BOOK REVIEWS


Viewed in the perspective of the series of interreligious dialogue literature of which this is the fourth volume, the present study is aptly subtitled. The previous volumes, all edited by Professor R.W. Rousseau, offered selections from the literature of the dialogue of Christianity with other religions.

The volume two on dialogue between Christianity and the religions of the East was subtitled as 'model for a dynamic relationship', whereas the subtitle for volume 3 on dialogue with Judaism was 'Deepening Dialogue'. The description of the dialogue of Christianity with Islam as "struggling" should be seen in this comparative perspective. The Editor has elaborated on this point in the introduction describing the attempts of dialogue with Islam "at theological level as a successful beginning and disappointing as solution" (p. i).

The present volume contains a good selection of reports, reflections and analyses of this on-going dialogue between Christianity and Islam during the last 14 years (1968-1982). Apart from the reports of the dialogue Conferences held in Tripoly (1976), Cordoba (1977) Mombasa (1979) and Sri Lanka (1982) and an overview of all these dialogue-attempts from 1968 to 1978, the volume also offers studies of social dialogue between Christians and Muslims living as minority or majority with each other. These case-studies include areas such as Britian, Philippines and Nigeria. The core of the volume, however, are the papers which attempt to analyse these dialogues. There is no clear scheme or order, chronological or thematic, to justify the juxtaposition of these papers and reports as chapters: there appears to be no logical progression from one chapter to another.

But for Talbi's paper the present volume would have been a monologue of Christian scholars about the dialogue, perhaps that is what makes this dialogue 'struggling'. As Talbi has also observed, Muslim participation in the dialogue has not been equal to Christianity because the latter has been represented by more qualified and refined participants. That has also turned the dialogue into a monologue.

The editor's remarks of satisfaction on the dialogue with Judaism in fact call for further investigation into the semantics of expectation from dialogue. Do we mean or expect the dialogue to be 'negotiations between two parties'? Or is it 'an attempt to understand each other's point of view'?

It appears from most of the papers in the volume that stress has been on the former aspect. No wonder then that the dialogue is struggling. The reasons are not far to seek. For negotiations it is essential that the representatives be authorised by the parties concerned and be willing to 'negotiate'.
In Islam there is no religious "authority" and hence there is no official religious representation of Islam. The Muslim participants in the dialogue have been either representatives of their respective governments or scholars of various disciplines, mostly western educated. Even the traditionally trained 'Jamā' (often wrongly termed clergy) do not enjoy the required religious authority. It appears from this volume that some religio-political organisations such as Islamic Foundation have been participating in these dialogues but they are neither qualified nor authorised to make or pretend to make negotiations on the theological level. The allusion of this pretence has perhaps been created because on certain religious issues some religio-political leaders like Mawlānā 'Abū'l, A'lā Mawdūdī have issued appeals to the Pope in Rome. But that does not mean that they aspired to be Pope's peers in Islam.

As far as the social dialogue is concerned, there has been a marked progress in the understanding between Muslims and Christians as is evident from the number of Muslims migrating and settling among the Christians.

It appears that the Muslims and Christians do not find it difficult to carry on dialogue on the social level. It is only on theological level that the conflicts arise. The approach by most of the papers in this volume e.g. by Maurice Bormann, has been to avoid sensitive issues and to seek only the points of agreement. That may be a 'wise' strategy to negotiate a 'bargain' but not to seek a 'model for dynamic relationship' or for a 'deepening dialogue'.

Muhammad Khalid Masud
This book analyses the influence of Islam on the traditional structure of some 20 selected tribal communities in the so-called "Middle-belt" of Nigeria. These are communities which have had a long contact with Islam and larger Muslim communities, mainly Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri. The author also mentions the progress made by Christianity in this region and its impact on the religious configuration of the country's population and on the position of Islam.

In writing this book the author draws on his own observations during his thirty years' association with Nigeria, part of which (1956-1976) he spent in the country as a Christian Missionary as well as a teacher. Much of the material for the book comes from interviews for which, he says, he relies on his good knowledge of the Hausa language.

The first five chapters are devoted to a study of the interaction between Islam and traditional religion.

While hesitating to make generalizations about African traditional religions, the author concedes that they have three common features: their self-containment, the naturalistic form of their outlook and ritual, and their 'community realism'. It is these common features which bring traditional religions in conflict with the universalistic outlook and strictly monotheistic nature of Islam. Tribal religions also have a sense of "immediacy", an expectation of quick results from their rituals, which is lacking in Islam and which, for them, renders Islam's concern with reward and punishment in the hereafter as irrelevant.

The author classifies the communities into three categories according to the level of their resistance to Islam. The categories are: (1) The "Active-Resistant", consisting of the Tiv, Jukun, Kutep, etc; (2) the "Open Traditional", such as the Bachema, Gwam and Kilba; and (3) the "Open" as for example the Maguzawa, Fabin, Bura and Nupe.

What is it that determines a tribe's response to Islam? The author rejects the idea that time is the only relevant factor; that long contact with Islam leads automatically to assimilation. He rather sees a more basic factor firstly in the elements of "compatibility (to what extent does Islam "fit" into the traditional structure), secondly in the ability of Islam to break the "archaic circle" (and thereby deprive the community of the centre around which its traditional religious life revolves), and lastly, in the "negative or positive image which the Hausa and Fulani have as a people".

The two contrasting examples of the Tiv and the Bura could show how important compatibility is: the concept of a "divine king" among the Tivs inhibits acceptance of Islam's belief in the supremacy of God; while Islam finds better reception among the Bura whose traditional god, Hyel "belongs to a type which fits admirably into a concept of the Unity and Self-existence of Allah".
The author then observes that among the "Active Resistant" category the retaining of a strong traditional centre has minimised the impact of Islam. The various social, psychological, economic and political elements have played a role in the interaction between Islam and the traditional religion, including the impact of these elements on the Muslim's image. Many of these elements have tilted the balance in favour of Islam, but some have had a rather negative effect.

Social and economic forces of change threaten and disrupt traditional society. The individual and community have to adjust. What is the role of Islam in this context? While Islam certainly does not help to maintain the strength and integrity of the tribe, it nevertheless offers a refuge to the individual and becomes a new organising centre for his life. The author sees this as a major factor of conversion to Islam in the cities of the North where he sees the rich among the Muslims as dominating the economic life and using their influence in favour of Islam. The individual may also convert to Islam for prestige because being a Muslim is considered "progressive" and being a pagan is "backwardness". Again Islam may gain a convert, when an individual seeking remedies to the anxieties and misfortunes of daily life fails to find them in the traditional system and therefore turns to the Muslim method.

Some political and economic factors have however had a less than positive effect in the way they have built up the "Muslim image". The author traces the formation of the "Muslim Image" to the 19th century Jihad and the periods of colonial rule and post-independence politics. The Jihad had a "positive" side in creating an enlightened class of Muslim teachers and raising the power and prestige of Islam, and a "negative" side in making pagans resent the Fulani because of slave trade. Colonial rule favoured Muslims through Lugard's indirect rule system, but this has also "taken a toll on the Hausa image".

The part on post-independence politics in devoted to a discussion of "the effect of Ahmadu Bello's policies for the religion of Non-Muslim tribes." Ahmadu Bello, leader of the ruling party and a descendant of the Jihad leader Usman Danfodio, "saw himself as one to fulfill the theocratic ideal of his noble family" by Islamizing the pagans. He made this ideal part of his political campaigns. The author however, finds Ahmadu Bello's success of little, if any, lasting value: the quality of the conversions is suspect, and much of the response to Ahmadu Bello's overtures depended on the tribe's level of resistance to Islam. It may be commented here, however, that some people saw Ahmadu Bello as such a great threat that they made him pay with his life.

In the last two chapters the author looks back over the period since the assassination of Ahmadu Bello. He finds that a great shift has taken place and religious change has taken new forms and directions. While Christianity has experienced rapid growth, traditional religion, though its elements persist, has all but been submerged. Islam has suffered reverses. Muslims fell into a demoralised and leaderless state after the assassination of Ahmadu Bello in 1966; they suffered defeat on the "Shariah Issue" in 1979 in the Constituent Assembly, the Maitatesine. uprisings exposed their disunity, and the creation of states shattered the myth of a united North as a Muslim bloc.

The author sees these developments as having had an impact on the position of Islam in the communities he studied as well as in the overall situation in Nigeria. Among the communities he studied the "Active Resistant" have become even more resistant to Islam while at the same time opening themselves to Christianity. The "Open Traditional" Communities have experienced a noticeable shift towards Christianity and a hardening attitude against Islam. The "Open" group, while maintaining its attachment to Islam, still allows its tribal interests to predominate.
The author finally considers his study to have established the necessity to redraw the religious map of Nigeria and correct wrong assumptions. He considers it erroneous to regard Nigeria a "Muslim country" because his own computations show a Christian majority by 1985, or to regard five of the northern states (Kaduna, Bauchi, Plateau, Gongoki, Benue, Niger) as northern states, if "northern" is taken to mean simply Islamic.

It is to the author's credit that he is able in the first five chapters of this book to examine closely the very complex process of change in such a difficult setting, and to discern various interesting patterns and reach enlightening conclusions. His look at the classes of priests and Malamai who dispense medicine and cures in both Muslim and non-Muslim societies, as well as their practices and interactions, is one of the most informative parts of the book. His distinction between various classes of priests and malamai and the levels at which integration has taken place between the two tells us a lot about the levels at which Islam "integrates" with or "accommodates" traditional practices.

Author's methodology has however led him sometime to conclusions which do not agree with facts. He, for example, gives unduly disproportionate significance to "compatibility" as a factor of Islamic influence. It has to be realised that he is dealing with communities whose contact with Islam is of varying length, degree and quality. What the author perceives in their existing religious attitudes of tolerance or resistance to Islam as elements of compatibility/incompatibility in Islam itself may well be only the indices of this difference in the intensity and quality of their contact with Islam.

The author has clearly kept himself up to date with the matters which in recent years became subjects of controversy in the pages of Nigerian newspapers. The weakness of these chapters, or for that matter of the book as a whole, lies not in the data but the sources of this data. Like most Nigerian newspapers the data in the book reflect more of what and how Nigerian Christians think and react to an event or a matter of national controversy than of the event or matter itself.

The analysis of political developments in Nigeria, therefore, is reduced to Christian grievances against former Heads of State. And so we come to know that Christians resented Gowon (a Christian himself) for his policy over Mission schools and hospitals. Christians were alarmed by Murtala (a Muslim) for establishing Shariah Courts and building a mosque in the State House, and Christians were displeased with Obasanjo (a Christian) for not paying attention to them as he should.

The methodological weakness also comes from the fact that those whom author interviewed were mostly Christians. It may also explain other parts of the book; as for example where we find that motives for conversion to Islam are all too often described as "for political appointments", "to marry Hausa of Fulani women", "as for political expediency", "to be seen as progressive", and never "for the religious appeal of Islam". Even Christian women who marry Muslim men do so because "they do not have convictions and are attracted to promises of money and material things". But pagans convert to Christianity as a result of "education" and "rising self-consciousness as a people".

It is not the obvious one-sidedness of such a presentation that is a weakness but the tendency it causes to retain factual errors and inaccuracies. Here are examples. The "Shariah issue" is presented as a controversy over the application of Shariah: "By this arrangement court cases would be conducted under the Islamic law", and then reasons are given why Christians would not accept Shariah being applied to them. This is, of course, how the opponents of
the proposal for a Federal Shariah Court of appeal argued their case in the newspapers. But what the constitution Drafting Committee proposed was simply a Federal Shariah Court of Appeal whose jurisdiction was limited to hearing appeals over matters which were already governed by the Shariah as personal law of Muslims and dealt with by other Courts. A reference to the Draft Constitution could have prevented this error. It is also erroneous to say that the Shariah courts in the 10 Northern States were established by Murtala. The fact is that the Shariah Court of Appeal of Northern Nigeria was established at Independence in 1960, and each state got its court when the North was divided into states.

There are also what are perhaps inadvertent errors. This will include the reference to Ahmadu Bello as "the Sultan of Sokoto" which he never was. Another is in the quotation from Ahmadu Bello's reported speech: "The father of enlightenment and good in this land was the prophet, Usman Dan Fodio, and the work of salvation for all the people. Which he so nobly undertook has now been handed to me...." Describing Dan Fodio as "the Prophet" is almost certainly the author's error of translation from Hausa. The normal epithet for Dan Fodio in Hausa is "the reformer" (Mujaddadi), and the words "the Prophet" (annabi) are always limited to describing the Prophet.

But what promises to generate controversy the most in this book is the astounding claim it makes that Christians form a majority in Nigeria. The author also finds inaccurate the description of Nigeria as the "Muslim North" and the "Christian South". He prefers "Muslim North" (meaning far North) "Christian South" and "Mixed Middle Belt" because there are large numbers of Muslims and Christians in the Middle belt. But since the "South" shares this common feature with the "Middle belt" many will wonder: Why "Christian South"?

MUHAMMAD TABIU
"Teaching unless supplemented by research and its dissemination, is of little value." That is the motive which the editorial of this newly launched journal of Social Science and Humanities by the University of Karachi describes for itself.

Against the backdrop of serious apprehensions about the state of higher education and research, the journal appears certainly as a silver lining.

This first issue contains ten articles, two reviews-articles and five book reviews. The articles cover a wide variety of disciplines of Social Sciences and Humanities. The quality of the articles is, however, of varying levels.

Dr. Manzooruddin Ahmed's article on "Islamization of Political Science" constitutes the opening chapter of the Journal. However strictly speaking the article depends so heavily on his recently published work on *Islamic Political System in the Modern Age: Theory and Practice* that it has failed to justify its inclusion in the journal as an independent article. The article, however, is a bold departure from the traditional political studies of Muslim community. The author has rightly pointed-out the complexity involved in the application of traditional Islamic political theory to modern political structures, mainly because the conflicting frameworks of theology and political theory have not yet been resolved. The Political experiments by the Muslim Ummah which began with Ataturk and are still continuing are marred by confusion and obscurantism.

Dr. Akhtar Saeed Siddiqui's article on the "Early History of Islamic law—An Analysis of Western Scholarship" is a good piece of scholarship. It is with a sense of gratification that one notes Dr. Siddiqi appreciating the contribution by the two scholars of the Islamic Research Institute i.e. Dr. Fazlur Rehman and Dr. Ahmad Hasan towards a critique of Western scholarship on Islamic law. They, according to Dr. Siddiqi, presented a "well-argued thesis" in variance to orientalists, particularly to Joseph Schacht.

It may be well in order, here, to invite a comparison of this comment with the invectives of some ambitious scholars who visualize the Institute under the alleged influence of orientalism. The credit must also be given to Dr. Siddiqi for distinguishing between the emotional opposition of orientalists and balanced analyses of their view. One must agree with the author in his view that writing the history of Islamic law requires largely the stock taking of actual legal developments in the early centuries of Islam. A critical study and evaluation of Athār, Fatāwā, and Muḥannaf literature are a necessary prerequisite for writing this history. Perhaps the search and evaluation of judgement of early Qādīs should also be added to this list. The contents of the article however, have not justified the title because it has not taken into account western studies of Islamic law in the more recent periods such as by George Makdisi and has particularly overlooked French and Italian scholars like Bellfondes who took different views of the nature and history of Islamic law, from Goldziher, Margoliouth and Schacht.
The production of the journal however, leaves much to be desired. For a scholarly publication particular attention should have been paid to the transliteration of Arabic and Persian names and titles and to the documentation of source materials.

Notwithstanding the above comments the journal is a refreshing as well as a welcome addition to the scholarly journals in Pakistan.

Muhammad Khalid Masud
BOOKS RECEIVED
