

Understanding the Christian-Muslim-Relations (CMR) in Modern Times

* Dr. Muhammad Junaid Nadvi: Professor of Islamic Studies, Al-hamd Islamic University, Islamabad. mjunaidnadvi@gmail.com

**Tariq Mahmood:M.Phil Scholar, Al-hamd Islamic University, Islamabad. tariqchahdary313@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Christians and Muslims have been engaged in communications on the matters of faith and morality, since the emergence of Islam. The attitudes of these faiths have been deeply contaminated by the legacy of past encounters and centuries-old negative views. However, the interest of Christians and Muslims, in understanding each other is also phenomenal in history. In view of this scenario, this article attempts to identify and understand three principal questions: What kind of relations does Christians and Muslims want in modern times? What are the challenges to Christians-Muslims-Relations (CMR) in modern times? and what are their solutions? These questions are taken in to account, for the kind of Christian-Muslim-Relations to be anticipated for and worked for.

Keywords: Understanding, Christian, Muslim, Relations, Modern Times.

Introduction

Over the last couple of decades there has been an intensified interest in developing a viable comprehensive religious framework for maintaining the Christian-Muslim-Relations (CMR). This interest has grown in part due to rise in militant extremism in modern times, which has resulted in reactionary responses on a global scale. This has created fears and uncertainties, leading to vicious explosions. Besides, it has led some to claim that the future of the

world depends on whether we will be able to develop a framework of “peaceful coexistence” for the two major religions of modern world.¹

This research presents an analysis of the history of Christian-Muslim-Relations (CMR), in order to understand the nature of the conflict. A theological impetus is developed to understand the applied-approach of interfaith dialogue in order to promote harmony and righteousness among the two significant religions of the modern world.² Five suggestions can be formulated for the type of Christian-Muslim relations to be anticipated for and worked for. In the following section we shall identify some important challenges in Christian-Muslim relations, and suggest their practical solutions for Christian-Muslim-Relations (CMR).

1. Sharing of Mutual Knowledge

If Christians and Muslims wish to construct relationship in modern times, they should have admiring and productive knowledge and friendly temper towards each other. An intentional study of the each other’s religion is a prerequisite, if interreligious relationships are not to decline at the level of overviews and overused expressions. Those having positions of leadership or responsibility in both religions have a greater obligation to carry out a profound study of the other religion.³

There are events or festivities which can support mutual knowledge between Christians and Muslims. For instance, friendly visits and participation at celebrations that mark major events in one's life, birth of a child, marriage, admission in a religious institution, grief and demise. On these occasions, it

¹ Thomas, David (ed.), *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History* (Brill, Leiden, 5vol, 2012), p:II

² See, *al-Qur’ān* 3:64 “... O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you, ...

³ See, *al-Qur’ān* 2:213; 2:140; 2:220; 2:232; 3:81; 3:86; 24:46.

is educational to observe and listen to friends of the other religion, which explains each other's rituals and cultural manifestations. Christians and Muslims can inform one another, how they approach their period of fasting and how they celebrate their major religious celebratory meals.¹ This type of knowledge can simply be acquired through unbiased dialogue. There is a need also for more specialized study in the fields of history, sociology, economics, politics and religious sciences. Such studies are not new, because they have been the part of university curriculum for decades. The new, will be a spirit of relationship between Christians and Muslims. It is worth mentioning, that this kind of relationship is in progress since past century in the form of study centers for Christian-Muslim understanding.²

2. Recognition of Views

In general, an opinion is a judgment, viewpoint, or statement about matters commonly considered to be subjective, i.e. based on that which is less than absolutely certain, and is the result of sentiments or understanding of facts. Keeping this minds, truthful information will demonstrate that the Muslims and the Christians do share many beliefs. For example, belief in one God, who is all mighty and merciful; acceptance of the role of Prophets; belief in the eschatological realities of judgment, reward and punishment.³ On the

1 See, *al-Qur'ān* 4:90; 8:61; 9:4; 9:6-7; 49:6; 90:14-15.

2 Examples of knowledge-Sharing: Prince al-Waleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.; The Muslim-Christian Dialogue Center, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul campus, Minnesota; Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Hartford Seminary, USA; Duncan Black Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Georgetown University, Washington DC; Centre for Christian-Muslim Studies, University of Belmond, Lebanon; Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies, Oxford; The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, Kingdom of Jordan; al-Zaytona University, Tunis with the Gregorian & Pontifical Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Rome.

3 Eschatology, literally "discourse about the last things," Doctrines about death and its aftermath: the body of religious doctrines concerning the human soul in its relation to death,

other hand, there are fundamental differences among them. For Christians, belief in the Trinity and the Incarnation completely transform the relationships between God and humankind. For Muslims the place given to the Qur'ān as final revelation and the role given to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the seal of the prophets is a special feature of Islam.¹ Moreover, in the moral sphere there are points of convergence and divergence. There is common concern that religion occupies an adequate place in society, it is satisfactory in quality and quantity, that materialism or greed should be reduced, that the institution of family be supported, that sexual permissiveness or open-mindedness be opposed. Yet, the concepts of law and society, of marriage and the family do not completely agree. True dialogue demands that Christians and Muslims should accept and respect each other with all their similarities and differences in theological, moral, cultural and socio-economic matters. In fact, the more deeply they understand, their ways of thinking through courtesy and love, the more easily will they be able to enter into dialogue.

3. Recognition by Dialogue

It means that, when Christians and Muslims will recognize one another, and learn to accept and respect each other, they will be well prepared to engage in a form of Christian-Muslim dialogue or an alternative way out. Four types of inter-religious dialogue or relations can generally be identified. The first is the entire area of relations across religious frontiers should start at the level of daily life in the family, in the workplace or in other social activities. This will provide an opportunity of interaction without discussing the

judgment, heaven, and hell. Microsoft® Encarta® 2009; also see, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/eschatology> [16-2-2021]

1 See, al-Qur'ān 33:40

religion. The second is inter-religious co-operation, for example helping refugees or victims of natural or accidental calamities. The third type of relationship is the dialogue in theological discourse, such as inter-faith conversations, discussions, seminars etc. The use of this type will develop the understanding of Christians and Muslims to demonstrate more appropriate social behaviour. The fourth type is the exchange of religious experience through conventions to understand the Christian-Muslim spiritualities. *Spiritualities*¹, is a term often used in the *Middle-Ages*, that refers to the income sources of a *dioceses*² and church establishment in the form of donations. It also referred to income that came from other religious sources, such as offerings from church services or ecclesiastical [Church] fines.³ The Muslims also have different kinds of *Spiritualities* which refers to income and its distribution on religious grounds. For example, zakāh, fidyah, infaq, atonements, birth and funeral offerings etc.⁴ If Christian-Muslim relations commit to an academic exercise, honesty to others, and willingness to engage in some form of co-operation, they are expected to be a sincere Muslim or Christian.

4. Shared-Values

1 Under canon law, spiritualities were only allowed to the clergy. In the 19th century, the spiritualities or spirituals were revenues connected with the spiritual duties and the cure of souls, and consisted almost entirely of tithes, glebe lands, and houses. See ,Coredon, Christopher, *A Dictionary of Medieval Terms & Phrases* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007), p:263

2 The Christian churches that are under the authority of one bishop, or the district containing them, or belonging to or involving the Christian Church or clergy. ,See Coredon, Christopher, *A Dictionary of Medieval Terms & Phrases* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007) , p:263

3 Coredon, Christopher, *A Dictionary of Medieval Terms & Phrases* (D. S. Brewer, Woodbridge, 2007), p:263

4 See, *al-Qur'ān* 9:18

Shared-Values are deeply held, commonly shared principles that exist within and across all of the world's religious and philosophical perspectives. On the contrary, some people view religions as one of the major causes of rivalry and conflict throughout the human history. Such people regard themselves as non-committed to religious philosophies, and adopt what they would call a “humanist position”.¹

Holders of the above view are skeptical about the general positive contributions of the religions. They hope that the exclusion of religion from the private or at least public, will bring a better solidity and harmony to human life. No serious Muslim or Christian will accept such kind of view. But this is not enough to eliminate this claim. Thus, it is necessary for the Christians and Muslims, including other category of believers, to live and cooperate in such a way that every person of good-will could see the misconception of such a distortion of religions. Hence, the Christians and Muslims should develop such harmonious relations in modern times, while maintaining their differing religious identities, they could show the world that they share respect for Allah or God, and that they believe that human conduct should follow Allah or God's will and law.² Islam and Christianity both consider that they possess a universal message, to be conveyed through Islamic Da‘wah or Christian Mission. This right to spread one's religion

1The position of a humanist is that a person has control over his own behavior. The Humanist allows a person freedom of choice, and is responsible for his own self-direction. Making one's own choices will lead to a progression of personal growth and a more positive view of oneself. Stressing that anxiety is a motivating force for change, the Humanist believes that the change will result in a more independent and complete life. <http://www.allaboutphilosophy.org/what-is-a-humanist-faq.htm>; [09-9-2020]

2 Laws of Allah: See, al-Qur‘ān 2:178-179; 4:14-16; 4:92-93; 5:33-34; 6:152-152

should be upheld¹, as long as it is carried out with due respect for human dignity; No harm should be done to others in the name of religion.²

The Golden Rule, which both religions teach is, treat others as one would like to be treated. A genuine religion does not cause hatred, tension or violence. Every religion teaches respect for others. Christians and Muslims should co-exist and co-operate to create a model human society. If the religious leaders of these two great communities do not provide this enthusiasm, we should honestly admit, that such leaders have failed to fulfill their task.³

5. Propagation of Peace

Peace is a state of harmony characterized by the lack of violence, conflict behaviors and the freedom from fear of violence. Generally understood as the absence of hostility, peace also suggests the existence of healthy and healed interpersonal or international relations, prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare, establishment of equality, and a working political order that serves the true interests of all. In the above sense, peace is the most common value of Islam and Christianity. Both religions stress the primacy of peace. For Muslims, "Peace" is one of the beautiful names of Allah (God). The significance of peace can also be witnessed in the customary greeting among

Muslims, by the word "*Assālmū 'Alaykum*" which means, Peace be upon you.⁴ For Christians, "*Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a*

¹ See, *al-Qur'ān* 109:6

² "*There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm*". Nawawi, Yahya bin Sharfuddin, *al-Arba'īn al-Nawawīyyah [Fourty Hadith]* (Millat Publications, Islamabad, 1997), Hadith:32)

³ See, *al-Qur'ān* 16:125 "*Invite to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching and argue with them in the best manner that the Lord is know who strayed from His way...*".

⁴ See, *al-Qur'ān* 4:86; 33:44

*peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you"*¹, said Jesus to his apostles the night before he suffered and died. And after his resurrection when he appeared to them, he generally began with the greeting: *"Peace be with you"*.² Peace is the necessity of human societies; it must be within the same religious community, between two or more religions, between peoples and states. Christians and Muslims have an obligation to promote harmony. The Muslims or Christians of today should not support crusades or holy wars. Nor should they allow their behaviour to be infected by racism or discrimination, on the basis of colour, race, lifestyle or religion.³ Muslim and Christian parents, leaders, educators should be convinced of the necessity of a sincere commitment to peace, beginning with peace between Christians and Muslims, that they will be able to effectively share these convictions in the family, at school, in the print and electronic media, and especially in mosques and churches. It is good gesture to offer condolences to families which have lost some of their members through violence sometimes carried out in the name of religion. But this will not be sufficient. It is necessary to educate one's co-religionists to accept and respect others and to co-operate with them to promote peace. This is the most important dimension of Christian-Muslim relations in modern times.

¹ Bible, John 14:27

² <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A27&version=NIV> [09-9-2019]

³ cf. Jn 20: 19,21 -26 --- St. Paul calls Christ "our peace" (cf. Eph 2: 14)

cf. Nostra Aetate, 5) --- The 2nd Vatican Council exhorts Muslims & Christians to "make common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace and freedom" (Nostra Aetate, 3). Pope John Paul II, addressing various representatives of the World Conference on Religion and Peace at the opening of their 6th World Assembly in Rome on November 3, 1994, insisted on the necessity of a joint commitment to the promotion of peace: "Today, religious leaders must clearly show that they are pledged to the promotion of peace precisely because of their religious belief" (Address, 2, in *L'Ossentatore Romano*, weekly English ed., 16 Nov. 1994, p:2)

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS IN CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS (CMR)

Both of these communities are now almost present everywhere on the globe in modern times. Both are universal in character and capacity. Both see each human as a potential member of their community and, for this reason, they invite everyone to institutional membership. The above discussion has given an understanding of the significant aspects of Christian-Muslim relations in modern times. There are indeed obstacles and challenges, to accomplish the objectives, mentioned in the previous section. In the following section we shall identify some important challenges in Christian-Muslim relations, and suggest their applied solutions in Christian-Muslim Relations.

Challenge & Solution # 1: Recalling and Healing the History

To some extent the present and also the future depends on the past history, because a community without memory, is a community without a future. Relations between Christians and Muslims have not always been peaceful and relaxing. Tension, conflicts, crusades and holy-wars have not been unfamiliar. Nor is the perception or impact of colonialism, forgotten.

The message of Pope Paul VI can be taken as an example, he says: "Over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding."¹ The only solution to this challenge is that both of the communities should sincerely apologize and forgive about the historical mistakes, mishaps, of their past behaviour and establish sincere relations of mutual

1 Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions proclaimed by Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965, in Documents of Vatican II, ed. Austin P. Flannery (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1975), p:740

understanding. The history of Christian-Muslim relations should be studied in all sincerity. Past wrongs should be accepted and regretted. Pardon should be sought and given. Only then will understanding be possible. Without true reconciliation, we cannot entrust together for the good of our co-religionists and of the world. Unbiased study of the past religious communities can be done to recognize their contribution to science and civilization. For example, contribution of Muslim Arabs to Western civilization is a reality. Similarly, Christian communities were in the Middle East for centuries before the arrival of Islam and Arab culture owes to them too. To accept the past is a condition for face the future. Institutes or Centers, to promote such studies will make both communities, more aware of such co-operation held in the past. Models for the future can be developed on these grounds.

Challenge & Solution # 2: Self-Criticism & its Application

Self-criticism or auto-critique refers to the pointing out of things critical or important to one's own beliefs, thoughts, and behaviour. It can form part of personal reflection or a group discussion. It is an essential element of critical thought, regarding it as healthy and necessary for learning and moral development. Christians and Muslims are taught by their religion to examine their conscience each day, to accept responsibility for any wrongs they may have done, and to repent and beg Allah and God for forgiveness.

Self-criticism is not a sign of weakness, but is a proof of maturity. It can help to consolidate and deepen relations between individuals and between communities. With regard to Christian-Muslim relations, where self-criticism is lacking, there is a tendency to be content with criticizing the others. This is a real obstacle to constructive and lasting relations. The difficult exercise of application of self-criticism has to be learned. If Muslims and Christian will perform this exercise, mutual relations between

them will become less strenuous. As has been said above, self-criticism is a sign of transparency and strength. It is encouraging that liaison committees and organizations are being established for Interreligious Dialogue to engage in such kind of self-examination. This could be recommended to all the Christian-Muslim working groups, around the world.

Challenge & Solution # 3: Religio-Political Exploitation & Freedom

Now and then, there is an attraction in religions to be used by politicians, and even a greater temptation for politicians to manipulate religion for their vested interests, because religious convictions are among the strongest of human motivations. A dishonest politician may be convinced to use religion to accomplish political goals. It has happened in history that religion has been mistreated to motivate their believers for wars which had political, economic, or racial motives. This is a sad history which did not either served religious or political ambitions.¹ It has happened in some parts of the world that governments or political parties, in order to strengthen their influence or to weaken a particular religious or political group, have given support to sectarian or extremist movements. For example, Europe, United States, United Kingdom, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, Bahrain, Sudan, India, Nepal, Pakistan etc. This indication can make Muslim and Christian leaders agree that politicians have their own goals and their own methods of achieving them. It is required of such politicians that they respect the freedom of other religions to determine their own aims and activities in the area of worship and the service of humanity. Muslim and Christian leaders cannot remain sterile from the exploitation of religion by politicians. Thus, essential freedom should be allowed to religion, to ease an individual's

¹ Steffen, Lloyd, *Holy War, Just War: Exploring the Moral Meaning of Religious Violence* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 2007), p:81

beliefs, rituals and code of life. Allah or God is at the axis of all genuine religions. Politicians and politics should remain impartial towards all religions. Religious leaders who yield the temptation towards their ideologies to be misused, and become an instrument of a political party, will reflect negative consequences, when that political party is not in power. Therefore, at times it will be useful for religious and political leaders to meet and discuss such issues.

Challenge & Solution # 4: Religious Extremism, Devotion or Plurality

Religious extremism is a subjective evaluation defined in the cultural context. What constitutes fanaticism in another's behavior or belief is determined by the core assumptions of the one doing the evaluation. As such, there is no academic consensus defining religious fanaticism.¹ Christian-Muslim relations are challenged by religious fanaticism or extremism. The religious extremist may be motivated by a desire to see religion return to its original state. But an extremist generally follows this self-assigned goal by an uncompromising application in modern times, which were a part of past age and culture. Extremism is often characterized by an inflexible attitude towards co-religionists and others, who embrace different views of society. This understanding frequently leads to violence. Some extremists go further, denying the right of religious freedom of others, which is different from their own, and exclude them from the right to be successful.²

Who does not see that, this is not the way to promote Christian-Muslim relations? Christians and Muslims should admit that religious plurality is a fact of 21st century world. As the Qur'ān asserts, “*There is no compulsion in*

¹ Steffen, Lloyd, *Holy War, Just War: Exploring the Moral Meaning of Religious Violence*, p:81

² Wilcox, Laird. "What Is Political Extremism", (*The Voluntaryist newsletter* #27, 1987) <http://voluntaryist.com/>

religion ---”¹. Therefore, Religion should be proposed, not imposed. The acceptance or compliance to a religious ideology by the use of psychological, physical, economic, social or other force, is not worthy for a human being. Because, it is not acceptable and approved by Allah or God. Thus, religious extremists should review this kind of approach, if they have, which needs alteration. As for those who engage in violence in the name of religion, this is a major insult to Allah or God and to religion. "No one can consider himself faithful to the great and merciful God who in the name of the same God dares to kill his brother."² Religion and peace go together: "to wage war in the name of religion is a blatant contradiction," said Pope Paul II in his speech to the World Conference on Religion and Peace.³

A possible solution to this challenge is that, visionary religious leaders and wise leading politicians should convince their citizens that freedom of religion is one of the wonderful human-right and that no one should be prevented from exercising this basic human right, provided that the just rights of others are being not violated.

Challenge & Solution # 5: Religious Liberty, Human Rights & Justice

Historically, "freedom of religion" has been used to refer to the tolerance of different theological systems of belief, while *freedom of worship* has been defined as freedom of individual action. Each of these has existed to varying degrees in the modern times.⁴ The freedom to leave or discontinue membership in a religion or religious group—in religious terms called "apostasy"—is also a fundamental part of religious freedom, covered by

¹ See, *al-Qur'ān* 2:256

² In, (*L' Osserv. Rom., weekly Eng. ed.*, 16 Nov 1994), p.2. Talk given at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., June 5, 1997.

³ *Ibid.*, p:2

⁴ Taylor, Richard A. & Clendenen, E. Ray, *Haggai, Malachi* (B&H Pub. Group, New York, 2004), p:31–32

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.¹ Freedom of religion is considered by many people and nations to be a fundamental human right. In a country with a state religion, freedom of religion is generally considered as permission of religious practices of other sects besides the state religion, with no harassment to devotees of other faith.² In this regard, the Muslim perception is somewhat different.³ Some Muslim countries have reservations regarding the United Nations 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁴, which they see as an expression of Western culture.⁵ In context of human rights and justice, the major reasons identified and described by the contemporary social scientists are: poverty, non-development, injustice and corruption which stimulates extremist religious tendencies. In such kind of societies, those who deny the present situation or who oppose the government, may easily find the support of the suffering poor, who are the vast majority, by making appeal to exaggerated religious claims, with the encouragement that the only solution to these sufferings is a return to what is presented as an original form of a religion, either Islam or Christianity. The effective response to this issue is not a clean-up of religious extremists. It should rather be a joint commitment of judicious Muslim and Christian citizens and intellectuals to work for justice, socio-economic

1 For detail see, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", The United Nations, Article 18
2 Declaration on religious freedom "dignitatis humanae" on the right of the person and of communities to social & civil freedom on December 7, 1965.
<http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html> [24-08-2020]

3 For same views see, al-Qur'ān 2:30; 6:165; 24:55; 38:26; 57:7; 109:6; See, Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the Islamic Council of Europe on 19 September 1981/21 Dhul Qaidah 1401.

4 See, Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the Islamic Council of Europe on 19 September 1981/21 Dhul Qaidah 1401. See, http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/islamic_declaration_HR.html

5 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb gave permission during his reign to the non-Muslims to practice their faiths. See, Nomani, Shibli, Alfarooq (Maktaba Rehmania, Urdu Bazar, Lahore, 2000), p:288-291

development programs, with sincerity in private and public life, and enthusiasm to show serious unity with the poor because, truth, development, justice and solidarity are the pillars of peace.¹

Challenge & Solution # 6: Reciprocal Relationship

Reciprocity in social psychology, refers to responding to a positive action with another positive action, rewarding kind actions. As a social construct, reciprocity means that in response to friendly actions, people are frequently much nicer and much more cooperative than predicted by the self-interest model; conversely, in response to hostile actions they are frequently much nastier and vicious.²

With this outlook, the rights to religious freedom apply to individuals and communities. It includes the right to follow a religion and share that religion with others. The exercise of this right should have no territorial boundaries. It applies to all humans, whether they are principally Muslim or Christian. A religion should not ask for religious freedom for its followers in a country while denying the same to other believers in a country, where it is the religion of majority. An example can be taken in this regard. On June 21, 1995, the first mosque was inaugurated in Rome. On this occasion, Pope John Paul II spoke on the necessity of reciprocity to the general audience.³ Such kind of examples is also required from the Muslims quarters to declare

1 Israr Ahmad, Dr., *Lessons from History (Anjuman Khuddarn-ul-Qur'an, Lahore, 2004)*, p:4-6, 122-130

2 Gouldner, Alvin. "The Norm of Reciprocity." *American Sociological Review* 25 (1960): 161-78

3 "This event is an eloquent sign of the religious freedom recognized here for every believer. And it is significant that in Rome, the center of Christianity ---, Muslims should have their own place to worship with full respect for their freedom of conscience. On a significant occasion like this, it is unfortunately necessary to point out that in some Islamic countries, similar signs of the recognition of religious freedom are lacking. And yet the world, on the threshold of the third millennium, is waiting for these signs! Religious Freedom has now become part of many international documents and is one of the pillars of contemporary society." (L30ssentatore Romano, weekly Eng. ed. 28 June 1995), p:11.

reciprocity between Christians and Muslims. This is what, all about reciprocal relationship.

Challenge & Solution # 7: Spiritual Dimension

Christian-Muslim relations can make more advancement in modern times, if both of the recognized entities increase their attention towards the spiritual height. Knowledge of the other religion, religious freedom, meetings and common socio-economic projects are good and important; however, they are not enough. A superior attention to Allah or God is essential. A strong relationship and nearness of a Muslim and a Christian to Allah or God in prayers, in openness and secretness, will bring them nearer to each other. We may say that interreligious relations are best promoted by those believers, who are deeply committed to their religious behaviours.¹

Challenge & Solution # 8: Judicious Use of Natural Resources

The experts tell us that 20% of humanity consumes 80% of the earth's resources, leaving only 20% to four-fifths of human race.² Commonly, there are two types of natural resources: renewable resources and non-renewable resources. However, most natural resources are limited. This means they will eventually run out.³ Moreover, evident rich countries control food production for the sake of balancing market prices, while there are poor countries whose inhabitants are starving to death because they do not have enough to eat.⁴ And no one needs the experts to know that the earth's resources can be devastated or slowly exhausted by greed, carelessness and wars.⁵ This is one the most important area for Christian-Muslim collaboration in the modern times, in which the people should people

¹ See, *al-Qur'ān* 2:2; 2:21; 2:284; 3:76; 3:131; 4:9; 5:7-8; 5:100

² Oscar Schachter, *Sharing the World's Resources* (Columbia University Press, 1977) p:177

³ *Ibid.*, p:177

⁴ *The American Heritage Science Dictionary* (Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 2005).

⁵ *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, Vol.2, Issue 1, Spring 2012

become more conscious about their interdependence. Thus, a viable solution must come, from the Christian-Muslim intellectuals, to save the future of humanity.

Conclusion

The religious attitudes of Christians and Muslims should be formed on the challenges and their solutions which has been emphasized in this paper. We have done no more than to highlight some considered necessary directions in which the Christian-Muslim-Relations (CMR) can flourish in the modern times. May Allah/God grace the Christians and Muslims to show a positive response.

“This is a declaration for mankind, a guidance and instruction to those who fear God.” (al-Qur’ān 3:138)

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