christianity setting are remarkable.

In this chapter we observed that he first of all touches on the nature of dialogue, its place in the Christian and Islamic context, and later develops his pluralistic views on dialogue. Now we can summarize his views.

He attempts to develop his pluralistic views into an Islamic-based dialogue understanding rooted in the concepts "covenant" and "humanum." He also underlines the crucial role of universal values for justification of dialogue among people of different

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[1038] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 198.

[1039] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 269.

religions.

He mentions misconceptions and misunderstandings of the term "dialogue" among Turkish scholarship. We observe that even though he explores misuse of dialogue, he does not come up with a conclusion that dialogue must be addressed by experts or historians of religion. Nevertheless, it appears he is uncomfortable with obscurity and believes everyone writing about dialogue is doing so in a subjectively and partly biased way.

In terms of gains of dialogue he points out an example, that presents contradictions and Islamic-based views in his understanding of dialogue. He states that general biases associated with Christians by Muslims will be demolished and partners will learn that Jesus is not accepted as the son of God by every Christian.[1040] These statements suggest that Aydın considers when a Muslim learns that there are Christians who do not believe Jesus as Son of God, it will be a fruit of dialogue. However, this desire is a very monological way of approaching dialogue because in dialogue participants do not aim to find marginal groups whose faiths are similar to theirs. Rather participants should try to understand differences of each other. In this sense, Aydın would give an example which would exemplify how Muslims should work to learn how Christians perceive Jesus as the son of God and what Muslims can learn from the concept of son of God. However, instead of seeing such attempts from Aydın we observe that he tries to question Christians' insistence on not accepting Muhammad as genuine prophet of God.

We observe that he suggests the term *taaruf* (learn) as an Islamic term for dialogue.

[1040] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar*, 27.

He believes that in the framework of the concept *taaruf*, Islam already affirms pluralism of religions as a reality. Pluralism is also the wish of God, who wants people to learn (*taaruf*) from each other and compete for achieving better and beautiful things. He thinks that the core covenant in Islam, Christianity and Judaism constitutes the common point for members of these religions to come together. However, his view creates inconsistencies with the general outlook of the Qur'an's criticism toward the inadequacies of other religions. He ignores the following points and questions: How are the concepts criticized by the Qur'an, such as the Trinity, seen as divine wisdom? There must be tension between faiths in the Christian and Islamic context. The teachings of Christianity rejected in the Qur'an in cannot be accepted as common faith. Thus he must articulate his position regarding theological dogmas that the Qur'an rejects.

It is striking that Aydın does not address the missionary background of the writings of Francis of Assisi, Peter the Venerable, John of Trebizon, John of Segovia and Nicholas of Cusa. He considers their attempts positive, and some of them, for instance John of Segovia's attitude, as dialogue in today's sense. He does not question their intention to create a new method of missionary work. Rather he stresses their challenge for good relationships with Muslims. Nevertheless, they keep an exclusivist attitude and consider Jesus the only savior, and Christianity the only true religion. However, they consider that instead of rejecting other religions altogether, they may use common points, beliefs and values to reach the the full message of God, that is Jesus. So, when exploring Aydın's perception of the views of historical personalities, we observe that they were creating core features of inclusivism of Christianity regarding Muslims. Instead of clash with Muslims, a more dialogical [friendly] relationship should be made in order to reach

them the message of Christianity. Aydın considers their desire for friendly relations as dialogical relationship and so misuses the concept of dialogue, because he stresses that dialogue is not a means for missionary work. His acknowledgment of their monological attitude as dialogue creates difficulties to pass on. Considering their attempt as roots of the contemporary Christian call for dialogue, he believes that there is not alternate change in the Church's perception of dialogue, which is using dialogue as a new method of mission. Therefore, even though he does not put much stress on any political ill-intention in dialogue, he does stress that there is an intention to persuade others to be converted to Christianity.

The following statements reflect his views on dialogue according to formal Christian institutions: "When we look at dialogue activities of the formal Christian institutions including especially the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, after the 1960s, we can state that; upon fail of missionary which is identified with the western imperialism and colonialism brought dialogue as a new method of the mission in order to offer Christianity to non-Christians more influentially and fruitfully."[1041]

But the importance of Vatican II cannot be ignored. Although the council stressed missions and accepted Christianity as the only valid religion, it played a vital, significant role in opening the door of dialogue with people of other religions. Aydın should have mentioned it, but he put much more emphasis on individual effort for dialogue independent of the council's effects. In contrast, according to him, these individual efforts influenced the Vatican in a direction to open its door to dialogue.[1042] So, one may

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[1041] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 72.

[1042] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 195.

conclude that there has been mutual interaction and influence by both sides.

We observe that Aydın underlines that mission activities, with exclusive character to non-Christians, enjoyed all the facilities of imperialism and colonialism. So, when they failed, contemporary Christian institutions developed an understanding that embraces non-Christians under the name of interfaith dialogue. It seems that Aydın considers imperialism and colonialism as means of missionary, in contrast to others who consider the reverse. Moreover, Aydın does not make so much stress on missionary-imperialism connections in the contemporary Christian call for dialogue as others usually do. Nevertheless, we observe that Aydın points out political and economic intentions in the missionary as obvious fact.[1043]

In terms of Aydın claim that when mission became identical to imperialism/colonialism and failed, dialogue was presented as a new method. Moreover, missionaries had noticed that their foremost error was an "unfriendly and patronizing approach" and therefore they adopted the path of dialogue.[1044] The idea of the failure of missionaries as a cause of dialogue seems to be unconvincing because through it millions of African Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists were already converted to Christianity. And still missionaries are active all around the world. Instead of considering dialogue the outcome of the missionaries, it would be a more healthy to perceive it as the result of multi-factors. Last, one can argue that the development of dialogue is not a mutually, exclusive development of missionary work.

[1043] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 73.

[1044] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 293

We observe that Aydın believes that in order to have dialogue with members of other religions, exclusive approaches, both in terms of revelation and incarnation, must be avoided by members of every religious tradition.[1045] So, we observe that he considers pluralism a precondition for occurrence of interreligious dialogue.

Aydın also states that Christian theologians' desire to know the Islamic world gained a new momentum at the end of the Crusades and loss of spirit of the Crusades.[1046] This represents a general attitude of Turkish scholarship regarding the role of Crusades. Subsequently, we witness that while some[1047] consider it a new beginning of missionary activities, besides agreeing with them Aydın considers it the turning point for constitution of inclusive views.

We also observe that Aydın considers almost every positive statement of Christian theologians he examines as dialogue in today's sense. Here he falls into same mistake as theologians he criticizes for evaluating every positive historical event in the history of Islam as dialogue. Aydın moreover underscores that there is Christian dominance in dialogue meetings. This is point raised by other prominent Turkish Muslim scholars who support interreligious dialogue.

When examining Aydın's suggestions for the principles of dialogue we observe that even though he critiques the application of Christian dialogue in a Muslim context by some Muslims, nevertheless he cannot avoid repeating the Christian scholars' perception

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[1045] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 129, 296. Also see his another article, "Bir Hıristiyan Kurtuluş Teorisinden Dinlerin Bir Kurtuluş Teolojisine Doğru," *Divan* (2000), 150.

[1046] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 67.

[1047] We may mention Abdurrahman Küçük and Mustafa Erdem among influential scholars with this view.

of dialogue, to which he often refers.[1048] When comparing these principles of dialogue with others, it becomes clear that his understanding of dialogue is Western-oriented. We observe this attitude throughout his studies, where he makes many references to English and Western sources. The basic reasons for his attitude that can be considered are his educational background in the UK, fluency in English, contact with many Western scholars and engaging academic events.

We also observe that Aydın is concerned that in the process of Muslim-Christian dialogue, Muslims and Christians should stay away from infidelity and abusing each other's weaknesses as they try to share their faith with one another.[1049]

Unlike the general treatment of Turkish Muslim scholarship, we observe that Aydın explores dialogue in detail in the documents of the World Council of Churches, which represents the majority of non-Catholic Christians. Aydın asserts that WCC evangelical and orthodox voices from America are quite powerful and influential.[1050] Additionally, he separates Christian scholars when he examines Christian attitudes toward non-Christians. Here it is seen that he makes a distinction between Catholic and Protestant scholars' attitudes.

Davut Aydüz's Perception of Dialogue

His Life and Works

Davut Aydüz was born in 1962 in the Hacilar village of Biga, in Çanakkale. He went to public school for elementary education and Imam-Hatip School for high school.

[1048] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 38.

[1049] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 21.

[1050] *Dinlerarası Diyalog Mahiyet, İlkeler ve Tartışmalar,* 94.

He earned his undergraduate degree in Islamic Theology at Atatürk University Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Erzurum in 1986 and his doctoral degree in the department of *tafsir* in Marmara University Faculty of Theology in Istanbul in 1992. After working three years (1990-1993) as a religious preacher in PRA in Istanbul, he started to work as an instructor in the department of *tafsir* in Harran University Faculty of Theology. He moved to Sakarya University Faculty of Theology as assistant professor in 1993, associate professor in 1996, and full professor of *tafsir* in 2002. He stayed in Azarbaijan and Egypt to do academic research. He still works at Sakarya University as a professor of *tafsir*.

Books

1. (Nahr in Islamic Economy) *İslâm İktisadında Narh* (İzmir: Işık, 1994).

2. (Move of the Thoughts) *Düşünce Kaymaları,* in a committee (İzmir: Kaynak, 1996).

3. (Foods and Healing in the Qur'an) *Kur'an-ı Kerim'de Besinler ve Şifa* (İstanbul: Timaş, 1997).

4. (Types of Tafsir and Tafsir According to Subjects) *Tefsir Çeşitleri ve Konulu Tefsir* (İzmir: Işık, 2000).

5. (Studies on the Qur'an) *Kur'an'a Dair İncelemeler* (İstanbul: Nil, 2000).

6. (Tafsir of short chapters of the Qur'an) *Kısa Sûrelerin (Fatiha, Duhâ-Nâs) Tefsiri* (İzmir: Işık yay. 2001).

7. (Translation of Jawshan al-Kabeer) *Cevşen-i Kebîr Tercemesi* (İzmir: Işık yay, 2001).

8. (Tafsir of Chapter of Ya-sin, the Heart of the Qur'an) *Kur'an-ı Kerim'in Kalbi Yâsîn Sûresi Tefsiri* (Istanbul, Akademi 2004).

9. (Interreligious Dialogue Throughout History) *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog* (Istanbul: Işık, Ekim 2004).

10. (Miraculous Protection of the Qur'an –in a comittee) *Kur'an'ın Mûcizevî Korunması (committee)* (Istanbul: Işık 2004).

Some of his articles in Turkish:

1. (Writings published in the journals *Sırât-ı Müstakîm* and *Sebîlü'r-Reşâd*) "Sırât-ı Müstakîm ve Sebîlü'r: Reşâd Mecmualarında Çıkan Tefsirle İlgili Yazılar," *Sakarya Üniversitesi, İlâhiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 1 (1996): 27-56.

2. (Ear and Hearing and Eyes and Seeing in the Qur'an) "Kur'an-ı Kerim'de Kulak ve İşitme-Göz ve Görme," *Zafer Dergisi*, Adapazarı, 232 (1996): 30-32.

3. (Types of Migration and the Most Blessed Migration) "Hicret Çeşitleri ve En Fazîletli Hicret," *Yeni Ümit* 17 (1992): 22-23.

4. (The necessity of Obeying the Prophet) "Hz.Peygamber'e Uymanın Lüzûmu," *Yeni Ümit* 12 (1991):41-43.

5. (The Establishment of the Institution of Hisbe) Hisbe Müessesesinin Doğuşu," *Yeni Ümit* 6 (1989):34-36.

6. (The Beginning of Hisbe) "Hisbe Hizmetinin Başlaması," *Yeni Ümit* 7 (1990): 29-31.

7. (Virtue of Pray) "Duâ'nın Fazîleti," *Yeni Ümit* 16 (1992): 36-40.

8. (Ulfat/Wearisome and the Ways for recovering) "Ülfet ve Tedavi Yolları," *Yeni Ümit* 10 (1990): 48-50.

9. (Narh in Islamic Law) "İslâm Hukûkunda Narh," *Yeni Ümit* 14 (1991).

10. (Cleanliness in the Qur'an and Hadith) "Kur'an ve Hadislerde Temizlik," *Yeni*

Ümit 57 (2002).

11.   (Views of Fethullah Gülen about Scientific Tafsir) "Fennî Tefsir ve Fethullah Gülen (Hocaefendi)'in Fennî Tefsir Hakkındaki Görüşleri," *Yeni Ümit* 40 (1998): 33-37.

12.   (Grammar and the Qur'an) "Kur'an-ı Kerim ve Gramer, *Yeni Ümit* 38 (1997):9-19.

13.   (Elesker Memmedov, an Azari Scholar, and his one work on Arabic Language) "Azerbaycanlı Âlim Prof. Elesker MEMMEDOV ve Arap Dili Konusundaki Bir Eseri," *Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi* 6 (2000): 309-15.

14.   (Jihad, Patience and Reward) "Cihat, Sabır ve Mükâfat," *Yeni Ümit* 39 (1998):40-44.

15.   (Narh in Ottoman State) "Osmanlı Devletinde Narh uygulaması," *Yeni Türkiye Dergisi,* 701 Osmanlı Özel Sayısı II, 74-81.

16.   (Similarities in the Story of Joseph and Moses and Miracle of the Qur'an) Hz.Yûsuf ile Hz.Mûsa Kıssaları Arasındaki Benzerlik ve Kur'an'ın Mu'cizeliği," *Zafer Dergi*si 239 (1996): 22-25.

17.   (Worship and Worship-Practice Relations in Islam) "İslâm'da İbâdet ve İbâdet-Amel İlişkisi," *Yeni Ümit* 60 (2003).

18.   (Bediuzzaman as Teacher and Master) Mürşit ve Mübelliğ Olarak Bedîüzzaman, *Yeni Ümit* 64 (2004).

19.   (Devotions of Companions of the Prophet in *Tablig*) Tebliğ Hizmetinde Ashabın Fedakârlıkları, *Yeni Ümit* 66 (2004).

20.   (Interreligious Dialogue Throughout History) "Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog" kitabı üzerine röportaj, *Aksiyon* 523 (2004).

Besides these works he has several articles in Turkish and Azarbaijani newspapers.

General Overview

Davut Aydüz, who provides a very inclusive approach to non-Muslims, pays attention to the reality of coexistence. Cohabitation is imperative in today's world. For him, "even if people live in the same room, it is not expected that they will develop a mutual recognition of each other without friendly conversations."[1051] Because of this reality, dialogue should be supported by the adherents of all religious traditions, especially in a world that displays many negative scenarios such as the clash of civilizations.[1052] In order to stress a fruitful and positive contribution of Islam to world peace, he attempts to articulate an Islamic basis for dialogue and coexistence. It is clear from his writings that he is sure Muslims can get along well with everyone, which is a basic Islamic principle, and can be in dialogue with everyone. So, Muslims should establish good relationships with others as much as possible.[1053]

Aydüz generally considers historical and today's conflicts as the result not of religions but of the interpretations by followers of religions. When people started to think their own views were the only valid/accurate opinions and wanted to impose them, conflicts appeared. For him, this exclusivist attitude is the basic reason behind historical conflicts. Some people or religious groups, instead of being responsible only to the creator, desired to impose their world views on others by using the name of God. Aydüz considers that this same attitude can also lead to greater unrest in today's shrinking

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[1051] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 14.

[1052] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 13.

[1053] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 11.

world.[1054] Therefore, reasonable members of religious traditions should come together to show that peace in the world can occur only through teachings of religious traditions. He believes in the power of love regarding bringing people together and emphasizes that people should open their hearts with compassion.[1055] Therefore, he maintains positive hopes regarding the future of humanity: "We believe that the coming years will be years of tolerance and love, in this context we will give the world so many things and we will get from the world so many things also."[1056]

Aydüz discusses the issue of interreligious dialogue in detail in the context of coexistence and tolerance, in his book "*Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*" (Interreligious Dialogue throughout History). Even though the title implies/covers a worldwide, broad scale of the history of interreligious dialogue, it focuses on the Islamic context. As Mahmut Aydın rightly points out, the book makes quotations from some works without making proper references.[1057]

The book starts not with the history of dialogue but with definitions or meanings of dialogue as a response to the criticism by Muslims. The other chapters basically explore and develop an Islamic perspective for dialogue. The last chapter touches on historical developments of interreligious dialogue and conditions for fruitful dialogue in the

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[1054] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 13.

[1055] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 12.

[1056] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 12.

[1057] For instance in pages 212-215, he makes direct quations from Mustafa Alıcı's dissertation "Kitab-ı Mukaddes ve Kur'anı-ı Kerim Işığında İslam-Hıristiyan Diyaloğu" and refers it only in the footnote at the end of the sub-chapter.

Muslim-Christian context.

Aydüz's book can be considered among the significant books in interreligious dialogue in Turkish scholarship because it attempts to analyze, justify and develop dialogue in an Islamic context, even though it received much criticism from mainstream academia and the public. Setting the book's incorrect points aside, one may consider it among the important books that represent a Turkish response to the Christian call for dialogue.

The criticisms are generally based on his closeness to the Gülen movement, his perception/representation of dialogue as God's command, his representation of historical relationships as dialogue and his educational background (he is not a historian of religions).[1058] His perception will be explored under three basic heads: Dialogue, Islamic Dialogue, and Christian Dialogue.

Dialogue

Definition

Professor Aydüz gives various definitions of dialogue. He basically defines dialogue with its dictionary and term meaning. The dictionary meaning of dialogue is a

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[1058] One of the harshest criticisms comes from Mahmut Aydın in his critical book review, "An Anatomy of Misuse." He states Aydüz does not have enough knowledge about the historical origin of interreligious dialogue in the Christian context, he is a professor of *tafsir* (exegesis of the Qur'an). He asserts that the book is among those written without sufficent scholarly research and aimed to defend a certain religious group's views. Last, the book cites directly or indirertly from several books, so it is not original research. See Mahmuy Aydın, "Bir İstismarın Anatomisi, Davut Aydüz'ün Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog Kitabı Üzerine Eleştirel Bir Analiz," *Milel ve Nihal* 3:1-2 (December–June 2005-2006), 175– 90.

"conversation between two or more people from different races and cultures, from different beliefs and convictions, from different political understanding; communicating with each other in a civilized way."[1059] He also states that in Turkish it means agreement, adaptation or works done for this purpose. He furthermore expresses that dialogue can be understood as a direct human-axis activity. In its broader sense dialogue is a "talk and an agreed way for people from different races and cultures to communicate in a civilized manner."[1060] Dialogue is also used for referring to chat between people, a human-object relationship, or the exchange of ideas or thoughts.[1061] It is based on the desire of understanding between participants: "In order to understand, one needs to know; in order to recognize/learn one needs to know."[1062] According to him, "Dialogue must be based on mutual awareness/knowledge, recognition and understanding instead of the themes of the accuracy and rightness of the participants."[1063] "Dialogue must be sought in an ethical, aesthetic, cultural and intellectual background, where common points are clear instead of emphasizing morals and doctrines, where differences may appear."[1064] Hence, it appears Aydüz emphasizes values rather than theologies.

In a religious sense, Aydüz defines dialogue as "speech, discussion and collaboration of people from different religious groups, as well as the different sects of a religion, without imposing beliefs and thoughts on each other by force and unethical

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[1059] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 14.

[1060] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 17.

[1061] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 17.

[1062] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 17.

[1063] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 18.

[1064] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 18.

ways and coming together on common issues within the climate of tolerance."[1065] In his second and broader definition religious dialogue is "an encounter/meeting of people of different religions which sustains coexistence, collaboration, talk and even compromise, in order to learn, know, recognize, listen, and understand in an atmosphere of openness, freedom and peace about an issue, whether it is common or not, having respect, love, good-will, sincerity, righteousness and hoşgörü/tolerance and equality towards others without compelling thoughts on each other."[1066] Moreover, Aydüz states that even though the correct term for interreligious dialogue is "din mensupları arası diyalog" (dialogue among followers of religions), he would use the widespread term "dinlerarası diyalog" (interreligious dialogue).[1067]

According to Aydüz, interreligious dialogue is also an effort and trend for finding solutions to common problems by collaboration of religious congregations representing different religious traditions. He touches on the principle, "you have your religion, I have mine" without imposing beliefs on each other.[1068] Last, he considers practice of dialogue a religious duty for every sincere believer: "avoiding interreligious dialogue places great responsibility on the shoulders of religious people."[1069]

Features of Dialogue
Aydüz explains what "dialogue is not" by aiming to clarify the general

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[1065] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 14.

[1066] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 18.

[1067] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 14.

[1068] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 18.

[1069] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 284.

misunderstandings and prejudices concerning dialogue. It is not a conversion, a compromising of religion or missionary activity,[1070] three concepts generally linked to dialogue by its opponents.

By stating that dialogue is different from and opposite to conversion, missionary work or compromising of religions, he rejects allegations in a clear manner. Meanwhile, he also considers that it is natural that everyone desires to share his/her own religious values with others. This desire must not be confused with Christian missionaries, because in missionary activity others are grasped as prey, and to get this prey every method is valid.[1071] However, dialogue is only a presentation of an opinion, so mutual knowledge and understanding play a crucial role. In dialogue, instead of imposition, willingness is focused.[1072]

One can only engage in dialogue with freewill and desire. According to Aydüz, through dialogue the "proclamation of a religion, which is the most important theme of the mission, is not ignored; it can be practiced in a broader-deeper way. This is the intersected point where most intense relations occur between mission and dialogue."[1073] After articulating these points, Aydüz states that a religious invitation should not be stated in the main center of dialogue; the main goal; is not rejection or forcing others. Yet, "hoping other's salvation" can be among the goals of dialogue.[1074]

[1070] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 21.

[1071] Küçük states something similar.

[1072] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 21.

[1073] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 22.

[1074] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 22.

He underlies that dialogue is not monologue, debate or polemic either, and has no hidden agenda. Ideological and sociological maneuvers or forcing others to doubt their belief are the two biggest mistakes in dialogue efforts, so they are unacceptable.[1075] So, participants, instead of considering differences, should establish the culture of coexistence through respecting fundamental rights and freedoms.[1076]

Aydüz stresses the significance of dialogue throughout his book. In one instance he states that "in order to exalt the principle that acknowledges and respects a genuine Godly attitude in people's faces, and to bring welfare to humanity, Muslims and members of other religions can offer fruitful suggestions and ideas."[1077] In this respect, he also mentions some fruits of dialogue. Through dialogue the opportunity to live together will be captured and the most accurate way to understand each other will take place.[1078] Hence, learning from others as they are will make a person able to conceive and know them closely. Dialogue also emphasizes peace and plays an important role in the formation of global love and justice, while sustaining differences in an atmosphere of trust and intimacy.[1079] According to Aydüz peace will occur only through dialogue where participants also have the opportunity to experience/observe each other's spiritual riches. Considering that there is such a crucial role of dialogue in world peace, everyone should come to the dialogue table with full honesty and trust. If any side has concerns regarding

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[1075] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 22.

[1076] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 20.

[1077] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 216.

[1078] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 23.

[1079] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 24.

being deceived, this will lead to the failure of dialogue, and failure of the peace initiatives.[1080] Thus, Aydüz draws attention to creating and maintaining the role of trust and sincerity in the success of dialogue initiatives. He also claims that dialogue guarantees religious freedom by preventing one from misunderstanding or misrepresenting the other's religion.[1081]

He states that dialogue also seeks solutions for the problems of communities and individuals. It tries to bridge the gap between people and cultures. It can develop common thoughts and feelings about art and culture. It ensures tolerance among religious people. To be *hoşgörü*/tolerant teaches one not to be reluctant to learn about the religions of others. *Hoşgörü*/tolerance, in a sense, is to respect others' beliefs and convictions and is a state of not being disturbed by the differences. Besides the constructive role, dialogue also prevents evil actions by contributing to the end of wars and fighting.[1082] Through dialogue one learns to embrace others instead of conceiving them as the enemy.

In this respect, Aydüz claims that when Western experts studied Islam, it began to appear more just and this understanding helped to break down some misrepresentations. At this point another fruit of dialogue emerges: one makes objective and just assessments regarding Islam in contrast to the hostile attitudes and prejudices of the past.[1083] He emphasizes that the main reason behind the Crusades was misinformation, slander and propaganda. If they had truly known Muslims, they would not have acted in such an

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[1080] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 25.

[1081] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 27.

[1082] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 26.

[1083] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 26.

aggressive way.[1084] In contrast to Christian propaganda in the past, now through dialogue movements/initiatives, many Christian scholars are able to approach Muslims with the aim of learning from each other. And they began to behave more just when they examined Islam. In this respect, he gives Michel Lelong as an example and takes quotations from Christian scholars such as Hartmut Dreier, Donald Reeves, and Christian Troll, regarding Muslim-Christian dialogue.[1085]

Last, Aydüz explains the factors that require interreligious dialogue and highlight its importance as globalization, interreligious peace, avoiding misunderstandings, universal peace and protection of human rights and freedoms.[1086] He also states that dialogue would find remedies for the problems such as everything that is life-threatening, war, terrorism, exploitation, inequality, euthanasia, suicide, exile, adultery, prostitution and so on.[1087]

Types of Dialogue

Aydüz presents the types of dialogue, yet superficially: dialogue of experts, dialogue of coexistence, and dialogue of religious experiences.[1088] Dialogue of experts is the meeting of experts on religious issues in order to understand each other better and more deeply. In this way, experts aim to enrich each other on the issues of theology.[1089]

[1084] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 28.

[1085] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 27-30.

[1086] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 215-216.

[1087] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 216.

[1088] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 212.

[1089] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 212.

Dialogue of coexistence is about the random relationship of adherents of different religions in practical daily issues.[1090] Such dialogue usually occurs in pluralistic societies within the framework of neighborhood, commerce, education, and so forth. In such settings, it is not necessary for people to talk in religious language. He states that this type of dialogue is sometimes called a 'secular dialogue.'[1091] Nevertheless, he underlines that during such dialogue, participants should not lose or hide their religious identities. Aydüz, considers dialogue of coexistence strongly related to intercultural dialogue, so that in such context, intercultural exchange occurs naturally.[1092]

In dialogue of religious experience, mystics present/show each other their own spiritual values, and prayers. They also sometimes worship and pray together.[1093] Since mystics usually prefer to stay away from daily theological debates and mostly focus on inner peace through contemplation and deep reflection on self, the ultimate being and the universe, in dialogue of religious experience, participants stay away from theological polemics and debates, but do not conceal their religious creed or opinion from each other.[1094]

Principles of Dialogue

According to Aydüz the following matters should be considered carefully if the

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[1090] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 212.

[1091] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 213.

[1092] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 214.

[1093] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 214.

[1094] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 215-16.

desire is to have a useful dialogue.[1095]

- Participants must be sincere, objective and unprejudiced.

- Participants must be humble.

- Participants must act equally toward each other.

- Freedom of expression must be provided.

- Everyone should strive for understanding of the other in a precise way and let others understand them. It is important to act naturally and not to treat/behave artificially.

- Empathy and love for each other are required. Participants must at least have the desire to pursue dialogue.

- Everyone must enter into dialogue with his/her own identities. Participants should be able to explain who they are and where they stand.

- Esteeming/respecting each other is a key theme in dialogue.

- Dialogue should also be transformed into participants' daily life and become their behavior, characteristics and culture.

- Christians must clarify the reasons they are involved in dialogue initiatives. They should articulate that it is not their goal to use dialogue as a Trojan horse. Hypocrisy should be avoided. In this context, Aydüz states that it is frequently observed that missionaries, in the meetings, do not present themselves as they believe, yet they pretend to explain their religions in a way that is acceptable for Muslims. He underlines that deception, including pressure, concealing motives,

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[1095] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 218-23. It appears that he repeats some points two times and uses/references mostly from Turkish academics.

and so on, has no place in dialogue. In any religion, it is not affirmed that one can lie or hide reality, even to gain the love of Allah.

- The principle that "you have your religion and I have mine" should be hold.

- Dialogue should not be limited to general concepts such as love and tolerance. Dialogue meetings should also deal with the beliefs, worship, transactions and moral principles of religions.

- Participants must avoid pointing to any religious tradition as the only address of wisdom and salvation. It is clear that Aydüz is sure that in dialogue meetings participants must stay away from any exclusive claims regarding salvation and should focus on more moral issues.

- The thought that an unexclusive salvation that exists among some Jews should be spread to people of other religions. He is not clear about which group in Judaism has such views.

- Intrareligious dialogue should be practiced before initiating dialogue with members of other religions.

- Participants must stand with suffering people from any kinds of oppression.

- Dialogue should be on equal ground and equal conditions.

- Dialogue should not only be in words, but also in practice.

- Interreligious activities should not be rushed. First, it is necessary to prepare ground for intercultural dialogue. After being successful and getting experience in intercultural dialogue, interreligious dialogue can be approached. Dialogue also should be carried out in the framework of a formal policy and by authentic institutions.

‒ The A Center for Intercultural Dialogue should be established under the umbrella
of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality.

After pointing out these suggestions, Aydüz underlines the need for dialogue in the grassroots too. Unlike Aydın and Küçük, it seems that Aydüz considers that the crucial role of dialogue will be experienced among people if it can be reduced to the grassroots level.

Moreover, to point out the underlying rationale of empathy in dialogue, he states that similar to Muslims who want Christians to learn Islam, it should also be understood that Christians desire Muslims to learn Christianity.[1096] In order to break down negative images regarding Christianity/Islam and strive for learning from them, negative history should be left in the deep pages of history for both sides.[1097]

Aydüz occasionally uses a Muslim-Jewish-Christian dialogue trilogy and underscores that the establishment of a healthy dialogue between these three religions depends on not focusing on the negative events of the past. He states that it would be more useful to talk on the future of dialogue.[1098] Aydüz claims that dialogue, tolerance/*hoşgörü* and coexistence exist in the three sacred religious books. But the religious and positive references are not practiced at the same level by Muslims, Christians and Jews.[1099]

[1096] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 223.

[1097] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 251.

[1098] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 216.

[1099] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 137.

Common Moral Values

According to Aydüz, the easiest way to come together is by using the common moral values in both religions.[1100] When participants meet to talk and collaborate on adopting these ethical values, especially for the new generations of their religious traditions, they can be supported by their own people without facing so much criticism as in theological dialogue. IN this context, he lists some basic common moral values that both traditions closely adhere:

- The world is for people, so human life must be respected.

- Abortion and suicide must be opposed, and rejection of voluntary death and affirming of resurrection should be promoted.

- Education, protection of mothers and children, helping families in need.

- Helping interreligious marriages.

- Purification in basic faiths through going back to Prophet Abraham.

- Acting together against immorality and unjustness.

- Maintaining global ethic.

Pitfalls of Dialogue

Aydüz also refers to the pitfalls of interfaith dialogue: [1101]

- Prejudices.

- Negative/exclusivist approaches in the Holy Scriptures.

- Historical adversity.

[1100] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 252.

[1101] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 258-60.

- False images/representations through mass communication.

- Political interests.

- Arrogance. Sides must not consider themselves an arbitrator in dialogue meetings. Another pitfall is conceiving dialogue as a tool for missions. For him, these facts harm the confidence between the participants: while one side considers dialogue as normal activity, the other side conceives it as a threat to its very existence.

- Disrespectful behavior toward dialogue partners in terms of theological differences.

- Failure in correct communication.

After stating Aydüz's principles, common moral values and pitfalls concerning dialogue, it would be helpful to state that his main concern is that in dialogue, one must recognize others as they are and must work to come together on common values, where historic events are not considered a source of clash.[1102] Since the world has become a small village, one should look at ways to establish grounds for agreement/understanding with atheists, Buddhists, and others.[1103] This is because, in the environment where many clashes of civilizations are produced, dialogue appears to be the only way to create worldwide understanding and a global conscious.[1104]

Dialogue in Islamic Context

Professor Aydüz believes that the dialogue initiative of the Vatican was actually

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[1102] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 284.

[1103] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 284.

[1104] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 285.

launched by Islam fourteen centuries ago.[1105] Islam opens its dialogue door completely in order to reach its universal principles to the whole universe.[1106] By referencing Qur'an 3:64, he considers Islam's ecumenical (universal) call to be the greatest the world has ever seen.[1107] Among the various meanings of Muslim are "embracing everyone, love for everyone and everything and accomplishing all in this way."[1108]

Aydüz also understands dialogue within the triad of 'dialogue, tolerance and coexistence,' and claims that they have religious and intellectual foundations.[1109] He claims that Islam treats non-Muslims with the concepts of "dhimmi agreement" "*musamaha*" and "alh-al Kitab," and provides peace in this way.[1110]

He states that Muslims do not need to look for new religious law in order to engage/promote dialogue; the Qur'an and Sunnah are more than enough.[1111] The dynamics of Islam are strong for Muslims to be open to the world. Since the Qur'an is the revelation of God, it will solve every kind of human problem. Therefore, for Aydüz, "if there are some who have to be afraid, it's those who live away from the invigorating climate of the Qur'an."[1112] It is also striking that Aydüz stresses that those who are afraid

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[1105] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 132.

[1106] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 225.

[1107] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 253.

[1108] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 43.

[1109] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 13.

[1110] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 226.

[1111] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 225.

[1112] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 12. A similar reaction was made by other scholars such as Niyazi Öktem and M. Sait Şimşek. Şimşek in *Main Topics of the Qur'an* states that only people who have no

of dialogue are the ones who also stay away from the truths of religion.[1113]

According to him, as long as one is following Islamic principles, the relationship and dialogue with other people will be helpful. Dialogue away from the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad can lead to dangerous ways.[1114] He states that Muslims should be open for dialogue and tolerance in internal relations as well as outside in the world, and should be comfortable with it. Dialogue will not make anyone lose anything in terms of religiosity, nation or culture.[1115]

Aydüz states that in dialogue with Christians questions such as "Why don't you believe in Muhammad as prophet?" should not be directed, because dialogue is not an integration meeting.[1116] Moreover, he finds some rejecting the Christian call for dialogue by directing questions like "Are you sincere? It is not easy for us to trust you. Your ancestors oppressed us. Why does the Bush government act like this? Why are there oppressions in Palestine?" These questions are seen an inappropriate because for Aydüz, this dialogue call comes from Christians, who are the stronger side in today's world. He also stresses that people who reach out their hands for dialogue are already disapprove

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strong faith in religion are afraid of dialogue. And this is not valid for Muslims. See M. Sait Şimşek, *Kur'an'ın Ana Konuları*, 2nd edition (Istanbul: Beyan, 2001), 275.

[1113] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 12.

[1114] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 11.

[1115] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 12.

[1116] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 23. Aydüz also answers the question generally addressed "Can one go to Heaven without having faith in Prophet Muhammad," by stating that it is not possible. According to him, this verse presumes that after affirming the basic message people will begin to think in Islamic perspective and will be open to affirming the Prophet (48).

injustices, and so they are trying to solve the problems by collaborating with Muslims. Since it is not possible to see inside Christians' hearts, Muslims should look outward. He stresses that Muslims should not get lodged in artificial obstacles before dialogue, and he says "We have been experiencing hatred and war for centuries. Let's try to live in a peaceful environment a little bit." [1117]

So, for Aydüz, Muslims should not be afraid of the Christian call for dialogue. They should not avoid the call to read the Bible and the Qur'an together; let's contemplate making it happen. "If a Muslim has suspicions about maintaining his values, his trust in the Qur'an is shaken easily and his faith already will be destroyed, tomorrow if not today." One who has a strong belief does not fear dialogue.[1118]

Aydüz thinks that as a result of dialogue many beautiful things have occurred. Without giving a name, he states that a director of a Catholic university asked his Turkish lecturer to teach a class instead of him. When the Turkish instructor replies, "what should I teach?" the Catholic professor says "teach surat al-Fatiha (the first chapter of the Qur'an) because it keeps common points for both you and us." One day, the Turkish professor went to the Catholic university director's office and found him reading the Qur'an. When asked he said he is reading it not for learning information but for earning reward from the book of the Qur'an. [1119] By looking at this instance, Aydüz states that there is a positive development of the elite class and perceives it as a gain for Muslims.

[1117] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 29-30.

[1118] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 25.

[1119] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 28.

In another instance he states that as a result of dialogue, many people acknowledge Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an alongside their faith and can be called Christian Muslims.[1120] At the beginning of the book Aydüz states that in dialogue one should not have the desire to convert/persuade others to accept our sacred beliefs, because it is not the goal of dialogue; nevertheless, he makes the same mistake here. He says: "one should not measure the gain of interreligious dialogue with only numbers of converts. One also should consider participants who accept some part of Islam. One should take into consideration participants who affirm the Qur'an as the word of God and participants who say that Muhammad might be among the prophets [as significant developments]." Aydüz, referring to future generations, represents these developments as very important.[1121]

Aydüz responds to the criticism that there are not concrete solutions occurring when conflicts and hostility toward Muslims continue very harshly.[1122] He underscores that it is not possible for everything to be solved immediately, which is a requirement of Sunnetullah. In terms of finding solutions to the problems through dialogue, he also states that gradualism is essential, which presupposes that time is needed.[1123]

Dialogue in the Qur'an and the Sunnah

Aydüz claims that interreligious dialogue was launched by the Qur'an and the

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[1120] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 25.

[1121] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 29.

[1122] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 28.

[1123] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 34.

Prophet Muhammad. Muslims were tolerant to the People of the Book.[1124] He underlines that *hoşgörü*/tolerance, müsamaha and dialogue basically have roots in the Qur'an and Sunnah.[1125]

In the second part of the book, Aydüz deals with the subject of interreligious dialogue in the Qur'an and the prophet's practices. His general style is that he discusses verses and hadiths, especially ones that seem to be opposed to dialogue, within the method of historicity. He avoids generalizations when considering them.

He considers the Qur'an's messages as universal and inclusive, so the Qur'an aims to reach everyone, which also requires Muslims to be in dialogue with others. Hence Aydüz links the very concept of "dialogue" with the concept of "peace" and considers dialogue as a precondition of it.[1126] He claims that throughout the Qur'an and Sunnah, except for some particular cases, one can see tolerance/*müsamaha*, based on Islam's all-embracing and universal features.[1127] Moreover, Qur'anic tolerance/*müsamaha*, in the particular case of the People of the Book, embraces the entire world.[1128]

The Qur'an as the Dialogue Book

Aydüz believes that the Qur'an, in a sense, can be considered as the book of

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[1124]   *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 28. Here Aydüz uses dialogue and *hoşgörü*/tolerance almost synonymously.

[1125] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 86. Here he appears to use dialogue synonymously with the other two terms.

[1126] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 43.

[1127] Here it is seen that Aydüz associates dialogue with tolerance/*müsamaha*.

[1128] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 43.

dialogue.[1129] By referring to the passages that present bilateral talk/dialogue between God and the angels, he claims that dialogue existed before the creation of humanity.[1130] In this context, Aydüz also asserts that God is persuasive – not compelling – when he communicates with people. When the Qur'an reports the duty of the prophets, it states they should not be coercive force; they should only warn and show the true path of God.[1131]

Aydüz claims that the Qur'an, by asking questions to opponents, gives ear to their evidence/claims. And so it shows that it respects people. The Qur'an gains people's trust, making opponents notice its messages and admit their mistakes. For Aydüz, there are many verses that point out this fact; Qur'an 29:61-63 is a persuasive example.

> 29.61. If you ask them, "Who is it that has created the heavens and the earth, and made the sun and the moon subservient to His order (thereby sustaining life)?" they will most certainly say, "God." How then are they (who oppose this Revelation) turned away from the truth and make false claims? God enlarges provision for whom He wills of His servants, and straitens it (for whom He wills). Surely God has full knowledge of everything. If you ask them, "Who is it that sends down water from the sky, and revives with it the earth after its death?" they will most certainly say, "God." Say (you, also): "All praise and gratitude are for God." But most of them do not reason (to know the truth and distinguish it from falsehood).

Aydüz also suggests that the parables of the Qur'an can be addressed in the context

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[1129] The book has also a subchapter, "the Holy Qur'an a book open to dialogue."

[1130] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 67. However, it is also clear it is not dialogue as we understand it.

[1131] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 67. At this point, it appears Aydüz perceives dialogue as alternative to forcing. Additionally, tolerance/*hoşgörü* and justice are alternatives to force. The dialogue, however, within the idea that others might be as right as oneself, means to learn something from others.

of dialogue. So, the struggles of the prophets with their tribes are also explained in a long way through dialogues. He claims that prophets preferred to contact the tribes through dialogue – he considers Prophet Moses as a convincing instance.[1132] However, it seems that dialogue in the case of parables is perceived as a form of communication by Aydüz.[1133] Moreover, it is clear that the dialogue he mentions in this context is *tablig*-based dialogue.

Last, Aydüz states that the Qur'an is not a book that keeps only the words of Allah; it even has the words of unbelievers in its chapters within dialogues, and so the Qur'an has a very rich content which provides Muslims the characteristics of dialogue.[1134]

From his treatment of the Qur'an as a book of dialogue, one may question Aydüz since he does not specify how to associate these verses with today's dialogue understanding. Another important predicament Aydüz must address is that this attitude of the Qur'an is a way to convince/send a message to others rather than dialogue.[1135]

People of the Book

Aydüz thinks that with the concept, "the People of the Book," the Qur'an could mean "literate community," besides its meaning of the people who have a "holy book."[1136] People of the Book were privileged in the Qur'an in contrast to the pagans.[1137]

[1132] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 69.

[1133] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 68.

[1134] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 69.

[1135] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 67.

[1136] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 74.

[1137] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 98.

The Qur'an corrects their improper understandings and constantly calls them to believe in the Qur'an.[1138] Some of these are: deforming their books, killing the prophets, blaming each other and lying. They are asked to give up their alleged crimes/sins.[1139]

Aydüz repeats many times that according to the Qur'an all the People of the Book are not the same and the criticism the Qur'an makes of them does not include them all. He supports his views with Qur'an 11:17.[1140] And by citing Qur'an 2:121,[1141] he states that a group of the People of the Book had faith in the Qur'an. Moreover, pointing to Qur'an 3:113,[1142] he says that some among Christians were worshipping Allah at the time of the prophet.[1143] He also gives statements of the Qur'an that respect some groups of the

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[1138] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 76-77.

[1139] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 76-77.

[1140] So, (how can you compare others with) one who stands on a clear evidence from his Lord (the Qur'an), and is upported by a witness guided by Him, and there was (revealed) before it the Book of Moses (confirming it) as a guide and mercy? Those (who make and understand the comparison) believe in it (the Qur'an); while whoever from the diverse parties (belonging to different nations and faiths, knowingly) disbelieves in it: "Fire will be their promised place. And so you should not have the least doubt of it (being revealed by God). Surely, it is the truth from your Lord, though most of the people do not believe.

[1141] Those (people) to whom We gave the Book (and who) recite it with true recitation, following its commandments without making any changes or distortions in it, they have (renewed, ever-strengthening) faith in it. Whoever disbelieves in it (conceals and distorts the truths the Book contains), they are the losers (in both this world and the hereafter).

[1142] Yet, they are not all alike: among the People of the Book, there is an upright community, reciting God's Revelations in the watches of the night and prostrating (themselves in worship).

[1143] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 78-79.

People of the Book and states that they are trustworthy people.[1144] Hence, the People of the Book, who also believe in the Qur'an and the Prophet, are praised, yet those who do not even deign to examine Islam are criticized. They are not all put in the same bag.[1145]In another instance, by referencing Qur'an 3:119,[1146] Aydüz states that the People of the Book are asked to believe in Allah, the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad along with their holy scriptures, and if they do, they will be rewarded.[1147] He reports that Prophet Muhammad also said that if People of the Book believe him, alongside their prophets, their reward would be double.[1148]

Thus, it appears that Aydüz links dialogue with *müsamaha*/tolerance by mentioning the Qur'an's *müsamaha*/tolerance toward the People of the Book when he discusses the issue of dialogue in the Qur'an. For him the Qur'an places special tolerance toward People of the Book: Muslims are free to eat the food/meats of People of the Book, marry their women and eat from their vessels.[1149] He furthermore believes that when Christians

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[1144] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 79.

[1145] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 80.

[1146] You are such (frank, clear-hearted) people that you love them (even those who are enemies to you), but they do not love you; and you believe in the whole of the Book (without making any distinction between the verses, and believe in all of the God-revealed Books). When they meet you, they say (hypocritically), "We believe"; but when they find themselves alone, they gnaw their fingers in rage against you. Say (to them, O Messenger): "Perish in your rage!" Assuredly, God has full knowledge of what lies hidden in their bosoms.

[1147] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 81.

[1148] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 81.

[1149] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 82-84.

and Jews live according to the provisions in their holy books, the earth will be peaceful.[1150] He also indicates that the Qur'an asks people of the Bible to live according to what God revealed in the Bible: Love your enemies and do not judge to be not judged.[1151]

Non-Muslims in the Qur'an

Aydüz claims that Allah has sent every nation a prophet and in principle all religions are the same and every prophet preached Islam.[1152] Aydüz, reflecting the traditional view, states that Christianity and Judaism were Islam in principle (Qur'an 3:19 and 22:78). Their old scriptures were deformed and therefore the points that are consistent with the Qur'an can be relied on. The contradictory points to the Qur'an are either altered or overstated provisions.[1153] Moreover, he argues that Christians and Jews have more places in Islam because of their closeness to the Islamic tradition.[1154] Since Aydüz considers other religions in the Islamic framework and states they were in principle Islam, one can state that he has an inclusive approach to non-Muslims. His approach can lead readers to have the idea that as long as today's religions follow/accommodate themselves to Islam, they approach the truth. This opinion constitutes the similarity to the Christians' perspectives regarding non-Christians. So, Aydüz also develops an Islam-based inclusivist perspective.

[1150] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 133.

[1151] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 133.

[1152] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 44.

[1153] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 44.

[1154] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 45. He does not put such emphasis on historical and sociocultural factors.

Aydüz states that the Qur'an aims to construct only goodness (friendly relations) with non-Muslims. Referencing Qur'an 60:8,[1155] he states that even the Qur'an keeps this goal with its manner about the Meccan pagans.[1156] Moreover, in order to present the Qur'anic basis for interreligious dialogue, he has a subchapter titled "The Qur'an verses that order dialogue with People of the Book." Calling the Qur'an's statements orders of God for dialogue is a radical step toward Islam-based dialogue. This gives the image that the dialogue is a Qur'anic commandment. Within this subchapter he discusses the following verses:[1157] Qur'an 3:64, 29:46, 60:8, 64:14, 45:14, 25:63, 25:72, 28:55, and 17:84. I will explore some of them which will give the reader the most significant assessments of Aydüz.

> Qur'an 3:64. Say (to them, O Messenger): "O People of the Book, come to a word common between us and you, that we worship none but God, and associate none as partner with Him, and that none of us take others for Lords, apart from God. " If they (still) turn away, then say: "Bear witness that we are Muslims (submitted to Him exclusively)."

Aydüz states that a gentle relationship with the People of the Book is the clear command of the Qur'an.[1158] He points out that there is not only one door through which people join Islam, rather there are many ways. So, gradualism in religious proclamation

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[1155] "God does not forbid you, as regards those who do not make war against you on account of your Religion, nor drive you away from your homes, to be kindly to them, and act towards them with equity. God surely loves the scrupulously equitable."

[1156] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 45.

[1157] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 45-55.

[1158] He supports this view by Qur'an 20:44, which implies that even when Prophet Moses invited the Pharaoh, God desired Moses to be gentle.

appears as a significant factor in his thought. Keeping these views in mind, he points to the fact that when the verse states a common word, this word is not something that People of the Book don't know, rather they also know it. This verse indicates that through this bridge (common word), relationships will be created between the sides.

According to Aydüz, having strong and sound relationships with others and approaching them through common words is also crucial in Islamic *tablig,* which can also be called dialogue in the modern sense.[1159] He concludes that the Qur'an asks only one thing from the People of the Book: passing the bridge and reaching the door. When stating, 'let us not worship gods other than Allah,' it calls People of the Book back to their religious essence. It invites them not to attribute any defection to God.[1160] According to Aydüz, through this verse a line to which everyone can easily say yes – a peaceful line – is put forward. Thus, it would be accomplished that people only worship Allah and become free from any servitude to false gods.[1161]

> Qur'an 29.46. Do not argue with those who were given the Book save in the best way, unless it be those of them who are given to wrongdoing (and, therefore, not accessible to courteous argument). Say (to them): "We believe in what has been sent down to us and what was sent down to you, and your God and our God is one and the same. We are Muslims wholly submitted to Him. "

According to Aydüz, the verse articulates that Muslims should create relationships with People of the Book only in the best way. He considers that method and process of argument/*münazara* extremely important in Islam. According to Aydüz, in argument,

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[1159] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 46. It appears Aydüz considers the dialogue equivalent to *tablig*.

[1160] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 47.

[1161] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 49.

participants must be dissatisfied when they defeat opponents, because they will not learn anything when they defeat others. According to Aydüz, argument should not be practiced of the sake of personal pleasure, but in pursuit for the truth. After stating that in political and similar meetings these objectives are not kept in sight, he emphasizes that to find/experience truth, mutual understanding, respect and righteousness should be maintained by the participants. This will be accomplished only through a convenient dialogue atmosphere. When one considers Aydüz's expressions concerning the structures of debate, one can conclude that arguments should be in mutual love and respect with the aim of exposure of the truth. However, one can also claim that when eradicating the structures of argument such as persuading others and proving the rightness of a view, there will be no debate. Yet, it appears he perceives debate within a dialogue-based standpoint and assigns dialogical meaning to argument. As he notes elsewhere, dialogue is not a debate and thus this also contradicts his above-mentioned statements. Nevertheless, his attempt should/can be considered in the framework of his efforts to find a strong basis for dialogue.[1162]

Aydüz also focuses on the statement "unless it be those of them who are given to wrongdoing" and states that oppression/wrongdoing encompasses shirk. Oppression is an even greater sin than shirk. He supports his claim by Qur'an 6:82,[1163] and says that tackling violence in relations with non-Muslims who do not oppress Muslims is contrary

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[1162] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 50.

[1163] "Those who have believed and not obscured their belief with any wrongdoing (of which, associating partners with God is the most grave, unforgivable kind) they are the ones for whom there is true security, and they are rightly guided."

to Islam. It seems that by pointing out the unacceptability of repression in Islam, he also states that any kinds of coercion must be avoided by both sides.[1164]

> Qur'an 60:8. God does not forbid you, as regards those who do not make war against you on account of your Religion, nor drive you away from your homes, to be kindly to them, and act towards them with equity. God surely loves the scrupulously equitable.

Aydüz explores the historical background of the verse, where he states that the verse was revealed about an incident in Medina. A Muslim asked the prophet whether he/she is allowed to meet his/her mother, who was an idolater. The verse orders Muslims to treat non-Muslims with goodness, mercy and justice. Considering the sociopolitical environment of the Medina period, where the prophet and his companions were facing severe oppressions from the Meccan polytheists, Aydüz underlines that even in the worst times, the Qur'an did not preclude Muslims from treating non-Muslims with goodness. According to him this verse also underscores a relationship with the highest moral principles to non-Muslims who do not fight with Muslims.[1165] In this context, he declares that when non-Muslims want peace and want to live together, Islam accepts them and constantly asks Muslims/people to treat them gently and with goodness. Hence, goodness and justice are required for both Muslims and non-Muslims. Nonetheless, highlighting the concept of goodness in the verse, he articulates that goodness here is a conditional goodness. It means that when non-Muslims want peace, then Muslims should response positively.[1166]

[1164] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 50.

[1165] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 52.

[1166] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 52.

Qur'an 60:9. God only forbids you, as regards those who make war against you on account of your Religion and drive you away from your homes, or support others to drive you away, to take them for friends and guardians. Whoever takes them for friends and guardians, those are the wrongdoers.

Aydüz articulates that the expression in Qur'an 60:9, which is about cutting ties with unbelievers, does not mean every kind of relations should be terminated. He underlines that the reason for terminating the relationship is not because they are Jews or Christians but because they oppress and offend Muslims.[1167] From these articulations of Aydüz, one may propose that the verse points out the attributes of people instead of names and titles.[1168] By evading such generalizations, Aydüz takes an important step in terms of objectivity.[1169] He moreover attempts to support his views by referencing a well-known Muslim interpreter, Mawdudi: "Even though not treating them with goodness, Muslims at least avoid hostility and treat them with justice and fair treatment. Yet, those who continued hostility against Muslims should not be treated in the same way, which would lead to injustice." [1170]

Aydüz's assessment of dialogue in the framework of neighbors' rights is another important point. He refers to Qur'an 4:36:

Qur'an 4:36: And (as the essential basis of contentment in individual, family and

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[1167] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 53.

[1168] He also avoids generalization as Küçük usually does by putting all the community in the same bag.

[1169] One must also state that Said Nursi and Fethullah Gülen have a similar manner. For instance, Nursi points out the attributes instead of titles when he interprets the verses which at first sight seem to forbid Muslims to have relationship with the People of the Book.

[1170] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 53.

social life,) worship God and do not associate anything as a partner with Him; and do good to your parents in the best way possible, and to the relatives, orphans, the destitute, the neighbor who is near (in kinship, location, faith), the neighbor who is distant (in kinship and faith), the companion by your side (on the way, in the family, in the workplace, etc.), the wayfarer, and those who are in your service. (Treat them well and bring yourself up to this end, for) God does not love those who are conceited and boastful)

He supports this verse with a hadith about treating neighbors gently: "neighbors are subdivided into three groups. The first group has three rights: the right of neighborhood, the right of closeness/relationship and the right of Islam. The second group has two rights: the right of neighborhood and the right of Islam. The third group has one right: the right of neighborhood, which means that Christians, Jews, and pagans etc. are neighbors."[1171] In this respect Aydüz states that even though they are not Muslims, whether they are Christian or Jew, treating them with goodness is a neighborhood right. He states furthermore that the verse and the hadith prove that opponents of dialogue do not fully understand Islam.[1172] Moreover, "Neither the Qur'an nor the Sunnah nor the Salaf-i Salihin has any opposite/forbidding attitude to dialogue, which encourages Muslims to build relationships with non-Muslims through tolerance/hoşgörü, love and freedom of relationships with anyone."[1173] In this context, Qur'an 17:84[1174] also

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[1171] El-münâvî, et-Teysîr, I, 492; Kenzül Ummal, IX, 51 (no: 24891). This hadith is also used by Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, famous Turkish interpreter. Cited in *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 53.

[1172] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 54.

[1173] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 54.

articulates that everyone expresses his/her character and so the character of the Muslims (heroes of gentleness) is tolerance/*hoşgörü*, *müsamaha*/forbearance and tolerance.[1175]

Aydüz also discusses the *verse of mubahala* (debate) Qur'an 3:61, which was revealed upon the debate with Prophet Muhammad and the delegation of Najran. Aydüz states that although many debates occurred between the prophet and Christians, letting Christians pray in his masjid proves the spirit of tolerance/*müsamaha* in Islam. Here it appears that Aydüz conceives dialogue equivalent to tolerance/*müsamaha* after debate.[1176]

e. Take not the Jews and Christians for friends and allies

Aydüz also discusses the verses regarding not taking unbelievers as friend: 5.51, 3.28, 3.118, 9.23, 4.139, 4.140, 4.144, 5.55-57, 58.22, 60.1-4, and 9.13.[1177] In order to show that these verses do not prevent Muslims from engaging in dialogue, Aydüz offers a dialogue-centered interpretation. He stresses that the Qur'an expresses that love and friendship should be shown to Allah, to His Messenger and to Muslims (Qur'an 5:55), and claims that these verses basically warn Muslims to be aware of non-Muslims' tricks against Muslims and Islam. The verses emphasize that Muslims should not be "hail-fellow-well-met" with non-Muslims, should not give them secrets of the state and should

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[1174] Say: "Every one acts according to his own character (made up of his creed, worldview and disposition), and your Lord knows best who is better guided in his way."

[1175] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 55.

[1176] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 55.

[1177] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 56.

not consult with them on sensitive issues by presenting heartfelt love.[1178]

> Qur'an 3:28. Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends, guardians, and councilors in preference to the believers. Whoever does that is not on a way from God and has no connection with Him, unless it be to protect yourselves against them and take precautions (against the danger of being persecuted and forced to turn away from your Religion or betray your community, or of losing your life). And God warns you that you beware of Himself; and to God is the homecoming.

Another method Aydüz uses in interpreting the scriptures is the historicity method. For instance, he stresses that in a position where Meccan idolaters and Jews were attempting to destroy Muslims, this verse was reasonable. He cites Muhammad Rashid Rida to support his points. Rida asserts that Prophet Muhammad made alliances and agreements with the Christian tribe Huzâa. The prophet considered that agreements are helpful for Muslims without looking at their religious identity.[1179] Aydüz claims that two points are highlighted when he examines the Prophet's agreements: to be safe from non-Muslims with malicious intentions and to always be cautious in all agreements by not sharing the secrets of the Muslim community.[1180]After emphasizing that alliances are based on mutual interests, he says that making agreements and establishing good relationships are different from being close-friends.[1181]

> Qur'an 5:51. "O you who believe! Take not the Jews and Christians for friends and allies (in their

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[1178] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 57.

[1179] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 58.

[1180] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 59. One may critique Aydüz by stating that on the one hand, he says the intention of Christians is not very important when entering dialogue with them, on the other hand he says that in prophets' agreements, he was always looking for Christians' real intentions.

[1181] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 59.

Judaism and Christianity, and against the believers). Some among them are friends and allies to some others. Whoever among you takes them for friends and allies (in their Judaism and Christianity and against the believers) will eventually become one of them (and be counted among them in the Hereafter). Surely God does not guide such wrongdoers."

Aydüz claims that the verse orders Muslims should not to make friends from those who are hostile to Islam and who fight against Muslims. It does not preclude any alliance with non-Muslims who do not fight against Islam. According to him, an alliance is different from being close friends. In this respect, Aydüz gives the Hudaybiya peace treaty with the polytheists and the alliance with the Jews in Medina as significant instances in the life of Prophet Muhammad.[1182]

Aydüz concludes that these verses only forbid buddy-buddy relationships with people who are enemies of Muslims. He stresses that friendships with them would harm the Islamic society.[1183] Muslims can be friends/associates with non-Muslims, yet this friendship should not harm other Muslims; otherwise, this friendship is forbidden/*kharam*.[1184] He is sure the verses do not prohibit alliances between Muslims and the People of the Book against their common enemy – atheists/unbelievers. One may

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[1182] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 59.

[1183] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 59.

[1184] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 60. Here it seems he makes an important point. Acting within the conscious of the umma/Muslim community, one can become friends with people of other faiths, but this friendship should not harm Muslim sisters and brothers. It is clear that this point puts strong emphasis on intrareligious dialogue. When participants engage dialogue among co-religionists, these matters will already be taken into consideration. This view also points out that Muslims extend the hand of dialogue with non-Muslims before establishing dialogue among themselves, which causes such problems.

state that this shows he does not favor dialogue with atheists. Here the sociopolitical history of Turkey is influential on the perception of Aydüz regarding atheism. The major threat of the ideas of communism to Turkey and the Turkish Islamic culture was evident. So, it was perceived as a very dangerous entity by Muslims who had already experienced it during the two world wars and the Cold War period. It is also helpful to state that Aydüz follows Bediuzzaman's views regarding atheism. However, his statement regarding the necessity for establishing good relations with everyone in his later statements reveals an ironic situation. Nevertheless, one can come up with the conclusion that he does not mention individual atheists when he encourages Muslims and Christians to fight against them. What he means must be that religions can fight against ideological and sociopolitical atheism.[1185]

Aydüz also expresses that these verses prohibit a heartfelt friendship with the unbelievers: loving them instead of Muslims. It appears that he emphasizes umma/community conscience and love.[1186]

Nevertheless, these verses do not forbid friendship and dialogue in daily life, as opponents of Islam assert. For Aydüz, the verses do not target all Jews and Christians or infidels either.[1187] In this respect it is seen that he cites Qur'an 3:113[1188] and states that all

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[1185] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 60. One can also state that he generally assumes dialogue between faithful people throughout his book. He supports his views regarding dialogue by Qur'an 2:80.

[1186] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 60.

[1187] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 61.

[1188] "Yet, they are not all alike: among the People of the Book, there is an upright community, reciting God's Revelations in the watches of the night and prostrating (themselves in worship)."

the People of the Book are not the same, so one cannot put them into the same category by their relationships, which shows that Aydüz avoids generalizations.[1189] Qur'an 60:9[1190] also gives a clear answer to the question which type of friendship is prohibited. The points mentioned in this verse are not relevant to their heresy/infidelity, rather they talk about their oppressing and offensive nature.[1191]

Aydüz's answer to the question whether dialogue is friendship with the enemies of Islam is striking. He is sure that dialogue is nothing more than an Islamic element and its reflection on life. For instance, despite all the persecutions by Abu Jahl, one of the brutal enemies of Islam, Abu Jahl was addressed by the *dawa*/Islamic call many times. Aydüz states that this form of dialogue is very Islamic, anyone who states that he/she formulated Islamic dialogue treats Islam with arrogance/priggery because he/she would betray the universal rules/values of Islam. Even if a Muslim is faced with an atheist today, Muslims should behave toward the atheist with the same gentleness; this behavior is not a *mümaşat*, hypocrisy, or *müdarat*.[1192]

In the subchapter "Qur'an's harsh statements about dialogue" Aydüz states: "the Qur'an's severe expressions to some Christians and Jews in the past who showed stubbornness, foot-dragging and hostility to self-evident truth, do not mean that the same

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[1189] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 61.

[1190] "God only forbids you, as regards those who make war against you on account of your Religion and drive you away from your homes, or support others to drive you away, to take them for friends and guardians. Whoever takes them for friends and guardians, those are the wrongdoers."

[1191] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 61.

[1192] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 62.

harsh statements must be used for Jews and Christians in every time period; there are no such obligations." However, one may ask Aydüz whether the harsh statements are valid for non-Muslims who persist not to believe in the Qur'an today? It is significant to note that today the Muslim community is only 20 percent of the world population. In addition, from his statement "those who showed stubbornness" it is clear Aydüz keeps an inclusive perspective and considers dialogue in the framework of *tablig*.[1193]

Aydüz states that another reason for the harsh attitude of the Qur'an to the People of the Book is that they brought false interpretations and misinterpretations to their religions and interpreted their religion according to their personal desires/benefits. "The Qur'an's attitude is not for individuals; it is for wrong-behaviors, wrong-thoughts, hostility toward the truth, and unacceptable attributes of people. There are much harsher words against these attributes that can be found in the Torah and the Gospels."[1194]

Furthermore, Aydüz considers that the Qur'an, which makes criticisms and warnings to Jews, Christians and hypocrites because of their attitudes and behaviors, makes the same warnings and criticisms toward Muslims whose faith cannot protect them from the same mistakes.[1195] In short, the Qur'an reacts to ideas, thoughts and behaviors rather than titles/persons.[1196] So, when non-Muslims have good relationships with Muslims, such as humane relationships, giving them gifts, helping them with financial aid, protecting their rights and showing them fair treatment, this has been praised in the

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[1193] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 64.

[1194] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 65.

[1195] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 65.

[1196] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 65.

Islamic tradition.[1197]

Aydüz also discusses religious freedom in Islam in the context of dialogue. He rejects the idea that jihad restricts the freedom of religion; jihad is the provider of freedom of religion. For Aydüz, jihad is a struggle to construct an environment that ensures whatever they want to believe.[1198]

Referencing Qur'an 45:14,[1199] he states that Muslims should respect other people first because of their humaneness. If they confess the faith/become Muslims, then Muslims respect them for being believers. If they practice the religious duties, Muslims respect them because they are Muslim.[1200]

Dialogue in the Life of the Prophet

Professor Aydüz is sure that the prophet is the perfect guide for Muslims in their relationship with members of other religions. According to Aydüz, the life of Prophet Muhammad was centered on forgiveness and tolerance/müsamaha, which prompts Aydüz to conceive dialogue in the scope of müsamaha and forgiveness.[1201] He stresses that the prophet's relationship with the "People of the Book" was based on honesty. He traded with people who had these virtues without making any distinction of religion. He also

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[1197] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 66.

[1198] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 71.

[1199] "Tell those who believe that they should pardon those who do not hope for the coming of the Days of God (when He will make them understand what their unbelief means), seeing that He will recompense people for what they have earned."

[1200] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 85.

[1201] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 85.

borrowed food from traders in Medina.[1202]

Aydüz discusses dialogue in the words and practice of Prophet Muhammad in detail. A significant case is when the prophet did not receive any revelation during the Mecca period, and acted in accordance with the People of the Book in opposition to the polytheists. Moreover, the prophet was saddened when Iran (Zoroastrians) defeated Byzantine (Christians). The other important incident is that the prophet wanted Muslims to migrate to Abyssinia, a Christian land, which was a safe place for anyone who was being persecuted.[1203]

Aydüz also discusses the Hudeybiye peace agreement in the context of dialogue. After emphasizing the saying "Peace is goodness," he states that getting to know people and letting them know about you will only occur in the environment of peace and dialogue. So, he points out the importance of the Hudeybiye agreement. Aydüz mentions it as the fruits of dialogue, yet it appears he assesses it only from the Islamic perspective. [1204]

Aydüz moreover talks about other historical incidents; however, he gives a special place to the delegation of Najran.[1205] He states that the prophet did not overturn the request of the delegation to pay jizya, refusing Islam, which according to Aydüz shows his religious tolerance. Although theological debates occurred, there was no compulsion.

[1202] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 98; Qur'an 3.76.

[1203] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 88.

[1204] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 70.

[1205] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 91. He refers to them many times.

Aydüz explains this situation within the Islamic tolerance/*müsamaha*.[1206] He also states that the spirit of toleration in the attitude of the Prophet spread to all sides of Islam.[1207]

In the context of relations with the Jews, Aydüz discusses that the Medina Charter provided a peaceful state with universal values and religious freedom and considers it as the first constitution.[1208] Aydüz considers the Medina document a prototype of coexistence.[1209] The prophet, after the agreement of the charter, which started from the common points the three monotheistic religions share, considered them closer to him than idolaters and invited them to the unity of belief under the name of Islam. He attempts to support his views by citing Qur'an 2:40-43, 5:19, 3:64.[1210] He underscores that there was no coercion in the prophet's invitation. He also stated that the prophet only proclaimed his message.[1211] The prophet visited the Bayt-al Midras, the Jews' meeting and education place in Medina, and invited them to Islam without forcing them.[1212] According to Aydüz, despite the lack of integration with Jews of Medina, he was looking for an environment to live together with them in a spirit of tolerance/*hoşgörü*.[1213]

One of the striking cases he presents from the life of the prophet is that one day the

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[1206] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 94.

[1207] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 93.

[1208] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 94.

[1209] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 130. By citing Qur'an 5:42-43 and 5:47 he claims the pluralistic composition in has justifications in the Qur'an.

[1210] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 95.

[1211] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 95.

[1212] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 96.

[1213] A *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 96.

prophet stood up when a Jewish funeral passed by them. Asked why he did so, he responded, because he is a human, and thus, this showed that humanness alone is enough for respecting someone.[1214]

After stating these views, Aydüz cites Qur'an 2:256[1215] mentioning that freedom of religion was guaranteed to non-Muslims.[1216] He also expresses that *jizyah* was not asked from some people: women, children, elderly, poor, unemployed, disabled, and church members. The prophet took advantage of their skills and backgrounds.[1217] He clarifies that there was no purpose of humiliation when asking jizya from non-Muslims.[1218]

Dialogue in the History of Islam

He gives examples of interfaith dialogue in the history of Islam mostly in the second part of the book. It is possible to find his views regarding dialogue throughout Islamic history in his general attitude of Islam-based thinking. He states that the basic factor of Islam's treatment of non-Muslims is a religious factor which encourages tolerance/hoşgör and müsamaha.[1219] It is rational that Islam, as a universal religion, covers all people and provides freedom of human rights to all of them.[1220] He stresses that Islam invites all people to worship one God, to respect people and the rights of others and

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[1214] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 87.

[1215] "There is no compulsion in the religion…"

[1216] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 96.

[1217] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 97.

[1218] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 102.

[1219] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 137.

[1220] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 132.

always forbids abusing their rights.[1221]

Aydüz claims that Islam differentiates people only on the basis of religious belief and recognizes members of other religions within justice to live in peace with their distinctive identities.[1222] He mentions the rights and freedoms that Islam provides to non-Muslims. Accordingly, within Islam, everyone is equal. Superiority of people depends on their deeds. Everyone is equal before the law; there is equality in the judiciary, there is freedom of religion, of religious education, building of temples, thought, life and property safety, social security, and so on.[1223]

After summarizing Aydüz's views regarding non-Muslims in Islamic states, I turn to his views regarding dialogue in the history of Islam. He states that from the earliest days of Islam, Muslims were living with Zoroastrians, Christians, Jews, Hindus and Buddhists.[1224] He claims that tolerance was shown to Assyrians and Nestorians during the Abbasid period. Tolerance toward the Jewish community let them be promoted to top positions in the government. These positive situations in the Islamic world at that time compared to other communities and were excellent examples.[1225]

Aydüz stresses that whether in the early or later stages of Islam, members of other religions have not always been seen as the enemies. He states that Islam presented them

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[1221] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 132.

[1222] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 101.

[1223] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 103-23.

[1224] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 205.

[1225] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 138.

infinite tolerance under the umbrella of an Islamic state.[1226] Moreover, by the dhimmi status of non-Muslim minorities within Islam, it was not aimed at dissolving or punishing them. On the contrary, in the tranquil and peaceful atmosphere created, it is intended for non-Muslims to experience/learn proper/natural Islam. [1227]

A striking case in which Aydüz uses tolerance and dialogue in the same sense is in his chapter regarding Interreligious dialogue during Four Rightly Guided Caliphs Era with a subtitle about tolerance/*hoşgörü*. In this chapter he explains that there was *hoşgörü*/tolerance in the area of freedom of expression and faith, worship and sacred, religious debates, bureaucracy and social life. He reiterates that recognition of freedom of religion in Islam exists by referencing the verse "there is no compulsion in religion." The general approach of the Caliphs of Islam toward other religions was shaped as respecting dhimmies and showing tolerance, in contrast to Christians who had the policy of assimilation or Christianization. Aydüz underlines that under the rule of Muslims, non-Muslims could experience their culture, education and religious practices freely.[1228] Moreover, in 774 at the funeral of Islamic scholars from Evzâ, Jews, Christians and Kıbties were also there, a clear instance showing the existence of a dialogical environment. Furthermore, Aydüz considers religious debates between Muslims and non-Muslims as examples of tolerance toward non-Muslims and their thoughts.[1229] By giving examples from religious apologetics, he states that since in the Islamic world there is a

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[1226] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 140.

[1227] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 139.

[1228] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 141.

[1229] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 143.

freedom of belief, people were able to write apologetics to each other.[1230]

Aydüz states that Muslims should have the same sublime and moral attitudes toward non-Muslims. Accordingly, he states that Turkish Muslims are the children of the sublime culture which during the Crusades treated the army commander Richard at night in his tent. "So, we are heirs of the world's most extensive, most comprehensive and most universal culture of tolerance." Aydüz states that Turkish Muslims are the children of the culture equipped with sublime moral values. Supreme occasions in the Turkish culture allow Turkish Muslims to act with the same glory.[1231] Hence, he emphasizes that in all Islamic states and particularly in the Turkish-Islamic states, religious tolerance has been based on Islamic principles.[1232] He states that religious tolerance in the Turkish-Islamic states was perceived as a gift of God by the people at that time, unlike a gift of kings or administrations as in the West.[1233] According to Aydüz, where as in Western history religion of people was presumed to be the religion of the king, in the Turkish-Islamic world the principle of coexistence in a multitude has always been accepted.[1234]

He stresses that the prevailing view in the Ottoman Empire was the darus-sulh (land

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[1230] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 145.

[1231] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 12. Whereas Küçük does not perceive history in this aspect even though he mentions these beautiful examples, yet he considers that there is a constant battle between the West of the Turks and Muslims, where the West always has pressured. On the other hand Aydüz conceives the past within the glory/morality of Islam. Küçük usually considers history in terms of politics and perceives it within an inharmonious context.

[1232] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 132, 150. Similar emphasis is made by Küçük.

[1233] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 150.

[1234] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 132.

of peace) and that the principle of justice had an important role.[1235] He explains the examples of tolerance and dialogue in the Ottoman Empire in terms of religion and belief, economic and social rights, law, and millet system.[1236] When Ottoman Sultan Yavuz Selim wanted to retaliate with persecutions in Spain, the Islamic jurists, especially Sheikh al-Islam Zembilli Ali Effendi, opposed him by saying that "cruelties are not responded to with cruelties."[1237] Aydüz moreover indicates that the experience of living together in the Ottoman Empire created an ethnic mosaic of 22 different nationalities and religions, the largest Muslim state experience of dialogue.[1238] He states that this is also referred to as the Ottoman Peace.[1239]

Dialogue Today in Turkey

According to Aydüz, people need to throw hostility away like old leather and act together to solve problems of humanity. It is clear that what Aydüz usually affirms and talks about is social/moral rather than spiritual, political or theological dialogue. He expresses the common values people can unite with as follows: piety, righteousness, neighboring rights, solidarity, helping the needy and poor, love between family members, respect and loyalty, hospitality, and so on.[1240]

In the third section Aydüz focuses on contemporary studies on interreligious dialogue. First, he examines Bediuzzaman's views in the form of Christian-Islamic

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[1235] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 151.

[1236] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 151.

[1237] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 208-9.

[1238] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 162.

[1239] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 162.

[1240] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 166.

dialogue. Even though Said Nursi does not clearly mention interreligious dialogue, from his expressions regarding Muslim-Christian collaboration against communism or injustice, Aydüz attempts to infer some dialogical principles and views. He also uses the term Islam-Christian dialogue, instead of Muslim-Christian dialogue.[1241] According to him, Bediüzzaman stresses that one of the goals of Christian-Islamic dialogue is to act jointly against atheism, materialism and communism. He gives views of Said Nursi in detail.[1242] Similar to Nursi, Aydüz is sure that since more than half the world's populations are Muslim and Christian, when they work together against atheism many things will be achieved.[1243]

Aydüz considers Fethullah Gülen as a second important figure and explores his opinions regarding dialogue.[1244] He also superficially examines views of the following academics about dialogue: Ahmet Güç, Abdurrahman Küçük, Mehmet Aydın, Mehmet S. Aydın, Kemal Karpat, Bekir Karlığa, Ömer Faruk Harman, Niyazi Öktem and Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu.[1245] However, since he does not explore their views in detail, we get only basic, supportive statements from them. It is an insufficient analysis since he does not mention the views of Mahmut Aydın and Mustafa Alıcı who wrote their doctoral

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[1241] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 165-172. So, one may state that he does not make distinction between the two terms, which is usually criticized by mainstream Muslims. Even though Aydüz states that interreligious dialogue occurs among adherents of religions, nevertheless he does not pay attention to such usage that one may infer dialogue between religions.

[1242] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 165-172.

[1243] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 165-172.

[1244] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 172-194.

[1245] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog,* 195-200.

dissertations on interreligious dialogue. In terms of institutional dialogue Aydüz examines the World Parliament of Religions and the Journalists and Writers Foundation.[1246]

Aydüz also explains the reasons Muslims hesitate to engage in dialogue, with seven points:[1247]

- Colonialism, imperialism, and orientalism.

- The Church on the one hand speaks of dialogue; on the other hand it promotes missionary activities. This fact forces Muslims to perceive dialogue as the new face of missionary efforts.

- As a result of Western-Islamic conflict, especially after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Muslims' humiliation pushes Muslims to look for some ulterior motive behind dialogue.

- Because dialogue develops in the control of Christians, it is the biggest problem of Muslim-Christian dialogue. He considers it as a proper concern. However, one may question Aydüz to state the biggest problem in the fourth point.

- Because Christians are more effective in dialogue initiatives, Muslims consider the term dialogue as not belonging to themselves. Some Muslims hesitate to enter dialogue with well-educated Christians; it is thought they can influence Muslims.

- Some Muslims perceive dialogue as the product of cultural and intellectual development within Christianity and as such a threat to Islamic culture and

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[1246] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 201-2.

[1247] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 235-37.

civilization.

− Ambiguity in Christians' understanding of dialogue. Many Christian theologians understand dialogue differently and this affects the development of the concept in Christian context. The vagueness forces Muslims to approach it suspiciously.

After mentioning the above reasons, Aydüz nevertheless underlines that Muslims should not hesitate to enter dialogue and should not be afraid of it.[1248] Whatever the intentions of Christians, Muslims should make proper assessments about dialogue partners and not miss the opportunity of dialogue.[1249] He moreover states that dialogue in no way prevents Muslims from speaking of Allah and his religion.[1250] He stresses that a life centered on the Qur'an-Sunnah is strong and only through such a life would dialogue be fruitful.[1251]

Aydüz considers the idea that through dialogue, as long as others respect us, we also respect them is wrong. Muslims should respect everyone only as a requirement of Islam. He repeats that regardless of the intent of Christians, the opportunity of dialogue should not be missed.[1252]

He considers dialogue as a means that lets Muslims conceive others as servants of

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[1248] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 237.

[1249] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 251.

[1250] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 238.

[1251] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 248.

[1252] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 283-84.

Allah and thus can explain themselves to others.[1253] Even in insoluble problems of social issues, mutual respect can occur.[1254] Moreover, the aim of Islam, by engaging dialogue, is conveying its message to others.[1255] When Muslims meet others, it is necessary to invite them to Islam and to witness their faith.[1256]

Opponents of Dialogue in Turkey

Aydüz states that those who oppose dialogue consider it an intelligent game of Christians. They accuse community leaders and theologians who participate in dialogue of treachery.[1257] He also considers that opponents of dialogue usually mention Christianization of some Turks as a result of interreligious dialogue. In a response to such claims, he underlines the fact that missionary activity did not begin with dialogue and that it is impossible to relate dialogue activities with the increase of Christianization in Turkey. He declares that missionary ventures are as old as Christianity. Last, he claims that the conversion of Turkish Muslims depends more on a desire to be Westernized than on having faith in the creeds of Christianity.[1258] He claims that opponents of dialogue moreover attack the activities of the Gülen movement and criticize the West.[1259]

Aydüz also explains opponents' factors for rejecting dialogue in three main points: (1) Individuals and organizations that stand upon fighting and clashing; (2) Jealousy,

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[1253] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 232.

[1254] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 234.

[1255] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 225.

[1256] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 232.

[1257] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 210.

[1258]*Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 262.

[1259] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 239.

viciousness (*su-i zan*), misunderstanding and unwilling to share God's mercy; and (3) Marginalized groups who strive to accurately understand some issues.[1260] Besides these three factors he also mentions two notable groups who oppose dialogue. The first group consists of former communists, who refuse dialogue because they are hostile to religion. He moreover asserts that while every believer wants unification, every unbeliever desires fighting with everyone.[1261] The second group consists of so-called religious people who, in reality, are not religious. They assert that dialogue is an impermissible activity according to the religious rules.[1262]

Aydüz mentions some marginalized groups (rightist and leftist) that criticize the activities of individual engagement of dialogue, yet are silent to the official authorities' dialogue initiatives. He does not give specific names concerning these groups. He claims that jealousy plays a significant role in their rejection of dialogue of the individuals, referring to Gülen. These marginal groups criticize individuals in terms of not having an official duty from PRA, the government etc. or who do not have the capacity to represent the Turkish Muslim community.[1263]

Tablig-Dialogue Tension

Aydüz, who many times expresses that the rejectionist position of Muslims would not bring goodness to Muslims, emphasizes that Islam provides people a pluralistic environment where they live freely. In this way it is believed that everyone is left alone

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[1260] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 239.

[1261] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 240.

[1262] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 240.

[1263] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 240.

with their faiths and cultures. He asserts that this atmosphere would also be the most appropriate environment for Islam to be known properly by non-Muslims.[1264] In the section "*tablig* as basis of dialogue," he states that Islam is the religion of *tablig,* which he defines as "to call people to the oneness of Allah and to let them adopt the religion of Islam by explaining it."[1265] By citing the principle "there is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'an 2:256), he underlines that *tablig* should not be compelling in any sense.[1266] He asserts that many people converted to Islam through good relations, graciousness and humane contact. According to Aydüz, this fact forces Muslims to participate in dialogue. He also states that converted Muslims in the UK are influenced by Sufism.[1267]

Aydüz emphasizes that Muslims can eliminate their improper images and directly explain themselves to non-Muslims only through dialogue. In dialogue converting has no place; however; in *tablig* one desires others to come to their religion. For him, this point is where conflict intensely occurs between dialogue and *tablig*. He also points out that it would be senseless for a Muslim to engage in dialogue without the concern of proclaiming the religion. He only indicates that Muslims should respect other religions and by doing so there will be a place for both *tablig* and dialogue.[1268] Hence, it seems that Aydüz draws a respect-centered relationship in which dialogue and *tablig* could take

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[1264] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 228.

[1265] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 226.

[1266] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 228.

[1267] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 231.

[1268] Moreover, he compares *tablig* with mission, and states that *tablig* is beyond the mission that led people to know Allah as the only savior; it is letting people obey the rule of Allah and become his servant. See *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 228.

place without conflicting with each other.[1269]

He counts *tablig* among the basic motives that encourage Muslims to engage in dialogue: invitation/*tablig*, historical events, and social/religious pluralism.[1270] Muslims should practice the religious duty of enjoying goodness (*Emr-i bil ma'ruf*). If they avoid dialogue, they will not be able to accomplish this religious duty.[1271] So, whenever a Muslim encounters others, a dialogical attitude should be embraced and theological goals of *tablig* should be taken into consideration as well. In this way, they would benefit from dialogue and also fulfill the requirements of *tablig*.[1272]

Aydüz puts *bearing witness* (testifying the Islamic creed) in the center of dialogue when engaging dialogue with Christians, as clearly stated in the Qur'an 3:64, which is also called "dialogue verse." He supports his argument by citing Elmallı Hamdi Yazır, an influential mainstream Muslim interpreter of the Qur'an, who considers that the verse indicates that the common denominator among people is *conscience*.[1273] In this context, he underlines that dialogue is the duty of Muslims as *tablig*, and adds that in this way Muslims will have the opportunity to convey the word of Allah to others.[1274] Aydüz also expresses that some Muslims perceive dialogue as a different form of *tablig*; however, he

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[1269] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 232.

[1270] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 226.

[1271] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 230.

[1272] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 232.

[1273] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 229.

[1274] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 232.

does not specify who they are.[1275]

Dialogue in Christian Context

Aydüz stresses that the idea of interreligious dialogue as an official entity was first voiced by Christians. He states that Christianity's fourteen centuries of attitude changed with the Second Vatican Council. In the new term, the Vatican aimed to Christianize Christians who stayed away from the Church.[1276] It was aimed to encounter materialism and positivism.[1277] He moreover states that in 1964, the Vatican said yes to dialogue, but in the first decade serious steps were not taken.[1278] With reference to Küçük, he states the Orthodox Church has also participated in dialogue since 1984.[1279]

He explains the reasons that compelled the Church to engage in dialogue.[1280] For him, the impact of transportation, communication, tourism and migration is significant on the development of the concepts of freedom of religion and human rights after the Second World War.[1281] He also mentions the presence of students from different religions in schools, working in the same jobs, interreligious marriages and trading as significant factors. Healthy relationships in these places depend on mutual tolerance and

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[1275] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 230.

[1276] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 253.

[1277] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 206.

[1278] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 207.

[1279] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 207.

[1280] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 253.

[1281] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 206.

goodwill.[1282]

Aydüz refers to the problems of Christian-Muslim dialogue in the Christian context with nine points[1283]:

− Christians would expect to encounter norms that are contrary to their own beliefs. They would accept the risks and challenges.

− Christians still keep theological grounds for missions when they engage in dialogue.[1284]

− Some evangelicals conceive of dialogue as a betrayal of the universality of Christ. They consider dialogue as syncretism or see it as a compromise, and defamation of the Christian mission or even the denial of mission, so they reject it.

− Negative experience in history.

− Contrasts in the two sides' world views such as different religious terminologies, different psychologies, false images, prejudices, socio-cultural differences, political goals and moral differences.

− So-called Muslim fundamentalism.

− Danger of syncretism.

− Even though Muslims express that there is no compulsion in the religion, Protestants persist to not acknowledge it.

− Exclusionary references in the holy books

[1282] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 207.

[1283] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 256-258.

[1284] He does not make a WCC-RCC separation. This problem can be seen several places of the book.

Missionary-Dialogue Relations

Aydüz does not include a special chapter for mission-dialogue relations. He asks his readers to reconcile negative past experiences and to trust Christian statements concerning dialogue. By stating this he wants readers to avoid the vicious cycle of arguments regarding the real intentions of Christians about dialogue. However, when Aydüz assesses dialogue in the Christian context, he touches on dialogue-missionary and dialogue-politics relations.[1285] In terms of dialogue-mission relations he states that missionaries' main task is to spread Christianity. It appears that he keeps parallel views with the general attitude of Turkish academia regarding the development of dialogue as a result of missionary activity. For him, when Christians understood that they would not defeat Muslims with military power, they organized congresses, and as the outcome of these meetings, they decided to train professional missionaries. Since the 13th century, through professional missionary organizations, they have increased their activities in the Islamic world. Aydüz considers the main goal of the Christian missionary was Muslims, which is also a general attitude that exists among Turkish, Muslim scholars. He also makes assessments on missions and politics.[1286]

Conclusion

In his works, especially *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, Aydüz attempts to provide a sound Islamic basis for interreligious dialogue, even though the book indicates a broader scope. Aydüz occasionally uses dialogue synonymously with *tablig*, tolerance, müsamaha, hoşgörü, coexistence and rarely debate, discussion and argument. Nevertheless, the main aim in dialogue must be mutual understanding, tolerance and

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[1285] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 261.

[1286] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 268.

learning. Aydüz, mostly perceives interreligious dialogue in a *tablig*-based context.

Since, Aydüz is a Turkish *tafsir* scholar, the influence of his specialty is vivid. It is clear that in his assessments concerning interreligious dialogue he devotes a vast place to interpreting the Qur'an in order to find a Qur'anic basis for dialogue. One of the subchapters is called "Dialogue as the order of God" and "The Qur'an verses that order dialogue with People of the Book," which sufficiently show this attempt. He also attempts to find dialogical basis in the Sunnah, Islamic history and the views of the contemporary Turkish scholars. It is also important that Aydüz mentions prophets as exemplary personalities of dialogue.[1287]

Aydüz basically considers the Qur'an as a book full of dialogues between God-angels, God-people, believers-unbelievers and prophets-unbelievers. The Qur'an also asks people to come together around common words, values and humaneness against wrongdoing, oppression, and unbelieving/atheism. In particular, the Qur'an asks Muslims to be gentle when they are in a relationship or dialogue with non-Muslims, to give them freedom of religion and let them experience and observe Islam within an atmosphere of freedom.

The verses, which are considered antagonistic to interreligious dialogue, should be considered within the methods of historicity, *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions or circumstances of revelation), particularity instead of generalizations and considerations within the whole message of the Qur'an. If the verses are analyzed with these methods, the conflicts would be easily removed.

[1287] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 68.

Aydüz has no interest in so-called bad intentions in interreligious dialogue meetings. He stresses that Muslims should act according to statements of non-Muslims instead of doubting their intentions. Nevertheless, he asks Christians to express that they do not have a hidden agenda against Muslims when they enter dialogue. He is also in favor of forgetting undesired events that happened in the past among different religious groups. He is hopeful of future coexistence and asks Muslims to be in favor of peace, in contrast to the scenarios of clashes of religions and civilizations.

Even though he mentions dialogue in three types (experts, moral, and spiritual), Aydüz usually perceives interreligious dialogue as collaboration on common moral values, setting religious freedom and coexistence. He does not attempt to find a basis for religious pluralism. What he attempts is to pursue an Islamic ground for coexistence with non-Muslims. He develops an inclusivist approach by interpreting the Qur'an, Sunna and Islamic tradition in terms of the contemporary pluralistic world. Since he keeps an inclusive attitude, he occasionally states that Muslims should bear witness when they are in dialogue with non-Muslims and should consider dialogue as *tablig*.

The tension between dialogue and *tablig* is the crucial point that Aydüz avoids discussing deeply. He confesses that this point is the most intense point; however, he does not see this setting as an insurmountable problem. According to Aydüz, if Muslims practice their religious duties and bear witness to the faith in dialogue, then both dialogue and *tablig* would be accomplished. Aydüz stresses that Muslims should be motivated to *tablig* Islam, which is natural behavior for any believer of religions. Moreover, he considers that "wishing others' conversion is natural" unless one has ill-intention and considers others prey and are so using every method to convert them. It is clear from

Aydüz's expression that he is sure that Muslims do not use every method to convert others, because there are Islamic principles: there is no compulsion in Islam, act justly, do not deceive others, and so on. However, he is not sure about Christians' intentions because in some cases he mentions missionaries who do not accurately represent who they are and conceal their identities so as not to frighten Muslims in conferences. These missionaries explain Christianity according to the mindset of Muslims by not introducing contradictory points. These concerns of Aydüz are basically rooted in Muslims' experiences of missionary activity in political events especially during colonization, world wars and cold war.

It is also observed that Aydüz draws conflicting statements in terms of the role of the acceptance of the prophethood of Muhammad and the structure of interreligious dialogue. According to the first issue, in one instance he states that one should not ask non-Muslims why they do not accept the prophethood of Muhammad. Elsewhere he states that Muslims should agree with dialogue partners on faith in Allah and the hereafter. When they agree/accept these statements (faith in Allah and hereafter), then Muslims can talk about different subjects that should/must be acknowledged/believed. These kinds of statements indicate that Aydüz intends to make partners accept beliefs of Islam step by step in dialogue. "Just as before offering a new meal to someone you give a little bit for tasting, if he/she likes you give more, similarly firstly we explain the faith of Allah to members of other religions, if he/she accepts, then we present other belief subjects."[1288] So, what Aydüz states here contradicts his statements regarding the structure of dialogue and prophethood of Muhammad.

[1288] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 250.

The structure of the book also has inadequacies. Aydüz explores types of interreligious dialogue and participants in the last chapter.[1289] It would be more helpful if he articulates these in the first chapter, because after reading/learning about different types and goals of interreligious dialogue, the reader would have a clear idea about how Aydüz perceives dialogue and which type he supports. It is also a significant mistake that Aydüz does not articulate which types of dialogue he favors and which he rejects.

In his book, Aydüz first discusses/presents all the information regarding his complex understanding of dialogue and then gives basic/fundamental information about the nature, history and types of dialogue. The reader who does not have detailed information about the distinctive features of dialogue may easily comprehend his discussion points in Islamic context as interreligious dialogue itself. When one considers the fact that his dialogue discourse is partly provocative (especially the chapter title such as interreligious dialogue as the command of the Qur'an) and ambiguous, and his use of dialogue as the Islamic term for *tablig*, one can easily reject or at least cautiously react to interreligious dialogue. These ambiguities also affect one's apprehension of general features of dialogue that Aydüz explains later in the last chapter. This incorrect classification causes insurmountable difficulties and complexity for articulating and producing a more positive and natural perception of dialogue.

According to Aydüz, one must first talk on commonalities with other religions and then they should explore further common points. It is helpful to talk on common subjects rather than differences, and participants should not talk about these realities before a

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[1289] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 211.

convenient time.[1290]

The following words of Aydüz summarize his perceptions of dialogue and the importance of interreligious dialogue.

> Dialogue is an opportunity for Muslims that should not be missed. Regardless of the intention of adherents of other religions, which some assert as political or missions as some openly express, for Muslims it does not really matter so much. It is because the West, in any period of history (including Andalucía), has not adopted an atmosphere to learn about Islam and Muslims in an unprejudiced way. Therefore, one must use this positive atmosphere in the best way. We should spend more time for dialogue, where some positive results are already experienced, and should work for world peace to come as soon as possible.[1291]

[1290] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 248.

[1291] *Tarih Boyunca Dinlerarası Diyalog*, 285.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have explored Turkish responses to the Christian call for dialogue. First of all, I explored interreligious dialogue within the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches. I observed that within both the RCC and the WCC, interreligious dialogue is developed within the scope of the Church's missionary activity and ecumenism, two terms that articulate these institutions' relationship with others. The two major branches of contemporary Christianity on the one hand urge their followers to engage in dialogue with non-Christians in order to demolish prejudices and misunderstandings, and to explore their commonalties, which are considered by the Church to be rays from the ultimate truth of God. On the other hand, the Church asks Christians to witness and to proclaim the message of the Gospel to non-Christians in order to fulfill the truths in these religions. This is the basic motivation and the goal behind the Christian call for dialogue. Yet, besides this basic motivation, there are strong theological, social, moral and spiritual foundations behind their call. Each motivation is highly stressed and deeply encouraged Christians to engage dialogue with non-Christians. Lastly, any hidden agenda, ill-intention is strictly rejected and sincerity is always desidered in the Christian call for dialogue.

The Turkish Muslim response to this call for dialogue is varied. The Christian call for dialogue caught the attention of Turkish people mostly after the 1980s, when the pressure on religious groups was partly removed, and especially after the mid-1990s, when Turkey joined the European Union. Religious groups and academicians each responded to the dialogue call within their context and according to their perception of the position of Christians in Islam. In the writings of many scholars, we observed how they perceived the dialogue call differently, and how they responded differently, and even

in opposite ways. After exploring the rich and diverse views on dialogue, I focused on the views of three of the most influential scholars: Abdurrahman Küçük, Mahmut Aydın and Davut Aydüz. In their scholarly writings on the Christian call for dialogue and the features of dialogue, I made the following observations.

First, even though interreligious dialogue is defined according to its dictionary meaning, it is perceived in at least four different contexts: theology, morality, spirituality and politics. In terms of theology, most dogmas are reinterpreted to resolve misinterpretations and misrepresentations of other religions within the theology of religions. When speaking of moral dialogue, joint-action for peace and collaboration is presumed and mostly supported. In terms of spirituality, love for the Creator/God prompts love for people regardless of their religious convictions. Since love for people presupposes God's everlasting grace, mercy and love, it is separated from daily debates and mostly welcomed. Last, the political context is indicated most of the time in dialogue, primarily because of the very negative Muslim-Christian relations that have developed in recent history, such as during colonization, the First and Second World Wars, the Gulf Wars, the September 11 attacks, and so on. The perception of dialogue in these contexts, withou, articulating, identifying and separating dialogue accordingly, usually leads to the authors' total rejection or acceptance of it. In order to avoid such generalization and misuse of dialogue, I suggest that instead of considering dialogue in three or four different types or contexts, we should use four distinctive names for four types of dialogue, each of which takes place in a different context. To be precise, we should use these four different names:

Interreligious learning (*dindarlararası öğrenme*): where learning and respect is

central.

Interreligious collaboration (*dindarlararası işbirliği*): where justice is central.

Interreligious experience (*dindarlararası deneyim*): where sincerity is central.

Interreligious relations (*dindarlararası münasebet*): where multiple-factors are active.

Considering these four names, which are not mutually exclusive, advocates and rejectionists of dialogue should indicate which one best represents their intended purposes. In this way, by mentioning one name concerning dialogue, writers can concentrate their views on a precise aspect of dialogue without negatively affecting others.

Second, dialogue is understood in two fundamental ways: *tablig*-based and mission-based. On the one hand, *tablig*-based dialogue is acknowledged positively. On the other hand, mission-based dialogue is referenced and perceived negatively. Positive perceptions of mission-based dialogue appear mainly within moral and spiritual dialogue while negative images appear mostly within political and theological dialogue. When examining the writings of Turkish Muslim scholars in general, and the three aforementioned scholars in particular, we observe that they don't make clear distionction between their views on *tablig*-based versus mission-based dialogue.

Third, dialogue is discussed on three levels: individual, organizational and official. We observe that individual dialogue initiatives and views are generally welcomed and considered sincere. Organizational and official dialogue calls are perceived as veiling hidden agendas, such as missionary activity, imperialism and political aims.

Fourth, dialogue is perceived as having two different aspects: expert and grassroots. Grassroots interreligious dialogue, which has been practiced naturally throughout history, is welcomed. However, the contemporary dialogue movement does not stress practicing dialogue at the grassroots level. The three above-mentioned academicians advocate dialogue by experts. However, Küçük emphasizes that because Christian experts are also previous missionaries, they cannot engage in dialogue with sincere intentions.

Fifth, dialogue is understood from two stances: historical/natural and contemporary/prearranged. Even though dialogue practiced among ordinary people throughout history is perceived mostly positively, dialogue in the contemporary sense systematic, prearranged and planned is mostly rejected. On the one hand, dialogue in history is understood mostly as neighborly behavior between people from different religions in an unplanned way. On the other hand, dialogue in the contemporary world is understood mostly as a political means and strategic move. Thus, it is rejected.

Sixth, dialogue is perceived within three different philosophies: exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. Similar to Western implication of dialogue, dialogue is understood within these three Western classifications. While exclusive and inclusive Christian approaches are not perceived as sincere, pluralism is considered an appropriate approach. However, since pluralism is strongly related to dialogue and presented as a precondition for dialogue, pluralism is generally understood as synonym of dialogue. Yet religious pluralism, which presumes all religions are a means for salvation, is rejected by conservative Muslims. Therefore, conservative Muslims reject dialogue as well since it is understood to be the same as religious pluralism.

Seventh, the official documents of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches are not written in Turkish or Arabic. Thus, Turkish academicians try to understand these documents using secondary language skills. This creates difficulties and often leads them to an ambiguous understanding or to misunderstandings. Therefore, the documents concerning Muslims at a minimum should be written in Turkish, or at least in Arabic, in order to allow Muslims to understand them as they are understood by Christians. Language selection impacts mutual relations between members of religious traditions. If, for instance, Muslims wrote official documents concerning Confucians, they should write the documents, or relevant sections at least, in the Chinese language.

Eighth, scholars attempt to evaluate statements without taking their context into account. For instance, terms such as dialogue, mission, evangelization, inculturation and proclamation are usually understood synonymously or used interchangeable by most rejectionists of dialogue. Moreover, dialogue, relations, conversation, discussion and even debate are also used interchangeably by most supporters of dialogue. Thus, we observe that supporters of dialogue attempt to perceive every positive Muslim-Christian relation in history and the contemporary world. And rejectionists strive to consider every negative Muslim-Christian relation in history and the contemporary world as related to Christian mission and evangelization, and therefore also to dialogue. These two radical treatments of dialogue hurt the very meaning and aim of dialogue, which is creating sound and realistic bridges between people.

Ninth, every scholar perceives and responds to dialogue distinctively. We observe that Dr. Küçük considers the Christian call for dialogue a result of missionary activity, which he believes to be a means of political profit for the West, and therefore rejects it.

Nevertheless, he affirms interreligious dialogue as a means for *tablig*, which does not veil ill intentions the way the Christian missionary does. Nevertheless, he supports interreligious dialogue within its general meaning, such as learning from others and collaborating to achieve world peace. Hence we observe that while Küçük rejects interreligious dialogue within the context of theology and politics, where sincerity is ambiguous, he acknowledges the benefit of dialogue within the context of moral collaboration and spirituality, where sincerity is clear. Thus, sincerity is the basic measurement of appropriate interreligious dialogue.

Dr. Aydın conceives of dialogue in the context of religious pluralism. He is influenced by Western philosophers such as John Hick, Paul Knitter, and Hans Küng, and he attempts to develop an Islamic theology of religions. He thinks that genuine dialogue occurs only among people who believe in religious pluralism. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that religious pluralism does not mean that all religions are the same; rather, it stresses the distinctiveness of religions and assumes that every religion is a means for salvation distinctively. He criticizes scholars who find an Islamic basis for dialogue in the positive relations in the life of Prophet Muhammad, yet he makes the same mistake when he examines Christian scholars in the medieval era and states that their views can be considered dialogue in the contemporary sense. Thus, we can state that Aydın affirms interreligious dialogue in the contexts of theology, moral collaboration and spirituality; yet he rejects any political context concerning interreligious dialogue. He perceives the official call for dialogue in particular as having a political agenda and therefore rejects it and does not consider it a sincere call. However, we observe that he generally considers contemporary Christian appeals to be sincere attempts for

reconciliation between Muslims and Christians.

Dr. Aydüz perceives interreligious dialogue in the context of moral collaboration and supports it. He considers almost every positive relationship in the life of the Prophet and later Muslims in history to be interreligious dialogue. Since he is a scholar of the Qur'an, he explores verses in depth and interprets them according to interreligious dialogue. He analyzes the verses that seem opposed to dialogue using the historicity method. He thinks that the Qur'an, as the word of God, encourages Muslims to have friendly relationships with the People of the Book, and so encourages interreligious dialogue. He strongly believes that both sides should give up hostilities and should collaborate for world peace and work against materialism and atheism. The influence of Said Nursi and Fethullah Gülen is strongly clear in the writings of Aydüz. Moreover, in his writings we observe that he does not focus on the sincerity of Christians, but is convinced about their sincerity by stating that they are on the strong/positive side of dialogue and there is nothing that Muslims can lose in interreligious dialogue. Hence, Aydüz strongly advocates interreligious dialogue within the moral collaboration context while he rejects the political context. He is silent in terms of the theological and spiritual context. All in all, when examining interreligious dialogue within the views of these three scholars, we observe that even though at first it appears that they reject or acknowledge dialogue, or approach it cautiously, it is not clear from their writings what dimension of interreligious dialogue exactly they reject or affirm. Hence, by examining their views in depth we see that they do not fully reject or fully affirm dialogue. Rather, they perceive dialogue distinctively, and develop it according to their area of specialty and concern.

Tenth, in this regard we observe that Dr. Küçük perceives interreligious dialogue

in the context of his general research area, missionary activity, and in the context of his political views, which are associated with the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), and thus he focuses on the political and missionary dimensions of interreligious dialogue. He strongly rejects dialogue in the political and missionary context. Dr. Aydın perceives interreligious dialogue through his area of specialty, theology of religions, and his education in the UK with its Western philosophical influence, and thus advocates and develops dialogue in the theological context. Similar to Küçük, he rejects the political context of dialogue. Dr. Aydüz, who is influenced by the Gülen movement, strongly advocates dialogue in the moral collaboration context. Because of his area of specialty, *tafsir* (interpretation of the Qur'an), he mostly focuses on verses of the Qur'an and attempts to develop an Islamic model for dialogue as his response to the Christian call for dialogue. He rejects interreligious dialogue within the political context and does not present a clear picture about his rejection or acceptance of theological and spiritual contexts.

After summarizing the general points concerning interreligious dialogue, and setting forth the minimum *principles* concerning dialogue that the three scholars agree on, I can provide a *Turkish Model* for dialogue.

By observing commonalities within the definitions offered by the three influential Turkish Muslim scholars, I propose the following definition of dialogue for the Turkish model for dialogue.

Interreligious dialogue is the process of coming together through two-way communication and conversation between followers of different religions in order to learn the other's religious traditions and life styles, look at the other with warmth

and tolerance, and talk about common issues in an environment of mutual awareness, respect, trust, recognition and understanding, free from the imposition of any one participant's religious or political convictions on another.

Moreover, all three scholars agree that the correct term for interreligious dialogue in Turkish is *din mensupları arası diyalog* (dialogue among followers of religions), yet they prefer an incorrect usage, *dinlerarası diyalog* (interreligious dialogue), since it is widely used. This incorrect usage contributes to the ongoing misunderstanding of interreligious dialogue in the Turkish context.

In terms of the Turkish Model for dialogue, the following are the <u>minimum principles</u> that all three professors *agree on* in terms of accurate interreligious dialogue:

- Interreligious dialogue is a two-way communication.
- Participants listen to each other, and try to understand and learn from each other.
- Participants enter into dialogue with a full sense of honesty, mutual confidence, sincerity and respect, and an intimate bond of friendship.
- Participants adopt the principle of "we love the creature for the sake of the Creator" as a basis of dialogue.
- Interreligious dialogue looks for solutions to common human problems.
- Participants are gentle towards each other.
- Participants explore commonalities.
- Christians must clarify the reasons they are involved in dialogue.
- Dialogue is not a means for any kind of missionary activity.
- Theological dialogue based on the worship of no God other than God is possible, and is also an essential theological common point.

- Participants work to remove all kinds of misunderstanding towards each other.

- Participants engage in dialogue on equal grounds and treaet towards each other equally.

- Each participant defines his/her religious conviction.

- Participants engage in self-criticism and stay away from exclusivist claims.

- Dialogue partners oppose all criminal organizations, wars, fighting, life-threatening illnesses, and drugs etc.

- Participants work to maintain social justice, peace, human rights, and freedom.

- Participants are eager to practice dialogue in everyday life.

- Participants avoid any kind of syncretism and acknowledge the principle, "I have my religion, you have your religion."

- Participants should avoid radical interpretations in terms of theological issues.

- Participants also observe intra-religious dialogue.

Besides these principles, I observe that all three scholars are convinced that it is impossible to stay isolated from the rest of the world, and it is a necessity for Muslims to engage in dialogue with others in a convenient environment. They all agree that Muslims are not as well prepared as Christians in terms of interreligious dialogue, and therefore there is a need for an Interreligious Research Center to train experts on other religions and ensure they know at least two languages other than Turkish. All three also point out the need to engage of experts in interreligious dialogue meetings, yet there is not a concencus about necessity of interreligious dialogue on the grassroots level. All three also underscore that in proper dialogue events based on the above-mentioned principles, there is no reason for Muslims to fear engagement.

Having drawn out the minimum points that the three scholars agree on in terms of principles of interreligious dialogue, especially with Christians, I can now discuss the

minimum points that the three scholars *reject* in dialogue:

Dialogue as a means for Christian missionary activity, evangelization, proselytization and inculturation

Dialogue as a tool for Western politics and imperialism

Dialogue as a means for syncretism or a new human religion.

Dialogue as a tool for any hidden agendas or sneaky, secret and political purposes and ill intentions.

Considering these minimum points about accepting and rejecting dialogue in the Turkish context, I can conclude that dialogue in that context is based on "mutual trust," which is one of the results of some recent historical developments, including the two World Wars, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and various socioeconomic problems, which acted negatively on mutual-trust. The only way to secure this trust is tirelessly to continue organizing dialogue activities between the followers of Islam and Christianity.

The second suggestion is that, besides focusing on commonalities in dialogue activities, participants should also discuss how they perceive the common points differently. In dialogue meetings, for instance, if they contemplate God's mercy toward people, they should acknowledge each other's different perceptions of God's mercy. If they gather for a charity foundation, they should acknowledge that participants have different motivation for supporting the organization because of their distinctive understandings of charity. Differences in commonalities – what I call *contextual similarities* – should be emphasized in the dialogue meetings. In this way, religious conservatives would not be afraid to engage in dialogue meetings, which they ordinarily perceive as dangerous attempts to oversimplify religious traditions.

Third, if official organizations of any religion publish documents about dialogue with members of other religions, they should also publish translations in the majority language of the religion in question. One of the most difficult pitfalls of dialogue is the language problem. As I pointed out above, we observe this difficulty with the lack of Turkish translations of interreligious dialogue document. Moreover, Christian officials should publish works in Turkish or Arabic in order to differentiate between concepts such as dialogue, mission, evangelization, proclamation and inculturation, which are closely interrelated. Similarly, the Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA) of Turkey also should articulate the difference between *tablig*, *dawa*, *irshad*, and dialogue, which are also strongly interrelated.

Fourth, even though there is a department of foreign affairs within the PRA, it is not very active in terms of organizing meetings and conferences; therefore, besides this directory, university professors and NGOs should establish research centers directly engaged in interreligious dialogue. At these research centers, all documents published by Christian officials and academicians concerning interreligious dialogue should be translated into Turkish with the cooperation of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) of the Holy See and the Office on Interreligious Relations and Dialogue of the WCC. These centers should also offer short-term certificate programs in dialogue, primarily for the Imams and Preachers of the PRA, religious education teachers of the National Education Ministry, and theology faculty students.

Fifth, in order to spread interreligious dialogue at the grassroots levels, exchange programs such as the Fulbright and Erasmus programs should encourage an interreligious dialogue among students, academic staff and also host families.

Sixth, in order to reduce misunderstanding at the scholarly level, the PRA, PCID and WCC should share their official documents concerning their basic understanding of each other. The library of each university with a faculty of theology should also have basic literature, books and articles provided by these institutions. Similar to World Classic novels, a collection of World Classics for Religious Understanding should be developed within this program. Last, the United Nations should create an Internet web site, where these works can be freely reached.

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