

Interfaith Engagement and Theological Education

Common Awards
Seedcorn Grants

Project Report
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INTRODUCTION

A Brief Overview

The stated aim of this project was to develop a more robust network for the teaching of Inter Faith Engagement (IFE) across Theological Education Institutions (TEIs), by researching how TEIs might benefit from working in partnership with centres of excellence in Inter Faith Engagement. Its intention in doing this was to cultivate a conversation with and between TEIs about the importance of the discipline of IFE as an aspect of theological education, building upon the work of the Common Awards Inter Faith Engagement Module Working Group. At the heart of the project was a day conference held in September 2015, which brought together representatives from TEIs and centres of excellence in IFE to explore how best to resource and encourage incorporating IFE as a part of the Common Awards curriculum offered by individual TEIs.

A key objective of the project was to explore ways in which the significant experience and expertise located within the centres of excellence might be utilised by TEIs in the context of delivering the relevant Common Award modules. Ideally these relationships would be two-way conversations, with TEIs supported and resourced by centres, who would in turn incorporate the learning gained from this into their own research and development. The project took as its starting point the fact that the modules on Inter Faith Engagement are an asset to the Common Awards curriculum, preparing and equipping ministerial students for Christian mission and ministry - however their value for learning and formation is largely dependent on confident and effective delivery by TEIs. Therefore, it is necessary to develop mechanisms which ensure that this is the case across the board - one such mechanism being the development of a network, from which might stem sustainable bilateral or multilateral relationships between individual centres and TEIs. More broadly, the project sought to contribute to the discussion around both the future of theological education and the nature of learning in this context.

Inter Faith Engagement and Theological Education: An Introduction to the Issue

Inter Faith Engagement (IFE) is an integrative and interdisciplinary component of theological education that engages with the increasing reality of our 'multi faith conscious society'. Using this definition, IFE in

its broadest sense recognises that the issue is not simply confined to diverse areas which can be statistically defined as 'Multi-Faith' or 'Presence and Engagement' parishes. Important though that is, IFE expands the meaning of engagement by examining the implications for the ministry of the Church to a culture that increasingly acknowledges the reality of our religiously plural society. How does this inform engagement in mission, or understandings of the church and its role in wider society? What are the implications for responses to international issues, or concerns about peace and reconciliation? IFE as a discipline focusses on the impact of engagement with others on Christian self-understanding - encouraging self-reflection through the process of experiential engagement alongside studying or learning about and with other faith traditions, with an emphasis on the process leading the learning. In the context of the ministerial curriculum, IFE approaches seek to resource ordinands to engage creatively and with theological integrity in diverse contexts where they live and work.

As well as the obvious focus on engagement with individuals and communities from faiths other than Christianity, IFE recognises the importance of intra-Christian dialogue - valuing and affirming the diversity of perspectives on other faith traditions found within Christianity. This internal conversation encompasses theological perspectives that emphasise both fidelity to tradition and openness to others; seeking to encourage an approach that recognises the complexities involved in encounter and resists the false dichotomy of dialogue vs. witness. Open reflection on this, both within and beyond TEI's, furthers the formation of Christian identity - whether lay or ordained.

With this in mind, a key component of this project is the recognition that despite the sharing of a curriculum under Common Awards, there are a range of theological traditions found within the group of TEIs. It is imperative that in learning about IFE, students are exposed to healthy discussion around the range of theological positions that exist. While each TEI has its own particular tradition, it is imperative that a diversity of perspectives is brought into the classroom. A range of traditions are also embodied by the centres of excellence, which vary in their aims and focus though all share a belief in the importance of authentic and ethical engagement between faiths. This means that there is potential for TEIs to work with a centre which shares their theological standpoint - or alternatively to work with several in order to showcase to students the range of approaches. IFE is a great opportunity for students to practice 'good disagreement', being challenged to articulate their own views while recognising that others may reach different conclusions and both can be faithful Christian responses.

Inter Faith Engagement and Theological Education: Building upon Existing Work

As part of the Common Awards process a number of people involved in teaching Inter Faith Engagement in TEI's came together to form the Inter Faith Engagement Module Working Group. This included representatives involved in teaching at various levels in the following TEIs: Queen's Foundation, The Cambridge Federation, Ripon College Cuddesdon, the West of England Ministerial Training Course, Cranmer Hall, Trinity College Bristol, St John's Nottingham and St Mellitus. The group ranged from full time staff running compulsory modules on Inter Faith Engagement, to those from Presence and Engagement centres

which host weekends or residential weeks for a TEI, to individuals invited in by TEIs to teach either one-off classes or a set of sessions on aspects of IFE.

This group, with its diverse experience and theological perspectives, drew on the good practice of training of ordinands both at TEIs and also at Presence and Engagement centres to develop a range of modules that formed a part of the integrated learning suite of modules in Common Awards. Anecdotal evidence at the outset of this project suggested that a reasonable number of TEIs had taken up one of these modules, although some had not, and it was unknown how many of these were compulsory for ordinands. Therefore the project looked to build on the work of that group, by examining a) how modules are currently being delivered, b) how the present delivery might be enhanced and c) how partnerships between TEIs and centres of excellence in IFE might enrich the experience of students who opt for or are required to take these courses. The first of these aims was met through a series of telephone interviews with staff members at TEIs. With regard to the second and third, a day conference brought together TEIs who are currently using the IFE modules with TEIs who are seeking to introduce them and those wanting to explore the possibility, for the sharing of good practice and conversation about various ways these modules might work in different settings. This event also introduced TEIs to the external resources available through the various centres of excellence mentioned above, and in doing so helped to resource TEIs to develop and enhance IFE modules as well-supported and cohesive elements of their curriculum.

Inter Faith Engagement and Theological Education: A Conference and a Network

The project was a partnership between The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education and the Presence & Engagement Network. It was supported by a range of IFE centres and organisations including the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland Inter Faith Theological Advisory Group, The Woolf Institute Cambridge, The Cambridge Inter Faith Programme, The Touchstone Centre in Bradford, The Council of Christians and Jews, The Oxford Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies and The London Inter Faith Centre as well as support from other TEI's. This broad range of participants means that the project has the potential for real and lasting impact on the way IFE is taught in TEIs. As mentioned above, the central element of the research process was a day conference, of which further details are given later in this paper. This offered the opportunity for authentic conversation about the challenges of incorporating IFE into ministerial training, with chance to explore how the resources found within the centres of excellence might mitigate some of these obstacles.

Yet the project recognised that conferences alone are not the answer. Therefore it is hoped that this is the start of an ongoing conversation between TEIs about IFE in theological education, and marks the inauguration of a network of centres of excellence which TEIs can draw on, located within the Presence and Engagement Programme in the Mission and Public Affairs Division of the Church of England. Going forward, the shape of this will be determined by those who are involved, with the aim that it is a fluid, user-driven network, adapting to meet the needs of the participants. Initially, following discussion at the conference, this will take the form of a dedicated page for theological educators on the Presence & Engagement website, containing useful links and resources.

METHODOLOGY

Once the funding proposal had been accepted, the first step was to contact TEIs¹ to do the groundwork in terms of establishing the current situation and gauging the mood among theological educators in relation to interfaith engagement. The method for this stage of the research was as follows. Beginning with the data available on the Common Awards website, this provided a list of which TEIs had opted to offer modules from the selection of interest to this project. This allowed the TEIs to be divided into two sets – those which had opted to offer at least one module on IFE under Common Awards (referred to hereafter as phase 1), and those which had not (phase 2). A list of questions for each group was drawn up, which can be seen in the appendix. Again, the Common Awards website provided a list of contacts for each TEI and so an initial email was sent to the contact at each of the phase 1 institutions, introducing the project and asking for the opportunity to conduct a telephone interview. Following this, over a period of two weeks it was possible to speak to representatives from nine of the ten TEIs in phase 1, with one opting to answer questions via email.

Each conversation was structured around the questions devised in advance, but with space allowed for wider conversation about related issues and to pursue specific points raised by the interviewees. Conversations tended to last between twenty and forty minutes. Some TEIs were unsure who was best placed to participate, and often apologised for not having access to as much information on the subject as they would have liked. However, in general almost all the interviewees were interested in the project and spoke positively about the value of interfaith engagement in theological education, as well as being honest about some of the challenges involved in incorporating it. Conversations began with the interviewer seeking to understand the context of the TEI in question in terms of intake and model of training. This was followed by questions about the specific Common Awards modules being taught, verifying whether the information provided by Common Awards was correct and then enquiring about how each of the modules on offer were being delivered and by whom. The third section of the conversation looked at resourcing, and whether TEIs were accessing external resources and if so through what means. It was at this point that the conversation often touched on other issues relating to IFE in TEIs, as guided by the interviewee. Each conversation concluded by thanking the interviewee for their time and input, and notifying them of the upcoming conference at which these issues would be explored further and to which an invitation would be forthcoming. Notes were taken during the conversation under each of the question headings, a summary of which can be found in the section below.

Following the completion of these conversations, the focus shifted to phase 2 TEIs. Another email, adapted to fit the recipients, was sent out to the Common Awards contacts at the remaining TEIs. The questions to be asked of these seven TEIs were somewhat broader as it was unknown at this point whether there would be any element of IFE in their curriculum. As might be expected, this group were slightly harder to elicit a response from, however after repeated attempts phone calls were scheduled with four of them, while the other three responded to questions via email. One TEI was unresponsive,² beyond confirming that they offered no modules on Interfaith Engagement, and so they have not been included in the figures. However apart from this the data set is fairly complete, with this the only gap in the findings.

A similar process was undertaken for the interviews with the Inter Faith Centres.³ A number were identified as possible partners in the project and were contacted prior to the funding application inquiring as to their interest in the project and a) their willingness to be interviewed and b) attend the conference. The following centres initially agreed to participate: The Woolf Institute Cambridge, The Cambridge Inter Faith Programme, the Touchstone Centre in Bradford, The Council of Christians and Jews, The Oxford Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies and The London Inter Faith Centre alongside the Network of Presence & Engagement Centres including Birmingham, Bradford, London and Leicester. All the above bar the Cambridge Inter Faith Programme participated in the research through giving an interview and some also attended the conference with Woolf, CCJ, The Oxford Centre and Touchstone presenting material. Interviews were arranged either in person or over the phone and a similar process to the interviews with the TEIs was undertaken with a smaller number of questions asked, concentrating on the centre's involvement in theological education in general, and Common Awards in particular (see Appendix.) For ease, the interviews with IFCs will be referred to as Phase 3 of the project.

Phase 1: Interviews with TEIs offering Common Awards modules on IFE

The **Cambridge Theological Federation** is an ecumenical partnership which comprises nine institutions. Three of these provide training for ordained ministry in the Church of England – the Eastern Region Ministerial Course (ERMC), Westcott House and Ridley Hall.

The **Eastern Region Ministerial Course** offers theological education and ministerial training in two forms. The first is a centre-based model at St Albans and Norwich, where weekly classes are held; the other an online training model, in cases where centre-based training is not possible. All students are locally based throughout the Eastern Region and beyond, and attend six residential weekends and an annual Summer School. ERMC is also in partnership with the Dioceses of Norwich, St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, and St Albans to ensure some joint training of Church of England Readers alongside ordinands.⁴

Currently the interfaith engagement modules offered to students at ERMC are *Multifaith Awareness* at Level 4 and *Christian Discipleship and Ministry in Multifaith Contexts* at Level 5. These are taught simultaneously as a residential summer school, which ran for the first time in August 2014. All students will attend this

once during their training. Most of the content was described by the interviewee as ‘homegrown’ with the exception of the teaching on Islam. This was provided by Revd Colin Chapman, author of several books on Christian-Muslim relations. During the residential, 24 hours were spent at St Philips Centre (SPC), taking part in one of their programmes. The link with SPC came about through a personal contact, as ERM’s principal was previously a chaplain in Leicester Diocese where SPC is located. Prior to Common Awards, ERM had run a similar study week every other year since 2008. This varied between using speakers from SPC and utilising local contacts to organise visits in East Anglia. The study week had a wider focus, looking at Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. However, under Common Awards Islam has become the single focus, coupled with more emphasis on the Christian response to other faiths, and this adjustment has prompted a reconnection with SPC. The decision in recent years to focus solely on Islam was a recurring feature of these conversations, something which will be explored in more detail below.

Westcott House provide fully time residential training for ordination in the centre of Cambridge, rooted in the catholic tradition of the Anglican Church.⁵

The first Common Awards interfaith engagement module which students will be offered will be the forthcoming *Exploring Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Encounter*. This will be a Federation-wide module, in collaboration with the Woolf Institute. It will be optional, and is very similar to a course which has been previously taught at Westcott as part of the Cambridge-accredited B.Th course. The new module will be taught by Revd Canon Chris Chivers (Principal of Westcott House), along with Dr Ed Kessler (Director of the Woolf Institute) and Dr Atif Imtiaz (Academic Director of the Cambridge Muslim College). Federation-wide Intensive courses are also available to students – there is one exploring Christian-Muslim relations (taught by Revd Colin Chapman), one on Jewish-Christian relations in a post-Holocaust context (taught by Dr Ed Kessler), and the Common Awards module *Integrative Learning for Collaborative Practice on World Faiths* is a third option. This takes place in January and June, outside normal teaching times and is usually taught by an external speaker. In addition, a lecturer in Hinduism from the Cambridge Divinity Faculty comes in for a lecture and discussion, and there is a trip to Neasden Hindu temple. This module is compulsory for first year students, although some do it for assessment, while others choose to audit it. Some students have also shown interest in attending the ERM summer school mentioned above. The interviewee also explained that Westcott is building a relationship with the nearby Cambridge Muslim College. So far, several visits described as “intentional dialogue” have taken place between ordinands and trainee imams. In future Westcott hope to connect with the Cambridge Interfaith Programme and set up a Scriptural Reasoning group for students from the two institutions. The interviewee felt that Westcott are well resourced in terms of interfaith engagement and wondered whether they might therefore have something to offer to other TEIs, perhaps via access to some online modules they are developing in partnership with the Woolf Institute. They felt that the main barrier to the inclusion of Interfaith Engagement in the curriculum was not lack of resources, but lack of interest from students. Specifically mentioned in this regard were those who had a bad experience of RE at school, or those who feel called to rural ministry. However the interviewee reiterated that all students are required to do some study of IFE, and once it is explained why this is the case they generally understand and are happy to comply.

Ridley Hall is a full time residential college in Cambridge which describes itself as open evangelical, where students train for ordination alongside others preparing for youth and children’s ministry.⁶

In the academic year 2014-15, Ridley Hall did not run any Common Awards modules on IFE, but in 2015-16 the Cambridge Theological Federation, of which Ridley is a part will be offering *Exploring Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Encounter* as mentioned above. This will be optional. Students are also strongly encouraged to attend one of the Federation-wise intensive courses. In addition, several students do four-week block placements in parishes which are multi-cultural, ethnically diverse and multi-faith, providing opportunities to explore interfaith engagement in context. The interviewee's view was that the main constraint in including IFE in the curriculum is the number of key areas that need to be covered in the syllabus. Like Westcott, Ridley also felt the Federation was well equipped to offer resources; particularly in the area of Judaism and Islam.

Lincoln School of Theology (LST) is a learning community which provides part time ordination training as well as training candidates from the Diocese of Lincoln as Licensed Lay Ministers. Ordination training takes place over three years, through a mixture of Saturday seminars, local tutorial groups in the evenings, and residential study at weekends and over Easter.⁷

At LST, *Christianity and Interfaith Engagement* is compulsory for all ordinands, and this is delivered as a residential weekend. This took place for the first time in Spring 2015, with input from the Council for Christians and Jews (CCJ). This relationship developed after CCJ initiated contact with LST, and the weekend included a historical overview of Christian-Jewish relations, and input from Rabbi Mark Solomon. There was also a dinner with local people of other faiths and those involved in interfaith work. In relation to this, the interviewee stressed the importance of students meeting people of other faiths, not just hearing about them from a Christian with interfaith experience. Although the weekend's teaching focusses on Judaism, students then complete their assessment on another faith after doing their own reading. Though LST has a small staff team, there is a retired incumbent who acts as their Interfaith Coordinator.

Ripon College, Cuddesdon, offers both residential and non-residential training for ordination. The former takes place on site at Ripon College, near Oxford, while the latter is administered either through the **Oxford Ministry Course (OMC)** or the **West of England Ministerial Training Course (WEMTC)**. There is also the option of mixed mode training tailored to the individual's situation.⁸

The interviewee said that historically Ripon College has had no assessed interfaith component to its training, but rather taken it as one of the themes for its study weeks. These occur twice a year and are primarily formational rather than academic. The interviewee estimated that about half of the students will do the interfaith engagement week at some point during their training. Under Common Awards, Ripon College now offers two interfaith courses at Level 5 - *Christian Discipleship and Ministry in Multi Faith Contexts*, and *Christianity and Inter Faith Engagement* - and so if students opted to take one of these then the study week would make up the primary input for it. However the interviewee expected numbers doing so would be fairly low. In addition to specific modules, the *Mission and Evangelism* module taught at Ripon College includes a ninety minute lecture on IFE. In the past, Ripon College have used the Oxford Centre for Christian-Muslim Studies and the Oxford Diocesan Committee for Interfaith Concerns when planning visits and input for study weeks. However although such resources are valuable, in practice most things are done via personal contacts.

From 2015, students on the Oxford Ministerial Course take *Multifaith Awareness* as a summer school, together with WEMTC. This is taken by all ordinands in their first year, and looks at Islam and Buddhism.

This is resourced via the interviewee's personal contacts and they recognised that this means the programme would be unsustainable in their absence. Prior to Common Awards, there was a weekend on this topic, so for WEMTC/OMC the amount of time spent on IFE has increased under Common Awards. The interview noted that WEMTC has two centres, one of which is in an area where visits to places of worship were hard to organise due to a fairly homogenous community. This was an issue which also arose in other conversations.

St Mellitus College is one of the largest TEIs in the Anglican Church. It uses a model of 'on the job' training in London, where students are based in a church and then have one day's teaching and one day's study per week, plus residential. Part time courses are also available in London or Chelmsford, with evening and weekend teaching.⁹ St Mellitus North West provides a similar programme based as Liverpool Cathedral, however the interview focussed solely on the London college.

All third year ordinands take *Christianity and Interfaith Engagement*, which is taught over two residential weekends at a conference centre, with visits to places of worship nearby. This took place for the first time in Spring 2015. Most of the teaching was done by the lecturer in Missiology, except for the content on New Age groups. The interviewee stressed that this is possible in large part because the focus of the course is on Christian engagement with other faiths, as opposed to learning information about them. The course does focus on Islam, which was described as a pragmatic decision. Having looked at the areas which students come from, this was felt to be the faith they were most likely to encounter in their ministry. Prior to Common Awards, students had visited local places of worship and looked at Judaism and Sikhism as well as Islam. At present, the interviewee stated that St Mellitus were happy doing things in house, however they had made use of the London Presence & Engagement Network as well as other personal contacts. If the module were to be expanded in future to cover other faiths besides Islam, they would seek guidance on delivering this. The interviewee expressed interest in how other TEIs decide on what to include and what to leave out, given the constraints on time.

Trinity College in Bristol is an evangelical institution which trains students for ordination on a full time, church-based or part-time basis.¹⁰

During the course of their studies, all ordinands take the module *Integrative Learning for Collaborative Practice* on the subject of World Faiths, with a specific focus on Islam. Generally this is not done for credit, but they will be required to write something for their portfolio as evidence of their learning. Prior to Common Awards there was a similar week, but no requirement to write anything. Howard Worsley, the vice-principal, oversees this area of the curriculum and the course is taught as a block week organised through his personal contacts. He teaches the World Faiths component, along with David Stockwell from Mahabba as a visiting practitioner, and there is a visit to local mosque.

Wycliffe Hall is an evangelical theological college set within the University of Oxford, providing ministerial training in a residential context.¹¹

At Wycliffe, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Engagement* is compulsory for all students, and this is taught as a study week. This has not yet taken place but will be taught by Ida Glaser, who is an associate tutor and director of the Centre of Muslim-Christian Studies. As well as input from Ida, the course will involve

meetings between students and Muslims. Prior to Common Awards, there was a World Religions module on the Oxford BA course, which is still offered to non ordinands.

Lindisfarne Regional Training Partnership was set up by the Church of England, in partnership with the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, to provide learning opportunities for adult Christians in the North East. They offer training for ordination during the evenings in several locations across the region.

All ordinands and most independent students take the Common Awards module *Christianity and Interfaith Engagement*. This course is taught on a weekly basis by the Revd Gavin Wort, formerly Chaplain and Inter-Faith Adviser to Northumbria University and currently Chair of the Newcastle and Durham Committee for Inter-Faith & Ethnic Relations, with additional input from the Revd Chris Howson, Chaplain to Sunderland University. Prior to Common Awards there was a module called Christianity and Other Faiths at BA Level, which was also taught by Gavin. However this was only taken by any students who were studying for the full BA as part of their ministry training, or by those who had elected to return to 'top up' their Diploma into a BA, and not all ministry candidates. Therefore under Common Awards, more students are encountering interfaith engagement in the course of their training.

The **Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education** trains Anglican and Methodist ordinands as well as some Pentecostal students. There are two tracks; Track 1 is a daytime programme, either full or part time, and Track 2 is an evening/residential weekend programme.

Queen's teaches a number of Common Awards modules on IFE. At Level 5, *Christianity and Interfaith Engagement* is compulsory for all students. At Level 6, *Common Good in Christianity and Islam* is optional, and usually taken by 6-10 students. This is taught in partnership with the Al Mahdi Institute in Birmingham, a Shia education centre, with input from Dr. Ali-Reza Bhojani alongside Queen's tutor Richard Sudworth. There are hopes that this might become a joint course with their students in the future - at present they take part in structured dialogue sessions together. At Level 7, *Theology and Dialogue* is offered to MA students, as a possible alternative to auditing the Level 5 course that is compulsory for all ordinands. At Level 4 there is a compulsory module which is not Common Awards, on Christian-Jewish Relations. However, the course has the same learning outcomes of the CA module and was the basis of the CA Module descriptor, but is not done for credit.

Students do this Christian-Jewish relations course in their first year and Christianity and Inter Faith Engagement in their second year. Courses are largely taught internally, as Queen's have tutors with significant inter faith experience and a designated half time Inter Faith Engagement tutor, Revd Ray Gaston. Queen's draws both upon the local multi-faith context of the West Midlands and wider contacts established through the inter faith tutor. The interviewee emphasised that the primary aim of engagement with other faiths, either in the class or through personal experiences, is to encourage reflection on the impact of the encounters upon the student's Christian self-understanding. It is hoped that this will enable the development of a creative spiritual response rooted in the student's particular theological tradition.

Although not related to Common Awards, another relevant opportunity for students is the buddy scheme which Queen's have been involved with as a pilot project, pairing ordinands with rabbinical students from Leo Baeck. This was initiated by the Jewish institution, and Queen's have suggested that in future perhaps

Leo Baeck could buddy with students from another TEI where there are currently less opportunities for students to explore IFE. Queens also offer a Post Graduate Certificate in IFE for practitioners in the field that is co-taught with the Director of Inter Faith Relations of the Birmingham Diocese, but this is accredited by Newman University rather than Durham University.

Phase 2: TEIs not offering Common Awards modules on IFE

Cranmer Hall is located within the University of Durham, as a constituent part of St John's College. Most ordinands study on a full time basis, either residential or as weekly boarders.¹²

Prior to Common Awards, there was an audit-only block module at Cranmer Hall called 'Christianity and Other Faiths'. This week-long, intensive course involved an overnight stay in Bradford, facilitated by Bradford Churches for Dialogue and Diversity (BCDD), which included visiting a mosque and gurdwara. However the decision was made to cease working with BCDD as the cost of taking students to Bradford was prohibitive, and engagement is available close by in Newcastle. This block week now continues alongside Common Awards and is compulsory for all final year ordinands. Cranmer does not offer any of the Common Awards modules on IFE. This year's block week will be overseen by an external practitioner, Revd Steve Hollinghurst, aided by a range of speakers including Sarah Snyder from the Cambridge Interfaith Programme and individuals from other faiths. The central aim of this module is to provide students with an opportunity to reflect theologically, biblically and practically on Christian engagement with other faiths, to gain some understanding of other faiths - particularly Islam - and to give students opportunities to meet members of other faith groups at their places of worship. Any particular suggestions about resources, support or networks would be welcomed by the college.

The **South East Institute for Theological Education** is a regional training scheme for the dioceses of Southwark, Chichester, Rochester and Canterbury.¹³ All non-stipendiary candidates from these dioceses train at SEITE; mostly on a part time basis over three years, although there are some full time stipendiary candidates on a two year context-based course.

SEITE does not currently offer any of the Common Awards modules on interfaith engagement, but all ordinands do either *Foundations of Mission and Ministry in Context* at Level 4 or *Developing Mission and Ministry in Context* at Level 5. As part of this, Bishop Michael Ipgrave and Revd Richard Sudworth do a day's teaching on interfaith engagement. Furthermore, interfaith is specifically referred to in the written assignment. Bishop Michael Ipgrave has been involved for a number of years, and taught a similar day prior to Common Awards so little has changed in that respect. One thing that the interviewee felt would be useful was better signposting for students once they have left SEITE and encounter situations in their ministry where they need resources on a particular issue related to interfaith. They suggested that often the most important thing is knowing who has the expertise when you need it. It would therefore be helpful if there could be an up to date list held somewhere online which people could access. This is a need which might be met by the proposed theological educators webpage.

The **All Saints Centre for Mission and Ministry** in Manchester was currently undergoing the Common Awards validation process at the time of interview, to be completed in time for September 2015. All Saints trains candidates from the North West and East Midlands for ordination, generally over three years with teaching in the evening and at weekends.¹⁴

On the existing ordination training pathway, first year students take a module called Global Mission, which includes an exploration of the impact of world faiths on Christian mission both in the UK and abroad. This focusses particularly on Judaism and Islam, with Revd Steve Williams and Revd Phil Rawlings - both

Church of England interfaith advisers - respectively teaching these sections. The module includes visits to places of worship, which are organised through the teacher's personal contacts. The assessment asks students to write a critique of Christianity from either a Jewish or Islamic perspective. In terms of the content, these modules take a combination approach - the core beliefs of other faiths are taught along with some historical development and introduction to the varieties found within them. There are also sessions on engaging in dialogue and guidelines for engagement. However under Common Awards, All Saints are proposing to offer *Exploring Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Encounter* to fit their credit requirements. They are also looking at using *Introduction to Missionary Movements and the Gospel in Global Context*, which will include some content on IFE.

The **Lancashire and Cumbria Theological Partnership** offers part time training for candidates from the dioceses of Carlisle and Blackburn, both for ordination and Licensed Lay Ministry. The model of training is a dispersed one, with students in small tutorial groups across the area covered, working with honorary tutors. A small core staff team do the bulk of the teaching, which is delivered via termly day schools, residential weekends and a week-long summer school. Prior to Common Awards, LCTP students used the University of Cumbria's library service which was well set up for covering the area, but this no longer the case.

LCTP does not currently offer any of the Common Awards modules specifically focussed on IFE. The interviewee stressed that in terms of their Common Awards curriculum, LCTP have opted for broader modules in order to meet Ministry Division's requirements and address key areas within limited time. In addition, as LCTP has a small cohort it is not feasible to provide options for students to choose from, so there is one standard pathway. Furthermore there is a need to work with the specialisms of tutors. That said, IFE is addressed as part of the third year mission modules, often in a day school with field trips to mosques in Blackburn. The interviewee noted the disparity across the region their students come from in terms of diversity. Previously the University of Cumbria's Religious Studies department has helped organising teaching and visits on interfaith engagement but it's not clear if this will continue now they are no longer the accrediting body. LCTP have also used Diocesan Interfaith Advisers in Blackburn and Carlisle as well as other local resources.

In terms of resources which would be helpful, the interviewee noted that with such a dispersed cohort, online resources are key. In areas where there isn't the opportunity to meet people from other faiths, something like a set of interviews students could watch would be really useful - not so much focussed on what people believe, but on the lived experience of faith. More generally, better centralised online resourcing from Common Awards would enable a wider range of options to be available to students in places like LCTP where the size of the staff renders this unfeasible. Students have given positive feedback on their experience of using the Common Awards Virtual Learning Environment (CAVLE), suggesting this forum might be capitalised on to provide IFE resources. On a related note, the interviewee also commented that in their experience students doing part time training seem to do well at integrating their own experiences into their learning, in comparison with those training in a residential context. This is particularly relevant to of IFE, where there is an emphasis on theological reflection.

However during the course of this research, a review of LCTP was underway and in May 2015 it was announced by the Bishops of Blackburn and Penrith than LCTP in its current form will cease to exist at the end of the 2015-16 academic year.¹⁵ The review was prompted by a number of factors, including

changes to government funding of Higher Education and the introduction of Common Awards. The University of Cumbria have decided that given the move to accreditation via Durham University, it no longer makes sense to partner within LCTP. The two dioceses involved see the future of training provision differently - Blackburn are working on a partnership arrangement with an alternative training organisation and Carlisle are looking to repurpose LCTP to deliver a range of ministerial training and equipping. Therefore funding will continue until summer of 2016, allowing all existing students to complete their academic awards, but no further students will be enrolled until the new shape of LCTP has been agreed.

St Stephen's House (SSH) is an Anglican theological foundation and Permanent Private Hall in the University of Oxford, rooted in the catholic tradition. The primary model of training for ordination is full time and residential, but part time or mixed mode options are also available.¹⁶

While SSH doesn't offer any of the Common Award modules on IFE, all students do a course called 'Understanding Islam' which is facilitated by Dr John Chesworth from the nearby Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies unless they are exempt due to previous experience. This course is taught by staff from the centre and others from outside including Imam Monowar Hussein, and is also open to members of the public. It is taught over an intensive week, with lectures, visits, and evenings with videos and discussion. The course is primarily interested in what Muslims believe, though it also looks at Christian responses to and engagement with Islam. SSH doesn't explicitly look at faiths other than Islam, and the interviewee saw this as being in line with the historic Anglo Catholic vocation to the inner city, as these areas are now where Muslim communities tend to exist. However it was also felt to be a strategic decision to focus on Islam, as this is seen as the main 'challenge' when it comes to other faiths. It was noted that there is increasing pressure from students for there to be a clear and explicit connection between what they are being taught and what they will need in their parishes in future - something which other interviewees also mentioned.

Although there is only one module explicitly about IFE, the interviewee suggested that it naturally arises elsewhere in the curriculum. For example, doctrine tutor Mother Lucy Gardner also contributes to the Building Bridges Seminar for Christian and Muslim scholars in Qatar, initiated by Rowan Williams. The other main area which is relevant are the projects carried out by each pastoral group. Some of these groups work with East Oxford deanery, an area with significant Muslim population. Last year one of these projects looked specifically at local Christian-Muslim relations, aiming to host dinner and conversations so people can get to know one other informally, though this had limited success. Students also do individual placements where interfaith engagement may arise. These activities remain the same as prior to Common Awards, though the interviewee noted it was positive that generally there is now more space for practical aspects of training than there was within the Oxford BA. This qualification was mostly theoretical and thus any formational work had to be done outside of the accredited curriculum. In terms of support and resourcing, the interviewee expressed that it would be valuable to have better connections with Muslim communities so that students could meet and get to know individuals.

The **South West Ministry Training Course (SWMTC)** offers part-time training for ordinands and lay ministers from the dioceses of Truro, Exeter and Bath and Wells. The courses are taught locally in Exeter and Truro by means of evening classes, residential weekends, study days and local tutor groups.¹⁷

There has been little or no change to the way SWMTC addresses IFE since the introduction of Common Awards. SWMTC do not teach any of the Common Awards modules on IFE but offer a couple of sessions on the subject as part of a residential weekend on their programme for mission. These sessions are compulsory for second and third year students. In the past they have been taught by members of staff, but SWMTC are looking at using an external speaker next academic year. Additionally, first year students at the residential Easter School make visits to local places of worship including a mosque and gurdwara. Informal conversations are had with members of those communities, and students report and reflect on these. The interviewee reported that the main issue for teaching IFE at SWMTC is the small number of non-Christian faiths in the local area, and sometimes the inability of other faith groups to find representatives. Time is an issue here too, and the question of what would have to be left out in order to do more on IFE. It was felt however that the institution could make better use of local resources.

The **South Central Regional Training Partnership** encompasses the training activities of six Anglican Dioceses (Guildford, Winchester, Oxford, Portsmouth, Salisbury, Bath and Wells) plus several ecumenical partners.¹⁸ Those providing ordination training, and therefore of relevance to this project, are Guildford, Salisbury and Winchester.

The Diocese of Guildford has its own Local Ministry and Discipleship Programme (LMDP) which trains candidate for Licensed Lay Ministry and Ordained Local Ministry – the latter being where an individual is trained in and for their existing parish context. This takes three years on a part time basis, which teaching taking place during evening classes, study days, residential weekends and summer schools.¹⁹ The LMDP doesn't use any of the Common Awards modules on IFE, but rather addresses it as part of the 'formations for ministry' aspect of training, which takes place over two study days. These include visits to a synagogue, gurdwara and mosque, as well as input from an Anglican working with the local Muslim community.

The Diocese of Salisbury is represented in SCRTP by Sarum College. Sarum offers training for lay and ordained ministry through a combination of online study, local learning groups and residential.²⁰ At present they do not teach a Common Awards module on IFE, but there is a compulsory weekend where student travel to Bristol to visit places of worship, which is usually organised by a member of staff. Sarum have also had Scriptural Reasoning sessions organised by CCJ as part of their weekend on ethics, and CCJ have facilitated a link with Wi'am, a Palestinian conflict resolution centre, for student placements. The interviewee noted that IFE is covered as part of the Level 4 *Mission and Evangelism* module too. This is delivered via distance learning, using materials written by a former member of staff.

At present, Winchester Diocese only train candidate for Lay Ministry, using a Common Awards accredited course. However there are plans to begin an Ordination Training pathway, hopefully from September 2016. Part of the agreed syllabus for this is to use the Level 5 module *Christianity and Inter-Faith Engagement*. This would be taught in the Summer Term of Year 2, so not until May 2018.

St John's, Nottingham was a predominantly residential college however in November 2014 they announced a restructure of their ordination training. From September 2016, the training offered is either context-based or a part-time daytime programme, shifting the focus to a mixed mode, church-based approach in line with their rebranding as St John's School of Mission.²¹ How this will affect the context of the curriculum and input on IFE is not clear.

At the time of interview, St John's did not offer any of the Common Awards modules on IFE, but at the end of each academic year they run a Contextual Theology Programme for students which explores questions of ministry and mission with a particular focus on issues of marginalisation, poverty and justice. It is during this programme that interfaith engagement is covered. This year's programme (2015) spent a day visiting a parish in Birmingham that has a majority Muslim population; a day with the St Philip's Centre in Leicester, visiting a variety of different places of worship and engaging with faith practitioners; and a day reflecting theologically on these visits, and wider experiences, facilitated by Revd Richard Sudworth from Queen's. St John's have used the space provided in the CTP to explore this topic for a number of years and are exploring ways in which this area can be more integrated into modules through Common Awards. The interviewee felt that they have been able to develop good connections with local and regional experts and practitioners in this field. However if there were other local or regional resources that they're not currently aware of which could be helpful in this field, then that would be useful to know about. At the moment they don't feel a need to look further afield for wider support in this area.

Phase 3: Interviews with IFCs

Moving onto the interviews with Inter Faith Centres, this section concentrates on highlighting relevant information that is not present elsewhere in this report – either in the TEI interviews above or in the conference proceedings included later on. Each IFC is introduced by means of an italicised self-description from their own material, followed by a summary of their activities in theological education as described at interview.

The Woolf Institute, Cambridge

The Woolf Institute is a global leader in the academic study of relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims. Established in Cambridge in 1998, with close links to the city's famous University, the Institute is recognized around the world for the excellence of its research, teaching, policy and public education programmes. The aim of our work is to connect the multidisciplinary study of relations with broader practical and theoretical questions, including the importance of trust in everyday life, the role of religion in international diplomacy, and improving end of life care in local hospices. We strive, in our research and outreach, to demonstrate how greater understanding of commonality and difference can inform and enhance the wider public good.²²

The Woolf Institute were involved in theological education in the Cambridge Federation before Common Awards, particularly with Westcott House, and were also a part of the IFE Module working group in the Common Awards process. They continue to be heavily engaged in theological education in the Common Awards era within the Cambridge Federation. In addition to the information given about Woolf's involvement in the previous section and in their conference paper published elsewhere in this report, it is worth noting the particular relationship Woolf has with Cambridge TEIs as a fellow member of the Cambridge Federation, and therefore its distinctive nature as an Inter Faith Centre. Hence although not fitting the definition of a TEI for the purposes of this research, that is how they self-identify. Another particular feature of Woolf's activities is their expertise in online and e-learning. Woolf also wishes to stress its multi-disciplinary approach that includes theological, historical, sociological and philosophical strands. Unlike many of the centres involved in this project, it is not Christian led, and prides itself on its ability to draw upon high quality academic resources from Jewish, Muslim and Christian faith perspectives. Equally, it wants to stress how that academic engagement is aligned to questions of policy, demonstrated in initiatives like the 2015 Commission on Religion and Belief in Public Life.

The Touchstone Centre Bradford

Touchstone is a 'listening community' with the vision of making safe places of hospitality where people who are radically different can listen to and with each other. Based in the heart of Bradford, Britain's most Muslim city, Touchstone has worked alongside diverse communities for 25 years. The Touchstone Centre is sponsored by the Methodist Church in Britain and is open to all.²³

The Touchstone Centre has been involved in theological education for many years, primarily by offering placements to students from TEI's across the denominations including Queens, Cranmer Hall and

Luther King House. They also worked with the Bradford Centre for Dialogue and Diversity (now renamed Faithful Neighbourhoods) in previous years, when the former provided residential training in Inter Faith Engagement for Cranmer Hall and Trinity College. In this partnership, Revd Dr Barbara Glasson, the Centre's Co-ordinator, saw Touchstone delivering the practical experience of engagement whilst BCDD provided teaching on Islam and Christian-Muslim relations. Touchstone see themselves as embedded in the community and have a strong emphasis towards a practical theological approach. They have vast experience of working with women and a strong Christian-Muslim focus. Their location in Bradford, with high indices of deprivation, provides a particular context for theological exploration. In addition, their links with the Multan diocese of South Punjab provides another unique perspective. Therefore whilst being rooted in their locality, their links in Pakistan and with the Global Christianity project at Queen's provide a unique perspective on Christian-Muslim relations worldwide. Going forward, they are particularly interested in offering interfaith placement opportunities for TEIs.

The Council of Christians and Jews

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) is the leading nationwide forum for Christian-Jewish engagement: celebrating the history and diversity of both communities, facilitating constructive dialogue, enabling meaningful learning experiences; and providing opportunities for transformative change. There are three tranches to CCJ's programmatic work: Education, Dialogue and Social Action. When facilitating Christian-Jewish engagement, CCJ ensures that the following core values remain central: promoting understanding, valuing difference, demonstrating empathy and respect, and challenging prejudice.²⁴

CCJ have been involved in theological education in a number of settings, working with Lincoln School of Theology, St Michaels College in Wales, Ripon College and SEITE in recent times. They have also been engaged in IME training with Winchester and Oxford Dioceses, as well as working with Queen's on the delivery of their first year Jewish-Christian relations course. Apart from Lincoln, all these activities are either outside the Common Awards programme or preceded it. However CCJ are keen to be a resource to TEIs looking to incorporate Jewish-Christian relations into their curriculums. They feel they can offer access to practical engagement, drawing upon a pool of teachers from the Jewish Community especially Rabbis. They are also interested in exploring a Yad Vashem experience for ordinands similar to the course currently available for Christian clergy. CCJ are distinctive in their concentration upon the bilateral experience, and pointed out in conversation that Christianity and Judaism have a unique relationship and thus the necessity of facilitating greater understanding of the Jewish reality amongst Christians should lead to a prioritising of this encounter.

St Philip's Centre – Leicester

As well as providing an engagement with civic and community life, St Philip's Centre provides training for Christians to equip them to live confidently in multi faith society, being both present and fully engaged in faithful witness and service. For Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews, people of all other faiths and beliefs who would like to know and understand their faith neighbours and discover ways of strengthening community life for the common good. For people at work, whether in the public, private or voluntary sectors who need to understand more about faiths – the opportunities which are created when you get things right and the challenges that need to be

addressed when things go wrong. For young people with aspirations to be the leaders of tomorrow. For further study enthusiasts looking to enhance their vocation or simply fascinated by the theological and social issues raised by religion, SPC offers post-graduate courses at Certificate, Diploma and MA levels in Inter-religious Relations.²⁵

St Philip's Centre is one of the Church of England's Presence & Engagement centres, and was significantly involved in theological education prior to Common Awards including working with the Oxford Ministry Course, Lincoln School of Theology and St John's Nottingham. At present they have no active involvement in CA modules but have become involved in IME 4-7 with the Nottingham and Southwell diocese. They feel they can offer experience-based reflective learning, either delivered in short term residential settings where participants travel to Leicester or by facilitating encounter with individual faith practitioners at a TEI's base. They would say they specialise on reflection on Christian Ministry in demographically multi-faith contexts, seeing their approach as collaborative and emphasising the importance of other faith practitioners explaining their faith rather than St Philip's 'teaching about other faiths'. They have excellent contacts with a wide variety of faith communities. Interestingly, they are involved in the government's controversial PREVENT programme meaning that they can facilitate exploration of the sensitivities of Christian involvement with the delivery of such government initiatives.

Oxford Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies

Our vision is the dream that we hold before us and what helps to spur us on in our work. The vision of CMCS is to see Muslim-Christian relationships transformed through shared academic study and by following the example of Jesus Christ. We equip leaders, resource scholars, disseminate and develop Biblically-based thinking at the Muslim-Christian interface through teaching, research and public education.²⁶

CMCS have taught Islam and Christian-Muslim relations at various TEI's as visiting teachers, some of which are in the Common Awards programme as well as others outside it. These include Trinity College, St Stephens House, All Nations College, Cliff College, Moorlands and some other smaller Bible colleges. They continue to be significantly involved at both Wycliffe House and St Stephen's House, heading up the Common Awards module on Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in the former. At St Stephens House, staff from CMCS facilitate a three day workshop for students on the same subject. CMCS feel they can offer advice on curriculum design and are particularly keen on how engagement with Islam can be incorporated into the whole curriculum, rather than a specific module, and have engaged in exploration of this through INSET training at Cliff College. They also run their own Summer School for Muslim and Christian theological students, and would welcome applications from students at TEIs. CMCS focuses only on the Christian-Muslim interface and are involved in considerable doctoral and post-doctoral scholarship in this area.

The London Inter Faith Centre

London Inter Faith Centre is a Christian centre which seeks to engage with the reality of individuals and communities "Living Together in a Multi Faith Society". We aim, by means of talks and courses, the study of scripture, a well-stocked library and a website, to resource Christians and others who encounter people of different

faiths in their places of work and in their places of abode. We endeavour to respond to some of the challenges thrown up by our multi faith society through silent prayer and meditation, through meeting with individuals and communities from different faith (and ideological) backgrounds, and through the sharing of stories. We work side by side with other faith communities in tackling some of the social issues of our day. Opened in 1998, London Inter Faith Centre is a shared project of two church communities, the Church of England Parish Church of St Anne's, Brondesbury and St Andrew's United Reformed Church, West Kilburn.²⁷

The London Inter Faith Centre have been running courses on Inter Faith engagement since the mid-1990s, primarily but not exclusively for Christians. The LIFC runs an unaccredited Certificate in Inter Faith relations which is at a similar level to the Common Awards module at Level 4, Multi Faith Awareness. They are open to the idea of exploring accreditation, which might enable them to build the relationships with TEIs which they currently lack. This course is followed by a second one which reflects on the variety of inter faith experience. The numbers for each course, which have run in various forms five times, are between twelve and twenty. These participants come from a range of predominantly Christian backgrounds, including lay preachers, readers and ordained clergy. The LIFC has over 20 years of experience in their area, and deep relationships with other faith communities locally and beyond. They are an ecumenical body that incorporates United Reformed Church and Anglican influences and support.

Bradford Churches for Dialogue and Diversity (BCDD) – renamed Faithful Neighbourhoods during 2015

Bradford Churches for Dialogue and Diversity (BCDD) is an ecumenical project launched in 2005 to provide learning opportunities for Christians, lay and ordained, so that they might engage with greater understanding and confidence in mission and ministry in a multi-faith context. BCDD's mission statement is "to enable human flourishing in the context of religious diversity". BCDD aims to support Christian churches as they seek to make a contribution to social cohesion in an inter-faith, multi-cultural context and as they work out their call to bear witness to Christ. BCDD seeks to facilitate and encourage mutual learning, listening, sharing and theological reflection arising from the stories of culturally and religiously diverse communities.²⁸

BCDD is another of the Church of England's Presence and Engagement centres, and in the past has been significantly involved in theological education prior to Common Awards with both Cranmer Hall and Trinity College. BCDD offered 'immersion' type experiential courses for students over a week or a weekend. However neither of these relationships are still in place. Following the appointment of a new director, the centre is rethinking its work and developing a new strategy. This is primarily focussed on serving and equipping clergy and congregations in Yorkshire and it remains to be seen where work with TEI's might feature.

The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre – Birmingham

The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre (FNC) exists to provide a space where people of all faiths and none can meet one another; resource people living in a diverse society; and support people as they discover ways of working together to improve and strengthen their local areas. The FNC has been established in partnership with

*Birmingham Churches Together. The groups currently involved in The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre are: The Feast, Thrive Together Birmingham and Interfaith Relations in the Diocese of Birmingham.*²⁹

The FNC is also one of the Church of England's Presence and Engagement centres and acts as a hub for a number of activities that are interfaith related. As far as work with TEIs is concerned, the Diocesan Director of Interfaith Relations, Canon Andrew Smith, has a good relationship with the Queen's Foundation. He is particularly involved with their non-Common Awards Post Graduate Certificate in Inter Faith Engagement. This is a certificate primarily aimed at Christian practitioners in the field.

Notes

- 1 For the purposes of this research a TEI is an institution whose primary activity is the training of Ordinands or Student Ministers for ministry in the Church of England or The Methodist Church in Britain under the Common Awards curriculum.
- 2 The Yorkshire Theological Education Partnership, comprising the Yorkshire Ministry Course (YMC), the Schools of Ministry in each of the Yorkshire Dioceses, St Barnabas Theological Centre (SBTC) and a Church Army training scheme.
- 3 For the purposes of this research an IFC is an institution whose primary activities are centred around engaging the church and or wider society in the complexities of aspects of our multi faith reality.
- 4 http://www.theofed.cam.ac.uk/?avada_portfolio=ermc Accessed 14.08.15
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- 6 <http://www.ridley.cam.ac.uk/about/ethos> Accessed 14.08.15
- 7 <http://www.lincoln.anglican.org/education-training/lincoln-school-of-theology/lincoln-school-of-theology-programmes/> Accessed 14.08.15
- 8 <http://www.rcc.ac.uk/training-for-ministry/training-for-ministry> Accessed 14.08.15
- 9 <http://www.stmellitus.org/ordination-training> Accessed 14.08.15
- 10 <http://www.trinitycollegebristol.ac.uk/kingdom-leading/ordination-training/> Accessed 14.08.15
- 11 <http://www.wycliffehall.org.uk/ministerial-training> Accessed 14.08.15
- 12 <https://community.dur.ac.uk/cranmer.hall/study-with-us/ordination-training> Accessed 14.08.15
- 13 <http://www.seite.co.uk/aboutus.html> Accessed 14.08.15
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- 22 <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/> Accessed 15.02.16
- 23 <http://www.touchstone-bradford.org.uk/> Accessed 15.02.16
- 24 <http://www.cj.org.uk/> Accessed 15.02.16
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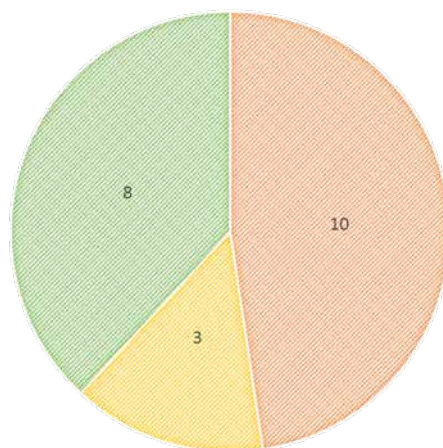
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- 28 <http://www.bcdd.org.uk/> Accessed 15.02.16
- 29 <http://www.faithfulneighbourhoods.org.uk/> Accessed 15.02.16

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Introductory Note

A note on numbers - at the time of interviewing, there were seventeen TEIs in Common Awards. For the purposes of this research, these have been broken down into their constituent parts where appropriate. For example, there are three institutions within the Cambridge Theological Federation which offer training for ordination, and so each of these has been counted separately. This means that there are twenty-one relevant bodies for whom we have data, and this is detailed in what follows.

Headline Figures



■ Offer a compulsory CA module ■ Offer an optional CA module ■ Offer no CA module

- Of these twenty-one TEIs, thirteen offer Common Awards modules on IFE.
- Ten of the thirteen teach a compulsory module on IFE.
- Three of the thirteen teach only optional module/s on IFE.
- Eight TEIs do not offer Common Awards modules on IFE.

Findings by Module - Which are Most Popular?

Course	TEI	Status
Multifaith Awareness	Oxford Ministry Course	Compulsory
	WEMTC	Compulsory
	Lindisfarne	Compulsory
	Eastern Region Ministry Course	Compulsory (choice of two)
Christianity and Interfaith Engagement	Ripon College	Optional
	St Mellitus	Compulsory
	Lincoln School of Theology	Compulsory
	Queen's Foundation	Compulsory
Christian Discipleship and Ministry in Multifaith Contexts	Eastern Region Ministry Course	Compulsory (choice of two)
	Ripon College	Optional
Exploring Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Encounter	All Saints	Compulsory
	Ridley Hall	Optional
	Westcott House	Optional
Integrative Learning for Collaborative Practice, World Faiths	Trinity College	Compulsory
	Westcott House	Optional
Islam and Christian-Muslim Engagement	Wycliffe	Compulsory
Common Good in Christianity and Islam	Queen's Foundation	Optional
Theology in Dialogue	Queen's Foundation	Optional

The two most popular modules, each offered at four TEIs, are the general ones – *Multifaith Awareness* at Level 4 and *Christianity and Interfaith Engagement* at Level 5. It is notable that the module available at Level 4 on Jewish-Christian relations has not been taken up by any TEIs, however this subject may well be covered elsewhere in the curriculum.

TEIs Not Offering Common Awards Modules

The 8 TEIs that don't offer CA modules do all cover IFE.

- Four have a programme on IFE which sits outside their Common Awards curriculum, and for all of these it is compulsory.
- Four teach it as part of another compulsory area of the curriculum:
 - ◇ Two as part of a module on mission
 - ◇ Two as part of module on contextual theology

Models of Delivery

Broadly speaking there are four models of delivery which emerged in interviews, though the boundaries between these aren't clearly defined:

1. Majority of module taught by member of staff
2. Majority of module taught by external individual
3. Module delivered in partnership with an organisation
4. Module overseen by staff member & taught by their external contacts

Although we don't have figures for this, it seems that these four models are fairly equally represented across the TEIs interviewed.

INTEGRATING ISLAM: THE IMPORTANCE FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION OF KEEPING ISLAM IN MIND

Dr Richard McCallum, Centre for Muslim Christian Studies

Muslims number a third of the world's population and Islam may be the world's fastest growing religion. Scarcely a day goes by without some news report concerning Islam – for good or ill. Unprecedented movements of refugees are bringing Muslims to Europe in increasing numbers. A century ago Islam was a topic of interest for Christians engaged in mission and development work far away overseas. Today it is a question for every Christian – anywhere. Every Christian ordinand, minister or lay worker (indeed leaders of every faith community) will encounter Muslims during their careers. This will inevitably be increasingly the case.

Despite the obvious imperative and the acknowledged importance of Islam in public life today, this does not always translate into the required equipping for students in Christian theological colleges. Islam is often subsumed into the generic teaching of interfaith leaving students unable to answer the specific questions that Islam poses to Christian theology as well as unprepared to embrace the positive opportunities that the presence of Muslim communities creates.

The Centre for Muslim Christian Studies (CMCS) is a Christian research and study centre in Oxford which is interested in education and concerned

about this particular issue. We are a community of both Christians and Muslims committed to doing good quality academic research on the Christian-Muslim interface *together*. We try to educate Christians honestly about Islam and educate Muslims honestly about Christianity.

In a 1989 article Colin Chapman looked at the challenges posed to Christian theology by Islam and suggested that it should be compulsory for all theological students to study Islam. He proposed that “what is needed now is an interdisciplinary approach. The challenge facing us is to find ways of allowing Islam to impinge on almost every discipline of theology” (Chapman, 1989, p. 27). This call was more recently echoed by Ida Glaser, director of CMCS, who suggested that what is needed is “theological education with Islam in mind” (Glaser, 2010). In other words having Islam present as one of our main conversation partners.

Several studies have been carried out that are relevant to this agenda. They create the backdrop and lay the foundation for the present study into the Common Awards teaching. In 2003 Sophie Gilliat-Ray's report ‘Ministerial Formation in a Multi-Faith Society’, noted that there was “extreme pressure on the theological curriculum”

(Gilliat-Ray, 2003, p. 15) which meant that the teaching of other faiths was competing with many other demands. The “already crowded curriculum” was again highlighted by the Woolf Institute in 2008. The authors observed that, due to this pressure, “when such courses are taught they are therefore often available only as optional modules, attracting few students” (Mumisa & Kessler, 2008, p. 2). This they felt to be unacceptable; “curriculum pressures are insufficient justification for failing to prepare religious and community leaders for life and ministry in contemporary British society”. Their study included only a very limited number of Christian theological colleges alongside Jewish and Muslim institutions. Gilliat-Ray’s earlier study, on the other hand, included almost all of the Anglican theological institutions in England and was based on interviews with educators and a survey of ordinands of whom 72% at that time reported receiving no training on “caring for members of other faiths” and 58% felt “inadequately equipped for ministry in a multifaith society” (Gilliat-Ray, 2003, p. 9). She suggested that “more important than the quantity of teaching about a subject is the learning of transferable skills to enable self-learning and reflection” (*ibid* 17). Whilst some colleges were still offering only “a dip into this subject” (*ibid* 17), others were taking steps to teach more reflectively with one using student journaling and some involving members of other faith communities in teaching, although this was sometimes problematic due to the poor skills of available speakers. Whilst Gilliat-Ray focused on the pastoral preparation of ordinands, the Woolf report pointed out that different colleges have different objectives in teaching about other faiths:

the more evangelical colleges tend to prefer courses taught from a Christian-centred theological perspective with the primary purpose of evangelising; on the other hand, more liberal colleges prefer to teach other religions with the primary purpose of promoting understanding and dialogue (Mumisa & Kessler, 2008, p. 3).

They recommended the “twinning of Jewish, Christian and Islamic seminaries” as a way of improving education and interfaith understanding.³⁰

In 2012 I looked at over 40 different Christian theological institutions in Britain and Ireland, right across the spectrum, including the 17 colleges today teaching Common Awards as well as those from non-denominational, evangelical, Pentecostal, Catholic and a range of other traditions (McCallum, 2012).³¹ Overwhelmingly everybody I talked to said that the teaching of Islam was important in their institution. No-one said it was not. That said, with only one exception, they also said their institutions did not pay enough attention, or that more attention should be paid, to the teaching of Islam within their establishments. They all recognised that their students were eager to learn about Islam, and yet not all of them could guarantee that their students would get some basic education on Islam. In fact a third of them admitted that there were students going through their programme without any teaching on Islam.

The report also looked at the motivation for and objectives in teaching Islam. An overwhelming majority said that the purpose was not polemical. On the other hand neither were they preparing students for shared multifaith worship. The greatest number suggested that they were preparing students for dialogue, co-existence and shared action. However, this was not to the exclusion of apologetics and evangelism. A surprisingly large number of institutions agreed they were preparing their students for either mission or evangelism and were engaging in apologetics, i.e. answering the questions that Islam poses.

As to who was teaching, two thirds said that they invited a Muslim in to do some teaching, either to teach the whole course or as a guest speaker. The majority of programmes also offered some sort of mosque visit. Those that did not were often located in a part of the country with little access to a Muslim community or could not find a Muslim who

was suitably qualified and equipped to do it. So it was not necessarily because they did not want to. However, the majority of respondents still felt that Islam is best taught to Christian theology students by a Christian or an academic, albeit with the help or occasional presence of a Muslim. The exception, as suggested by the Woolf report, was those from the more liberal wing of the church who felt that Islam should always be taught by a Muslim.

The report went on to explore the challenges of teaching Islam, and the greatest of these by far, as suggested above, was the pressure on already overcrowded curricula. On top of the core requirements, principals and deans faced the challenge of different disciplines and subjects clamouring for space in the timetable. The teaching of Islam is just one among many equally valid priorities. This is allied to an increasing emphasis on specialism. Colleges now tend to offer specialisms that will position them well in the market place, with worship, arts and youth work being particularly popular. However, such specialization leaves even less room in the curriculum for topics that might be seen as of marginal interest or relevance to the main focus.

One response to this would be to offer Islam as a specialism. In the past the London School of Theology had the Centre for Islamic Studies, which has now closed, and the Nazarene College has more recently opened the Manchester Centre for the Study of Christianity and Islam which is offering MA programmes. There is little else. In today's climate it is extremely important for Christian educational institutions to provide opportunities for in-depth teaching of Islam, and to support higher degrees and research for those wanting to pursue careers in the field. Of course we might also note and welcome the greater number of Christians gaining such higher degrees from mainline universities.³² That said there is surely a case for the maintenance of a specialist capacity within Christian theological education. Interestingly, the Common Awards programme seems actually to

offer *fewer* opportunities for specialist study of Islam as distinct from interfaith. The available modules that specifically mention Islam in the title all treat it in comparative perspective with Christianity or as one of the 'Abrahamic faiths'.³³ There is no module that focuses uniquely on Islam. Where Anglican colleges still offer specialist modules, such as the 'Understanding Islam' course at St Stephen's House, Oxford, they do not at present have Common Awards accreditation.

This may not be such a lacuna if all our theological education happened "with Islam in mind". The question is how to integrate an awareness of Islam across the curriculum? How can we, rather than - or better, in addition to - treating Islam as a specialism, allow Islam - and Muslims - to pose questions to us, challenge us and encourage us right across the curriculum?

CMCS has recently started to offer colleges INSET training, or in-service staff training, on how to do this. It is trying to help teachers to think about the relevance of Islam to the things that they are teaching.

For instance at a recent training for Cliff College, a Methodist institution in the Peak District, I created a number of practical exercises to raise awareness of Islam. One exercise takes the lectionary readings for the day and asks people to look at each of those readings and think how they would read that text in the presence of Islam? What difference does it make to their thinking? On that day there was a reading from Joel about invading armies and impending judgement. How do we help students think about that in the context of Islam? Are Muslims really an invading army coming to wreak God's judgement as some have suggested? Discuss! Every reading in the lectionary that day had some application to or resonance with Islam.

The second exercise looked at all the different modules taught at the college. For each module participants were asked to discuss how it related to

Islam. There were a couple that bore no relation, such as Celtic Mission, but in almost all of them there was some connection or question that Islam posed. It was a good exercise to sensitise the faculty to thinking through the issue.

The third exercise was based on their MA which included modules on Youth, Mission, and Third Age. The faculty had to prepare 15 minutes of material related to Islam and insert it somewhere in that module. For instance, in the Third Age Mission module it could be how Muslims care for their elderly, learning from their culture where there is a tremendous richness in caring for family members within the family. In Youth it could be around the sensitivities of engaging with minors and of course there are many connections with Mission.

The last exercise asked them to consider questions that students may ask about Islam. There are a lot of very problematic questions: Is Allah the God of the Bible? How do I explain the Trinity? My friend's brother has disappeared and gone to Syria - what can I say? And of course Islam raises such questions at almost every point in the curriculum not least in church history, theology and mission.

Alongside this sort of training CMCS wants to develop a resource pack about Islam to help teachers incorporate such an awareness into their teaching. It would include time lines, facts and statistics, comparative charts and studies, teaching materials, annotated bibliographies, reading lists, articles and so on. This will need funding to develop.

Finally, this summer CMCS started a new initiative - the Oxford Muslim Christian Summer School. Six Christian and six Muslim students came to St. Stephen's House for one week and were taught by both Christians and Muslims. We worked in co-operation with two Islamic colleges from London - the Islamic College of Advanced Studies and Ibrahim College - and it was a really rich time. The programme was specifically based on the recognition of difference and respectful

conversation. All the students were studying theology in a British context preparing for leadership in faith communities, and what we want to do is to encourage them to stay in contact with each other. We are organising a reunion weekend in December 2015, bringing them back together again and then next summer (2016) as more students come we want to add them to the network with the end goal of developing a cohort of Christian and Muslim faith leaders entering into community careers having relationships with one another as a point of reference. In that spirit we also want to extend the initiative to encourage Muslim institutions to do theological education with Christianity in mind!

Notes

- 30 This is part of the plan for the Oxford Muslim-Christian Summer School being developed by CMCS.
- 31 A summary of the report can be downloaded here
- 32 This observation is purely based on my impression and anecdotal evidence. It was not part of the survey.
- 33 TMM2267 Exploring Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Encounter
TMM2631 Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Encounter
TMM2647 Islam and Christian-Muslim Engagement (also TMM3247)
TMM3237 Common Good in Christianity and Islam

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THE PARTICULARITY OF CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS

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There is an increasingly common notion about the particularity of Christian-Jewish relations that I often come across in my reading as well as in my discussions with practitioners from both traditions. It could be stated this way: Christianity is a “monotheistic religion for the Gentiles”. I would like to challenge this notion and in so doing, provide a brief sketch of what are some of the distinct features of Christian-Jewish relations and, perhaps more importantly, show why Christian-Jewish dialogue is essential for the task of Theological Education. Moreover, I will argue that the Christian encounter with Judaism opens up unique ways of shaping Christian self-understanding, insofar as it is grounded in the conviction that the Other is a disruptive force which works to challenge our self-understanding and affirms the character of the divine as both irreducible and unlimited.

One doesn't have to have ever taken part in any formal dialogue between Jews and Christians to know that one of the fundamentally unique aspects of Jewish-Christian relations is that both traditions not only share belief in the same God but also important ethical principles which spring from our shared scriptures and traditions. But of course the relationship is so much closer and symbiotic in its earliest shared history than this. And it is in this context that we find the notion that Christianity is a religion for the Gentiles somewhat ironic. The historical fact, of course, is that Jesus and

his earliest followers were Jews, not Gentiles, and that the conflict between those who claimed Jesus was the awaited Messiah and those who did not was an intra-Jewish debate. Moreover, one of the primary and most urgent questions of the earliest Christian communities was not about whether Jesus was Messiah but whether the good news of the Gospel was for Gentiles and not simply for Jews. As we know, these Christian communities came to the conclusion that the Gospel brought to the Jews should also be brought to the Gentiles.

The historical fact of the Jewish origins of Christianity has several important implications, two of which give witness to the particularity of this relationship:

First, it utterly repudiates any justification or cover for Christian antisemitism, past or present. Although claims for the universalism of Christianity (that is, the claim that Christians are to go into the world and make disciples of *all* nations, that Jesus' death redeems the *whole* world) have often been used to justify antisemitic attitudes and practices throughout history, such claims ignore or suppress the Jewish origins of Christianity.

Second, despite the deep divergence around the significance of Jesus, there has been substantive convergence between the two traditions on both a philosophical-theological level as well as a socio-

political level. One can think here of the myriad ways in which Jews and Christians work towards the common good in areas such as the health service, in schools, in Parliament, in charities and other social action organisations. Moreover, there has been significant theological and philosophical engagement between the two traditions – one is reminded of the many ways in which Maimonides, Spinoza, Levinas, Heschel, Buber, Rosenzweig and many others have influenced the way Christians think about ethics, responsibility, and the nature of both God and human beings.

Moreover, the experience of the Shoah has, at least in Europe, placed a greater priority upon Christian-Jewish relations than other important dialogue partners (e.g. dialogue between the three Abrahamic traditions). Indeed, the whole concept of dialogue between Jews and Christians came as a consequence of the Shoah. The experience of the Shoah also presents significant theological challenges to Christian theology which must be taken seriously; I am thinking not simply of the troubled history of Christian-Jewish relations that led up to the Shoah, but of the event itself. There is certainly plenty of Christian rhetoric about guilt and responsibility for the Shoah. But I would argue, following Johann Baptist Metz, that it has not yet reached the roots of Christian theology. In the face of such horror how are we to think about questions of theodicy and suffering more generally? The experience of the Shoah does not simply demand a new kind of relationship between Christians and Jews; rather, it calls for a revision of Christian theology.

So for these reasons the particularity of dialogue with Jews enables a certain level of Christian theological self-reflection that is essential for Theological Education more generally. As Pope John Paul observes, the Church discovers a certain understanding of its own mystery precisely through its bond with Judaism. Judaism is not “extrinsic” to us, but rather in a certain way is “intrinsic” to our very identity while remaining distinct. With

Judaism, therefore, we have a relationship which is unique to that of any other religious tradition. In the covenant with the God of Israel, the Church makes the claim that she shares (and not exclusively) covenant responsibility with the Jewish people. Pope Paul adds that from this shared blessing of covenantal responsibility arises a unique intimacy of the Church with the Jewish people. This theological intimacy, if it is appropriate to use that term, transcends what is possible for either tradition when merely viewed as politico-social realities. Thus, in seeking to articulate together what it means to be creatures of the God who enters into covenant with such creatures, Christians and Jews gain a kinship rooted in shared affirmations about God and humanity.

So Christianity is not merely “monotheism for the Gentiles”, but is fundamentally rooted in the Jewish tradition and thus the latter is fundamental to the self-understanding of the former.

Many of us are familiar with the claim that any genuine encounter with the Other introduces a certain disruption of certain modes of discourse that have been passively accepted without proper critical evaluation. In the case of Christianity, the second half of the 20th century saw a considerable challenge from multiple sources to interpret the reality of the singularity or particularity of other faith traditions, especially Judaism. This challenge generally takes on the form of opposing Jewish particularity to the “universal truth” claims of Christianity. In other words, the challenge to Christianity is whether it can accept and embrace the Other who *remains* Other. So, as the argument goes, the invitation to challenge its self-understanding that comes from Christianity’s encounter with the Other (in this case Judaism) offers new possibilities: a new logic of reading texts, a way of seeing the trace of God in ways which transcend the often reductive anthropomorphisms, and new ways of understanding and embodying our responsibility for the Other. And as we have seen with documents such as *Nostra Aetate* and

its disavowal of both supersessionism and the need for Jews to undergo conversion, the Church is slowly recognising that the universal scope of its mission does not necessarily mean its truth claims constitute a totality.

But equally it is important to emphasise that the two traditions cannot converge: we cannot and should not become one, but must remain singular in each other's particularity. The aim of Christian-Jewish dialogue is not coercion or to verify the accuracy of their respective truth-claims. But rather, as I suggested at the beginning of this paper, this model of dialogue is grounded in the conviction that the Other is a disruptive force which works to challenge each other's self-understanding so as to continually be subjected to a process of self-transformation. Equally, this model of dialogue affirms the character of the divine as both irreducible and unlimited.

What does this Christian-Jewish particularity mean with regard to dialogue with other faith traditions? With its emphasis upon historical

practices that shape human life, Christian-Jewish dialogue emerges as an inevitable fact of our *being-with-other-faiths* in the Heideggerian sense of the term, which means we are all expected to be *in dialogue* with the Other rather than relate to the Other through a reductive polemic. And although there may be a great deal of convergence on certain shared concepts and social concerns, the scope of Jewish-Christian dialogue is not the overcoming of differences but the sharing of experiences mutually resisting, disrupting and transforming the constitution of our own religious self-identity. This should also be the goal of any interfaith dialogue. A commitment to this kind of dialogue gives witness to an exteriority, a transcendence, which human beings are unable to fully grasp and totalize into a universal system. It is what Emmanuel Levinas calls the "more" in the "less." And it also implies that interfaith dialogue should make space for each tradition, through its own practices and traditions, to give witness to this divine exteriority which eludes our grasp but to which we nonetheless find ourselves in its trace.

THE ABRAHAMIC APPROACH TO INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Dr Ed Kessler and Dr Emma Harris, Woolf Institute

In *Foreign Affairs*, Jonathan Fox commented that ‘religious persecution is a global problem’.³⁴ Indeed, in many parts of the world, people continue to be oppressed and victimised. In the Middle East, Christianity is under threat and HRH The Prince of Wales met refugees at Archbishop’s House recently and ‘warned that the Christian heritage of the region “is under threat as never before. The Churches are being targeted by fanatics.”’³⁵

A global problem demands a global responsibility. The continued existence of antisemitism, the growth of Islamophobia and anti-Christian hatred, not to mention the rise of religious extremism and the growing migration crisis, are reminders that our future lay and religious leaders need to receive education about other faiths, as well as their own. It is, therefore, no longer an optional extra but essential for TEIs to produce a stream of graduates who have a working knowledge of other faiths to minister effectively in the religiously diverse world in which they reside.

This is demonstrated by the following recent statements by religious leaders. On 14 November 2015, in a statement following the Paris attacks, Justin Welby insisted that ‘in solidarity across all faiths and none, and with all human beings, rather than in the victimisation of any, we will find the way to defeat the demonic curse of terrorism’³⁶; on 30 November, Pope Francis visited a mosque in the

Central African Republic and told the worshippers gathered there that “Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters”;³⁷ on 10 December, the Vatican’s Commission for Religious Relations with Jews released a new document, ‘The Gifts and Calling of God are Irrevocable’ which marks the 50th anniversary of the ground-breaking declaration *Nostra Aetate* and explores unresolved theological questions at the heart of Christian-Jewish dialogue;³⁸ and on 16 December, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that the Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis has recommended that Jewish schools teach Islam as part of the new GCSE religious studies curriculum which requires them to teach a second faith.³⁹

These three events show recognition, at home and abroad, for the importance of understanding our neighbours. The Woolf Institute, an Associate Member of the Cambridge Theological Federation, applies its teaching, research and outreach programmes towards the understanding of, and engagement with, the ‘Other’. We organise a series of online courses which offer individuals – from all faiths and none – the opportunity to interact with interesting and like-minded people from all over the world and from all walks of life. The key benefit of our online courses is that they create a platform that is cross-cultural, cross-continental and multi-disciplinary, and enables a network of dialogue. One participant commented:

I think the cultural diversity has added much value to the course and I have learnt a lot from my peer students who have very different cultural and academic backgrounds, especially those who were themselves Muslim or from Muslim countries.⁴⁰

In another online course, *Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges*, participants focus on the relations between the Abrahamic faiths in modern Europe and in European history and address challenging questions through case studies. For example, participants are invited to examine issues on, for example, public space and freedom of expression, minority experiences, and contemporary cultural trends from social, historical, theological and cultural perspectives. One student commented that this course had given them

...the opportunity to learn about difference aspects of Jewish, Christian and Muslim cultural and religious perspectives from social, historical and cultural dimensions [and]... I have had the opportunity to understand ideas about different faith and interfaith dialogues being transmitted from Jewish, Christian and Muslim sources.⁴¹

The 15-week course *Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter* is run in collaboration with the American University in Washington and explores the history, culture and theology of Muslims and Jews, reflecting on similarities and differences as well as the major challenges. This course is a practical example of how ‘virtual space’ can help participants to ‘listen’ and understand, to engage in a non-confrontational way and to share their personal stories of struggle and hope. While there has been notable interfaith activity in Europe and the United States in recent decades, the Jewish-Muslim dialogue and understanding are far from satisfactorily developed. Too often, there is neither space, nor indeed the necessary trust, which are prerequisites to the proper understanding of the

two faiths. Experience has shown that when subjects like the Israeli-Palestinian relationship or Antisemitism and Islamophobia are discussed, the dialogue too often becomes embittered or breaks down. At the commencement of the course in January 2015, one student wrote:

I have spent most of my life in the Middle East, mainly between Sudan and Saudi Arabia and until earlier this year... I had never actually met anyone Jewish. I did not realise how much the media (particularly the Arab media) had affected my understanding of Jewish people and Judaism and it was only after I met and interacted with real Jewish people that I realised how warped, myopic and antiquated my views were.⁴²

The course aims to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the study of Muslim-Jewish Relations, to engage with and appreciate viewpoints other than one’s own through reasoned academic discourse and re-examine one’s own position in the light of various readings and other viewpoints and to learn to discuss controversial issues in Muslim-Jewish Relations in a reasoned manner. During the course in 2015, one participant commented:

I believe that in a world so fraught with misunderstandings, we must talk to one another and express our misconceptions and beliefs. The revered cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, Ali ibn Abi Taleb, is attributed with the quote, ‘We fear what we do not understand’.⁴³

As is the case with the Institute’s other online courses,⁴⁴ the valuable impact will stem from the participants’ future plans to build bridges – be it in current or future interfaith initiatives. One participant’s feedback on the Online Short Course, *Is Interfaith Dialogue Important?*, exemplifies:

I found the course to be extremely interesting and [it] has helped me further understand the

*importance of, and the challenges in, engaging in interfaith dialogue as a way to build bridges between faith communities. Certainly, the role of religion in building these bridges has never been more pressing from combating extremism, making room for the 'other' to acknowledging the integrity of those who are not of our own faith.*⁴⁵

Ordinands at the CTF engage with the world views of Judaism and Islam in relation to Christianity which enables them to reflect on issues of identity and diversity in multi-faith Britain. The Woolf Institute has a unique place within the Cambridge Theological Federation where interfaith is high on the agenda – from teaching interfaith Common Awards modules and an Intensive Course to organising the Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration and creating interfaith social and ecclesial placements.

One of the teaching roles undertaken by the Woolf Institute staff is to co-teach two modules (with colleagues from Westcott House and the Cambridge Muslim College), the undergraduate *TMM2631 Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Encounter* and the postgraduate *TMM45020 Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations: Scripture, History, Theology and Practice*. It is hoped that the participants will disseminate ideas acquired in the course and apply them to other contexts beyond the course.

It is clear that there is demand for new postgraduate awards in the area of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations, allowing Christian students to engage with Muslims and Jews, as well as those of other faiths and none to enable them to engage with and appreciate viewpoints other than their own through reasoned academic discourse and re-examine their own position in the light of various readings and other viewpoints. Methodologically, this is an attempt to understand other faiths as their adherents understand themselves. For example, in the Intensive Course, Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations, CTF students have the, albeit brief,

opportunity to consider the relationship between Christianity and Judaism and explore the question 'What is Judaism?'. The course stresses the need to understand Jews as people with their own history, not as forerunners of Christians. Participants examine positive as well as negative relations. In the feedback questionnaires, two student comments sum up the impact such a course should have on their chosen paths:

*I hope that a large part of my future ministry will be in building closer relationships between Christians and the Jewish communities.*⁴⁶

*It has given me a firm foundation of understanding for the future.*⁴⁷

A unique partnership has evolved between the Woolf Institute and the Eastern Region Ministry Course (ERMC; a member of the Cambridge Theological Federation) to arrange interfaith social and ecclesial placements for the ERMC students. In an email to her students introducing the new initiative, Emma Rothwell, ERMC's Director of Practical Theology, wrote:

*I believe more and more that the shape of formation and ministry, within the Anglican tradition will need to be more focused on interfaith and ecumenical issues in order to have impact and meaning, both locally and globally. This formation will need to be active, integrated learning to really deal with barriers and broaden perspectives.*⁴⁸

One of the placement students, an Anglican priest-in-training, was placed at the Woolf Institute and was invited to join a conversation between two female colleagues – one Jewish, the other Muslim – on various aspects of faith. In her reflections, the student noted that we had begun the conversation as women of different faiths but ended as three women who had bonded through shared dialogue.

*And then there was no Jew, and no Muslim
and no Christian: there were just three women
and a fellowship.*⁴⁹

Notes

- 34 https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-08-31/equal-opportunityoppression?sp_mid=50308355&sp_rid=ZW1tYWWhcjlyQGdtYWlsLmNvbQS2&spMailingID=50308355&spUserID=NjMxMjYzNzEzOTQ51&spJobID=823284447&spReportID=ODIzMjg0NDQ3S0
- 35 <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/2910/0/christianity-is-under-threat-of-extinction-in-middle-east-warnsprince-charles>
- 36 <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5639/statement-on-paris-attacks>
- 37 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-34960971>
- 38 <http://www.ccrj.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/vatican-curia/1357-crrj-015dec10>
- 39 <http://www.thejc.com/node/151382>
- 40 Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter 2012 – Forum discussion
- 41 Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges 2011-12 – Course Evaluation Questionnaire
- 42 Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter 2015 – Forum discussion
- 43 Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter 2015 – Forum discussion
- 44 Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges; Is Interfaith Dialogue Important?; Jewish-Christian Relations in the English Novel; Shakespeare and the Jewish-Christian Encounter: Beyond The Merchant of Venice.
- 45 Is Interfaith Dialogue Important? 2015 – Course Evaluation Questionnaire
- 46 Cambridge Theological Federation – Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations – Course Evaluation Questionnaire – January 2015
- 47 Cambridge Theological Federation – Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations – Course Evaluation Questionnaire – January 2015
- 48 Emma Rothwell, email 02/02/15
- 49 Cambridge Theological Federation – Readings and Reflections, 26 May 2015

FAITH, HOPE & LOVE: INTER FAITH ENGAGEMENT AS PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Ray Gaston, Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education

Introduction

Traditionally, engagement with other faiths in Christian theology has been studied through the interpretative lenses of theology of religions or missiology. In theology of religions, the question being addressed is the salvific status and efficacy both of the other faith individual believer and their tradition. 'Who' is saved, and 'How' are they saved? In missiology, the approach has often been to learn about 'the other' in order to understand and approach them informed for apologetic and evangelistic encounter. In readjusting our interpretive lenses in a practical theological direction we turn the focus away from 'analysing' the 'other', either in relation to their salvific efficacy or as targets for apologetic or evangelistic engagement, and instead focus upon how encounter with other faith traditions impacts upon Christian self-understanding. The subject of exploration becomes ourselves and our relationship with others and with God.

From Theology of Religions to Theology of Engagement - relating to each other

In theology of religions, Alan Race's three-fold typology⁵⁰ has had many critics but has stood the test of time, as was demonstrated at a recent

conference held to reflect on its ongoing relevance.⁵¹ Many still find it a helpful heuristic tool in approaching the engagement of Christians with other faith traditions. Race's three categories of Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism have their contemporary proponents⁵² and although others have sought to expand the typology⁵³ they remain committed to its value. However, the typology and theology of religions in general, with its focus upon the salvific efficacy of the other, often descends into acrimonious theological contestation within intra Christian exploration. Some have sought to undermine this tendency towards strong contestation and examined ways of approaching the typology that emphasise the need for intra Christian dialogue upon engagement with other faith traditions. In *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions* Michael Barnes says

Rather than reduce the typology to a series of 'isms'....it makes better sense to understand them as each embodying a theological virtue essential to the understanding of the relationship between any faith community and those it perceives as other. 'Exclusivism' witnesses to that faith which speaks of what it knows through the specificity of tradition. 'Inclusivism' looks forward in hope to the fulfilment of all authentically religious truths and values. 'Pluralism' expresses that love which seeks always to affirm those values in the present.⁵⁴

This approach disarms theological approaches which seek to do battle over how we should view other faith traditions. It helps us to recognise that each position brings something to the table of Christian inter faith engagement; a deep relationship with an essential virtue for the practice of creative discipleship and ministry in a multi faith world. In the context of theological training, where the classroom is often increasingly theologically diverse in its makeup, an ability to engender such intra Christian dialogue is essential and also encourages a pedagogical approach that draws upon Christian diversity and sees it as a resource for enabling encounter with other faith traditions. The late evangelical theologian Clark Pinnock shows how such an approach works when he says of his own open evangelical proposal,

(O)ne could say that my proposal is exclusivist in affirming a decisive redemption in Jesus Christ, although it does not deny the possible salvation of non-Christian people. Similarly, it could be called inclusivist in refusing to limit the grace of God to the confines of the church, although it hesitates to regard other religions as salvific vehicles in their own right. It might even be called pluralist insofar as it acknowledges God's gracious work in the lives of human beings everywhere and accepts real differences in what they believe, though not pluralist in the sense of eliminating the finality of Christ.⁵⁵

As with theology of religions, contestation often features in explorations of missiology with proponents for evangelism and dialogue pitted at different ends of an argument. Although sophisticated missiological approaches to inter faith engagement exist, on the whole easy categorizations and simplistic opposites of evangelism vs dialogue are the perceptions that are strongly represented amongst ordinands in theological institution classrooms. Moving away from a simplistic contestation of evangelism vs dialogue, a practical theological focus shifts the

emphasis from this false dichotomy to reflecting upon the necessity of learning from each other in order to meet the challenge of our multi faith reality. Richard Sudworth⁵⁶ has noted the necessity of occupying the risky ground between positions that over emphasise dialogue on one hand or witness on the other. The missional task is not to secure tradition or offer a safe, superficial relationship with our neighbours of other faiths, but to take the risk through encounter that our understanding of our faith may change and that our relationships with our inter faith neighbours need to engage creatively with real difference. It is in this intra Christian informed praxis of 'missional synthesis' that the tension between and the connection of dialogue and witness is lived creatively, it is a 'mission tension' in which growth occurs.

Embracing the reality of our multi faith contexts and encouraging the challenge to engage dialogically with the different traditions within Christianity affirms an approach that creatively and faithfully seeks to reread tradition to discover powerful resources for inter faith engagement that both encourage encounter but also deepen our relationship to our own tradition. Missionary Roger Hooker displays this in his description of the presence of Christ in his encounter with Muslims as a challenge to his apologetic impulses

Everybody wants to defend something, for most men (sic) today suffer from a deep inward fear and insecurity as the world becomes more and more an unfamiliar place. Very often the more frightened a man is the more aggressive he becomes and the more noise he makes. This attitude is very natural, very human, but is it Christian.....

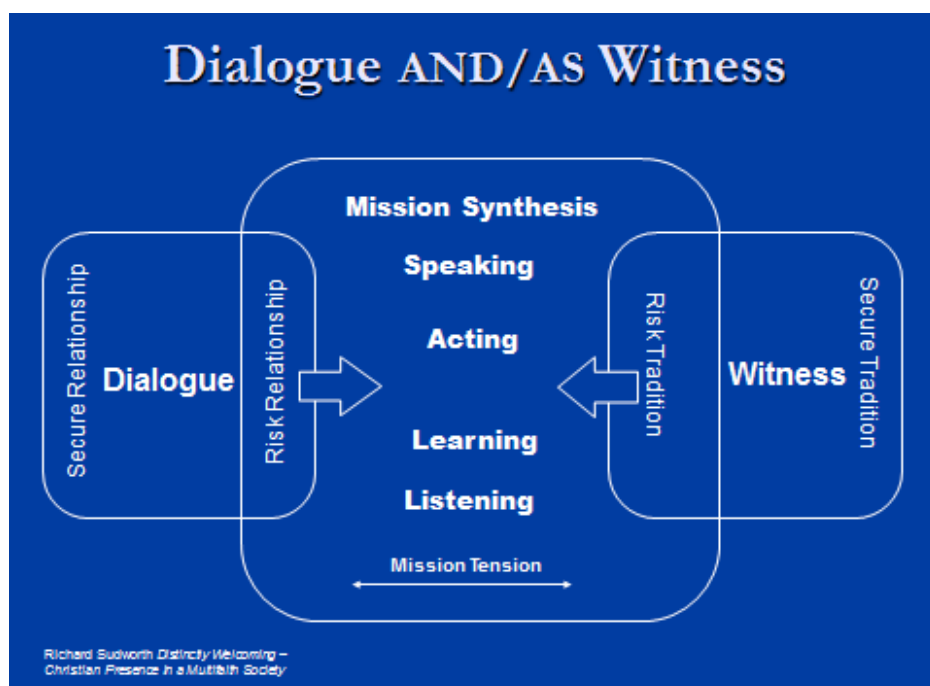
And so Jesus goes forth defenceless and alone. In the end his very clothes are stripped off him and he hangs on the cross, naked and vulnerable to all abuse and cruelty men want to heap on him. Yet we believe that there and in that way he did his greatest work.

This is of quite fundamental importance for the way in which we approach others. All our unwillingness to get hurt, all our attempts to argue in defence of our Lord stand condemned. So often, when I have allowed myself to be drawn in an argument, especially with Muslims, I have found that these words of Jesus have come into my mind. 'Sheathe your sword'. We must be open and vulnerable to the other, even as Christ on the cross was open and vulnerable. Part of being vulnerable is to listen – to expose our hearts and our minds to the full force of what the other is saying even when he challenges our most precious and deeply held convictions, putting faith itself at risk. To close our minds at this point, to refuse the pain of listening, is unbelief.⁵⁸

The Praxis of Engagement – Learning through Conscious Encounter seen as spiritual practice

How does this approach work in theological education? A model of theological education for

inter faith engagement that works with the tools of practical theology will emphasise the necessity of students entering into an educative process in which they are encouraged into a conscious encounter with themselves, God and others in response to the multi faith contexts of today's world. This involves providing opportunities for engaging with different faiths, exploring what it means to be a Christian in a context of what might be termed the growing 'multi faith consciousness' of our society and opportunities for experiencing dialogue as missional, theological and spiritual practice rooted in relationship with Christ. In this process three forms of engagement are emphasised and brought into dialogue for each student through experiencing inter faith encounter. An **engagement with other faiths** (inter faith dialogue), an **engagement with each other and the Christian tradition** (intra Christian dialogue) and an **engagement with ourselves in relationship to God** (inner self dialogue). This process draws upon contemporary theories of theological reflection such as the pastoral cycle and narrative approaches to theology such as Elaine Graham's 'Theology of the heart'⁵⁹ that encourage reflexivity but it also draws upon older resources in the tradition for reflection such as John Wesley's Practical Divinity⁶⁰ and emphasises the need to see our multi faith context as a God given



opportunity. Inter faith engagement can be seen as a spiritual practice, a means of grace that draws us closer to the God revealed in Jesus Christ.

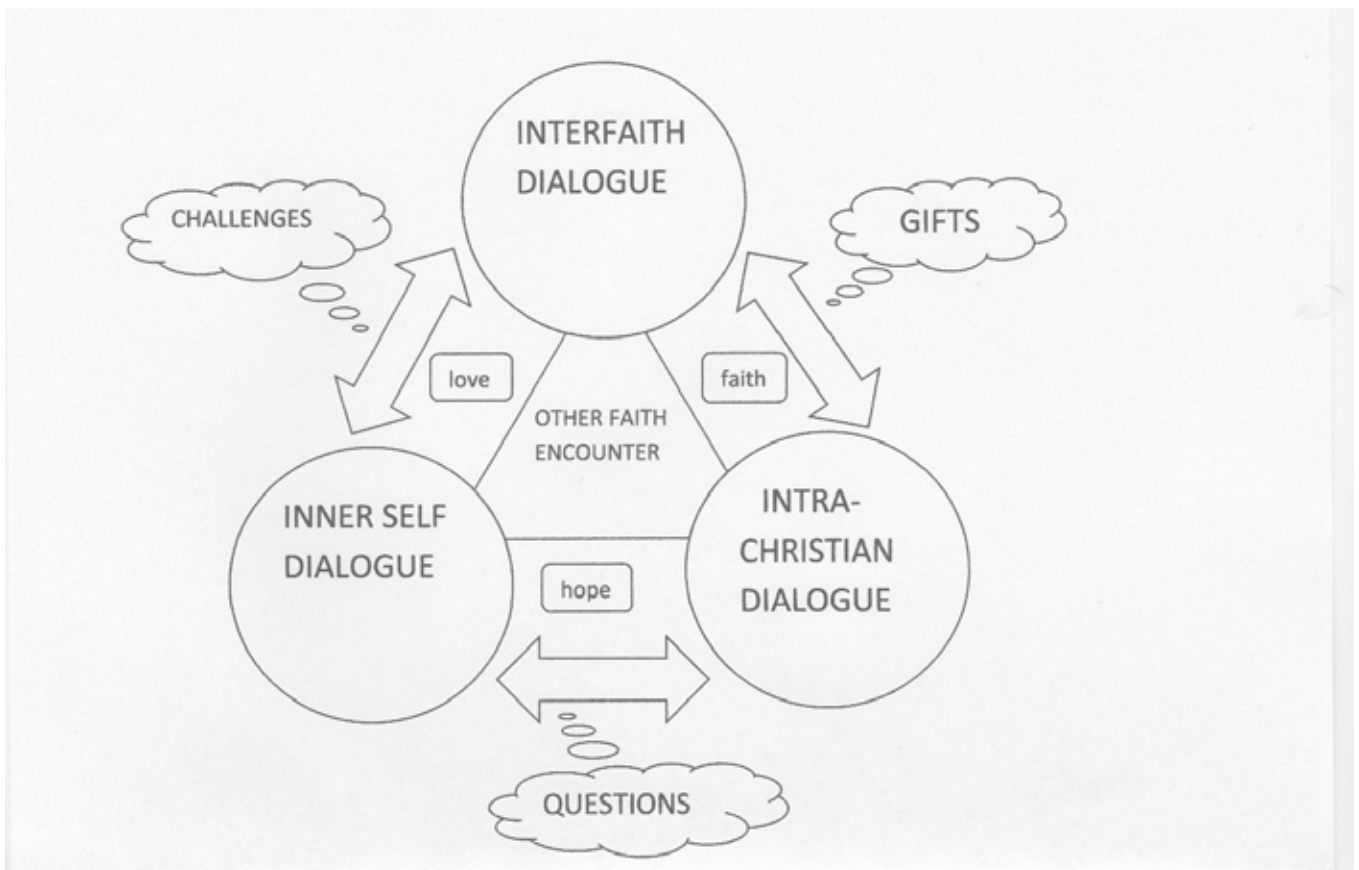
The Content of the Engagements

Barnes' critical analysis of the typology transforms it from argumentation on the salvific potential of the other into a dialogue on the virtues required for engagement. This becomes a different starting point for the Christian developing a deeper reflection upon discipleship in a multi faith world.

This shift articulated by Barnes sees the types (Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism) as each representing a bias in the virtues of faith, hope, and love (1 Corinthians 13:13) These virtues need to be in dialogue with one another; between faiths, within the community of faith, and also within the individual Christian for faithful engagement. Each

of these virtues needs expression in the discipleship of the Christian in their engagement with the religious 'other' in order for that engagement to be true - a balancing of the three virtues in one's continued practice. Students are therefore encouraged to reflect upon the dynamic of faith, hope and love in their past and future encounters and how the dynamic lives within them in their articulation of their theological perspective on other faith traditions. It also encourages students to reflect upon their own theological stance and what they might learn about the practice of their faith from others with a different approach. This reflection on the faith, hope & love triad is added to by a reflective process that asks in response to each encounter and experience on the course what are the gifts, challenges and questions that I come away from this experience with.

These experiences are also explored within the framework of reflection on the three "engagements" of inner, intra and inter-referred to above. Students are encouraged to reflect upon how these three



relate to each other in a self-reflective dialogue do they prioritise one over the others? If so, why?

Students are recommended to maintain a reflection journal throughout the course. Where is God in this dialogue? This is essentially an application of the pastoral cycle to interfaith engagement.

This dynamic reflective model is introduced in the classroom but as a model to use in engagement with the other as opportunities are presented for “crossing over”⁶¹ to other traditions in the course programme. Options might include amongst others: Qur’anic study groups; Sufi Dhkair; Langar at the Gurdwara; Aarti at the Mandir; Shabbat in a Jewish home; visiting a Sangha and experiencing Buddhist meditation. These options are where individuals or small groups of students encounter and engage with people of different faiths in their own contexts through conversation and experiencing their community in practice. In addition to this, students are expected to engage in a disciplined fashion with the scripture of another tradition during the course through accessible translations and introductions. They also encounter in class, representatives of a selection of traditions and through self-directed learning are encouraged to engage with a range of material that provides quality information on a range of faith traditions. This individual study is set alongside classroom exploration of theological self-understanding, biblical hermeneutics and spirituality explored in multi faith context. All this

activity then is reflected upon through the prism of the gifts, challenges and questions—faith, hope and love—and inner, intra, inter, modes of reflection.

There is here then a change of emphasis from a Theology of Religions concentrating upon the salvific efficacy of other religions to a theology of engagement that adopts a model of theological reflection rooted in contemporary and more classical understandings of practical theology. The emphasis is upon the individuals’ reflection in dialogue with the Christian tradition - represented by their peers but also beyond - on their practice and where this practice leaves them in their relationship to God.

Returning to the point with which we started, we move from a theology of religions whose subject is ‘the other’ to a theology of engagement whose subject is ourselves. This is not a narcissistic self-reflection but a spiritual practice rooted in the gospel. How do other faith traditions enable us into a deeper relationship with Christ? What challenges to our witness and self- understanding do they pose that might be seen as enabling within us a truer witness to the love of God in Christ Jesus? The salvific subject becomes not so much the other as the destiny of our own souls. ‘Put on the mind of Christ’ says Paul in the letter to the Philippians and ‘work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who is at work in you enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure’ (Philippians 2: 5, 12-13).

Notes

- 50 Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism – Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (SCM 1983)
- 51 See Harris Elizabeth, Hedges, Paul and Hettiarachchi, Shanthi (eds), *Twenty-First Century Theologies of Religions: Retrospection and New Frontiers* (Brill 2016)
- 52 Schmidt-Leukel Perry. 2016. 'Religious Pluralism in 13 Theses.' *Modern Believing* 57.
- 53 See P. F. Knitter *Introducing Theologies of Religions*. (Orbis Books 2002)
- 54 Michael Barnes *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions* (CUP 2002) p184
- 55 See Clark Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy – The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religion*, (Zondervan, 1992) p15
- 56 Richard Sudworth, *Distinctly Welcoming: Christian Presence in a Multi Faith Society* (Scripture Union 2007)
- 57 Catherine Cornille, *The Im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue* (Crossroad 2008) p8
- 58 Roger Hooker, *Outside the Camp* (CLS 1972) p55
- 59 See Elaine Graham, Heather Walton and Francis Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (SCM 2005) p18-46
- 60 For an example of using Wesley's understanding of the 'Way of Salvation' and applying it to inter faith engagement see Ray Gaston, *Faith, Hope and Love – Inter Faith Engagement as Practical Theology* (forthcoming, SCM 2017) especially the chapter 'Inter Faith Engagement as Spiritual Practice – Encounter as a Means of Grace'
- 61 Ewert Cousins, *Christ of the 21st Century* (Continuum 1998) p105-115

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- Michael Barnes, *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions* (CUP 2002)
- Catherine Cornille, *The Im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue* (Crossroad 2008)
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- Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism – Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (SCM 1983)
- Perry Schmidt-Leukel. 'Religious Pluralism in 13 Theses.' *Modern Believing* Vol 57:1 January 2016
- Richard Sudworth, *Distinctly Welcoming: Christian Presence in a Multi Faith Society* (Scripture Union 2007)

REPORT ON DELEGATE DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS

Following the morning's four presentations on various approaches to IFE in TEIs, as summarised in the papers above, the afternoon was designed to encourage reflection and response. Delegates moved into small groups to consider questions on what they'd heard; two groups were made up of those from TEIs, and two of those from IFCs.

TEI Discussion

The questions for the TEI groups were as follows:

1. Which approaches resonated with your experiences of interfaith engagement in theological education?
2. Is there a particular approach to interfaith engagement in your institution? If so, is it similar or different to those we heard this morning?
3. Where does interfaith engagement sit within your curriculum and your institution's wider understanding of ministerial education?
4. What questions would you want to ask about the approaches presented this morning?

It should be noted that although presenters had been asked to outline their approach to IFE in theological education, the three presentations given by representatives from IFCs failed to address this question explicitly. Rather they talked about their activities in the area of theological education, with less attention paid to exploring the narrative or reasoning which underpins this. Therefore delegates from TEIs were limited in their ability to reflect on their own institutional narratives around IFE. In light of this however, it was interesting that the one presentation which did state a rationale for approaching IFE (*Faith, Hope & Love: Inter Faith Engagement as Practical Theology*) was the one which TEIs delegates noted particular appreciation of in their discussions. While clearly this says something about the persuasiveness of the specific vision which was presented, it also might suggest that an overarching narrative is an attractive thing to TEIs - and so it would be beneficial to the IFCs if they were able to articulate this more clearly. In order to address the issue of presentations focussing on activity rather than rationale, the relevant IFCs were asked to submit revised versions of their presentations for inclusion in this report. It is these papers which are included in the body of the report, while the presentations given at the conference itself can be found in the appendices. This allows the reader to compare the two, and see that while some IFCs did state their approach to IFE more clearly in the second submission, others still struggled to do so. However, conversations with IFCs suggested that there are distinctive approaches

in operation, and so it is worth TEI's reflecting upon this when considering which IFC's might be more appropriate for their particular needs.

Moving on to explore the responses offered to the questions above, when asked which approaches resonated with their experience of IFE in theological education, TEI representatives expressed a clear appreciation of the notion of interfaith engagement being primarily about the student's own self. They expressed scepticism about the value of teaching the content of other faiths, feeling it to be more important to teach Christian approaches towards those of other faiths. There was no consensus on the extent to which factual information about belief and practice should be covered, but it was suggested that this can be picked up elsewhere more easily. Related to this, one person expressed the importance in a classroom context of raising questions, rather than giving answers. In addition, it was noted that there is a need for what was described as 'meaty' content, which challenged and stretched students, rather than a mere transfer of information.

There was discussion as to whether IFE is primarily formational or academic, though it was recognised that these are not discrete categories. Questions were also raised about how to make the best use of limited teaching time - for example, a ten credit module allows just ten teaching hours. Given that this is the case, some proposed that it might be better to do formational or 'experiential' teaching on IFE outside of the modular system, seeing the modules as being more geared towards academic content. However some of the Common Awards modules on interfaith engagement are aimed specifically at an approach which combines formational and academic, and so arguably such suggestions are based on conjecture and expectations of what modules might be like, rather than first-hand experience of using them.

TEIs understood questions about their approach to IFE as asking about their method of delivery, rather than their underlying narrative - arguably due to

the shortcomings in the presentations mentioned above. However all agreed that a key element was meeting people of other faiths, not just hearing Christians talking about them, which could be seen as expressing a preference for a particular approach - albeit implicitly. Others talked about inviting people of other faiths to teach alongside them as a 'double act'. There was conversation around how these relationships worked and the different ways such sessions might be framed.

When asked what questions they would want to ask about the approaches presented this morning, the main issue raised was the role of online education in IFE. Online resources were mentioned numerous times in the initial conversations with TEIs as one way to offer teaching on IFE to rural or dispersed cohorts. The Woolf Institute's presentation talked about the role of online learning in their courses. However delegates were unsure whether online methods were as effective as traditional teaching and learning approaches. In particular, they emphasised the importance of face to face engagement between people of different faiths, and responding as a whole person to the 'disruption' of that encounter. Those from residential TEIs also expressed uncertainty as to how online course would work for them.

IFC Discussion

While the conversations outlined above were taking place, those from interfaith centres were asked to consider the following questions:

1. Is theological education an important arena for your centre and its activities? Why or why not?
2. What place does this have in your broader understanding of your mission/purpose as an organisation?

3. What are the challenges in working with TEIs? Have you come up with strategies to overcome these?

The first key point raised when the groups shared their feedback was the need to interrogate the definition of theological education. For the purposes of this project, we have used theological education to refer to the teaching and training of those preparing for ordained ministry. However this is of course just one understanding of the term, which could be applied much more widely – to preaching and discipleship, children's and youth programmes, and other further or higher education courses. It was also noted that theological education takes place not just in contexts where there is teaching, but also through reflection, social action and dialogue.

With that said, the representatives from centres agreed that input to ordination training was not of particular importance to them, however theological education in the broader sense definitely was. There was also some ambiguity about whether centres were doing the educating, or equipping others to do it – or both.

Touchstone talked about how they offered placements to ordinands, but that this had arisen through their core work rather than being something they specifically aimed to do. The Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre in Birmingham noted that they do more with people in the IME phase of their training, and with non-Anglican denominations. The St Philip's Centre had historically done work in theological education but were not currently involved, however they were keen to explore revitalising this.

When asked about the challenges of working with TEIs, a range of answers were given. First among these was the notion that TEIs don't have any money and so can't pay for input from centres. However there was a feeling from some that perhaps this was not entirely true, and rather it was a case of IFE not being a financial priority. On a related note, it was felt that sometimes the idea of the 'squeezed curriculum' was used as an excuse for not including IFE in the curriculum. Another challenge was the complexity of TEIs as institutions. Centres struggle to know who to relate to, both due to staff changes and internal politics which make it difficult to know who to trust. Delegates from IFCs expressed nervousness about becoming entangled in the agendas at work in an institution. It was felt that one way to navigate this was through identifying a trustworthy individual and building an ongoing relationship with them as a way to connect with the broader institution

It should be noted at this point that the Woolf Institute, classified as an IFC for the purpose of this project, objected to this identification – preferring to be seen as a TEI. However given the working definition above, of theological education as the teaching and training of individuals for ordained ministry, a TEI is therefore a body for whom this is their primary task. Although the Woolf Institute is part of the Cambridge Theological Federation, it clearly does not fit this remit. The Woolf Institute's relationship to TEIs is very particular to the Cambridge context, and differs to that of the other IFCs involved in this research. Nevertheless despite acknowledging this, its role is closer to that of an IFC than a TEI as defined for the purposes of this research. Thus it was appropriate for Woolf to participate in the IFC rather than TEI discussions groups at the conference.

‘FROM DESCRIPTOR TO DELIVERY’

The second afternoon session at the conference invited three participants to share how they had addressed IFE in their context - two TEIs who had offered modules, and an IFC which offers placements.

Revd Sally Myers from the Lincoln School of Theology had recently used the Level 5 module *Christianity and Interfaith Engagement*, working with CCJ. LST used to address IFE outside the academic programme, as part of the formational element of training. They had worked with St Philip's Centre to do this, but when moving over to using a Common Award module, decided to put something together themselves along with another partner centre. They opted for a residential weekend, which was compulsory for ordinands with numerous trainee lay ministers also attending. In order to model interfaith engagement for the students, Rabbi Mark Solomon and Fiona Hulbert from CCJ took part in the weekend programme. Students were then asked to complete their assessment on a tradition other than Judaism.

The weekend began by exploring people's background and previous experience of other faiths - while some had lots of experience, others had very little. Fiona lead a challenging session about the Christian assumptions about Judaism which make Christian-Jewish relations difficult. This addressed a range of issues including those relating to liturgy, and Sally felt it was the hardest part of the weekend for the students. Rabbi Mark then arrived on Saturday morning and did a day's teaching, covering

things like Jesus as a Jew, and the historical context of Jewish-Christian relations. Fiona and Rabbi Mark then departed, leaving the group to debrief before an evening meal. Sally invited members of the Lincoln Interfaith Group to come for dinner, and they were asked to share something about themselves and their approach to IFE followed by questions from the students. This was felt to be really beneficial. On Sunday morning the group reviewed what they'd learnt and its implications for their faith. Sally described it as a great success, and "one of most joyful weekends we've had."

In recognising some of the challenges, Sally linked back to the earlier group discussions in noting that it was challenging to include both an introduction to the beliefs of other faiths as well as the principles of IFE. However the biggest issue was students conducting their own research afterwards; they struggled to find helpful information about other faiths, and found it hard to get input of the standard they'd had on Judaism via the internet. They were able to visit a place of worship of another faith however, using contacts from the Lincoln Interfaith Group, which was valuable for their assignment. Sally acknowledged the need to be more focussed in terms of how the academic ten hours are used, but wanted to find ways to keep up interfaith contacts in Lincoln as well as continuing to work with SPC outside the curriculum

Following on from Sally's presentation, Revd Dr Tim Naish from Ripon College, Cuddesdon, talked about

their experience of using the Level 4 *Multifaith Awareness* module as a week-long summer school. He explained that training at Cuddesdon consists of a number of different pathways, two of which are WEMTC and OMC. Both of these are non-residential courses, which normally operate separately but come together on this one occasion for a summer residential. Prior to using *Multifaith Awareness*, OMC had done one weekend on IFE plus five Tuesdays evenings, and this was not for credit. It was the first time they had done a summer school, and Revd Dr Janet Williams (Dean of WEMTC) has significant inter faith experience so did much of the work on it. For WEMTC it was a ten credit module, while for OMC it was not for credit. Again referencing earlier discussions, Tim wondered whether there might be some benefit to this.

In terms of challenges, while it was a hard decision to leave out a visit to the synagogue, it was impossible to fit everything. Similarly there was not time to visit a Gurdwara either, as OMC had done previously. Instead the week focussed on Islam and Buddhism – deliberately choosing one Abrahamic and one non-Abrahamic faith. There was a mixture of encounter, discussion, and teaching. Visiting practitioners, including Richard McCallum from OCMCS, taught an introductory session and a scripture session for each faith. In addition, Cuddesdon has a long relationship with Al Maktoum College of Higher Education in Dundee, which includes visits from a group of women, mostly from the Gulf region. As this coincided with summer school, it gave the opportunity for dialogue in groups. Janet prefaced this exercise with an introduction to set the scene. Other elements of the programme included the classic three fold typology (exclusivist/inclusivist/pluralist) being introduced but also critiqued, and input from Dan Strange from Oak Hill presenting a theologically conservative perspective. Tim stressed that it was important for students to hear a variety of perspectives. They also worked on private study in pairs, ready for a presentation on the Friday. Topics included Presence & Engagement and the religious demographics of UK. These were small,

fairly factual tasks for ten minute presentations, including a two-sided A4 handout. There was also a quiet day as part of the week, which was guided but relatively independent. Students were not specifically asked to reflect on the rest of the week, but many did and this was valuable in terms of giving them space to process what they were learning. This was the first time Cuddesdon had done this module; they learnt a lot of lessons but on the whole were pleased.

In response to these two examples from TEIs, representatives from All Saints in Manchester shared that they also run a summer school for students. This consists of Anglican interfaith practitioners delivering a number of two hour sessions on Islam and Judaism, and leading visits to a mosque and synagogue followed by a debrief. For both religions, a faith leader is invited to talk to the students and answer questions, but the majority of factual teaching input is given by Christians. The summer school focuses on how Muslim and Jews see Christianity, thus encouraging students to reflect on their own faith. The assignment is then to choose one of the two traditions and write about Christianity from this perspective. All Saints acknowledged that the teaching is a fairly intense experience, but then students have the whole summer to do their own reflection and prepare the assignment.

Revd Dr Barbara Glasson and Revd Jenny Ramsden from Touchstone in Bradford then introduced their work, as representatives of an IFC. Touchstone is a small practice-lead organisation, in a 46% Pakistani heritage Muslim area. Only 16-18% of the population are white British so the Touchstone team are living as a minority. Bradford has a history of textile industry, meaning it is a migrant city. It can't be accurately described as multicultural, but rather has a particular sort of cultural mix. Touchstone is based in a house on a residential street, and is a Methodist centre though working ecumenically. It is near to the University, which has mostly home students who are Muslim. Touchstone works in

partnership with Multan diocese in Pakistan, and has done clergy training for them. Barbara's belief is that you need to understand Bradford to understand Pakistan and vice versa, and she is passionate about this being a real partnership. Touchstone's work is in theological education in broadest sense, as discussed above; encouraging Christians to be confident and articulate about faith in their context.

Barbara's perspective is that IFE is about the transformation of individual, so that communities can be transformed. The individual's transformation is not an end in itself, but rather Church communities can be transformed through engagement. Accordingly, Touchstone focusses on exploring what it feels like to be a minority. Having theological students on placement is an opportunity to expose them to the complexity of this, revealing buried prejudices and considering ways to express challenging feelings and experiences. The hope is that these placements will be a catalyst for students, encouraging them to go on to exploring these issues in training and ministry.

Jenny works at Touchstone for 20 hours a week and is also an Anglican curate in her second year in Keighley - an area where the parish is struggling to come to terms with the growing Muslim presence. Having recently come out of theological

education, her reflection was that she learned a lot in the classroom about the major world faiths, but this doesn't prepare you for living, working and ministering in a multifaith context. This is borne out by Jenny's MA research on the role of the church in multifaith areas. As part of this she interviewed a number of P&E clergy, all of whom said that their training did not prepare them for the realities of their ministry. Jenny argued that real learning takes place through being enmeshed in a context - something a Touchstone placement gives students a glimpse of.

In closing, Barbara warned of the dangers of the 'tourist' nature of placements. She stressed the importance of Touchstone being where they are because they are committed to their context, rather than because it provides opportunities to use local people for their projects. For example, Barbara felt that she wouldn't take students to visit a mosque, but she would instead introduce them to Muslim people who might then invite them. Placement students are invited to share for a short time in Touchstone's ongoing commitment to the area, something which is only possible because of their long history. Being in authentic relationship with others offers a reflection on practice, and an opportunity for reciprocal learning.

NEXT STEPS

Finally, to round off the day the delegates discussed potential next steps, considering what would help and support both TEIs and IFCs in their work.

The group was keen to set an alternative example in relation to what they perceived as the competitive nature of TEIs, and sharing information between institutions was seen to be an important way of doing this, and one which would benefit this area of the curriculum. For example, one suggestion was the sharing of case studies from religiously diverse parishes, which could be written up and used in ministerial education. Others asked for a list of IFCs to be made available, detailing who is able to offer what, and the cost of their input. Links to useful websites would also be appreciated, and module outlines could be shared. Some wondered about creating better links with other denominational colleges on this subject area too, particularly now there are less Methodist training institutions.

There was discussion over where any resultant resources might be held. Delegates agreed that if there was a well-regarded Virtual Learning

Environment for Common Awards, that would be the natural place; however at present an alternative would be preferable. The Presence & Engagement website was proposed as an option, although those from other denominations were wary of Anglican ownership if this would limit the access of other denominations to resources. There was also concern over centralising things in case this meant it risked becoming dominated by hierarchical agendas and losing touch with the grassroots. Other host websites proposed were Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) – which already has a page for their Inter Faith Theological Advisory Group – or Churches Together in England (CTE).

The conversations drew to a close with an agreement that the conference organisers would go away and consider the suggestions that had been made, and draw up a course of action. This can be found in the following section of the report. In concluding, the project's findings will be summarised, and some key themes will be highlighted which may be worth further consideration by those interested in this topic.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the quantitative findings were encouraging. Of the twenty-one TEIs surveyed, thirteen offer at least one Common Awards modules on IFE. For ten of the thirteen, this module is compulsory for ordinands. Of the eight TEIs not offering Common Awards modules, all of them provided students with teaching on IFE - either in modules outside the curriculum or as part of curricular modules on missiology or contextual theology. Therefore fears that it might emerge that many TEIs were not including any content on Christian engagement with different faiths were unfounded.

However although the teaching exists, what about its content and quality? The interviews revealed that half of the TEIs who participated in this project were drawing on external centres or organisations to aid with their IFE input. Of those who were not, there was a fairly even split between those who had the necessary in-house expertise to teach and facilitate courses on IFE, and others who used their personal contacts to identify individuals to offer this. For example, a number of TEIs mentioned visits from diocesan interfaith advisers or local Christian interfaith practitioners, whether lay or ordained. While it is positive that TEIs are able to draw on local resources in this way, it should be noted that arranging teaching through personal contacts can mean that these connections are lost when the member of staff responsible for IFE moves on. Though a relationship between a TEI and an IFC is likely to initially be 'owned' by a particular staff member, there is scope here for a more institutional relationship to develop over time. This also allows the TEI and IFC to work together to provide a programme which is of most benefit to students - whereas with a personal contact, the TEI may feel they have less ownership and thus be unable to offer constructive criticism or shape the input in response to student feedback. Anecdotally, the connections between TEIs and IFCs are fluid and change quickly - suggesting there is a need for an online source of information on what the latter can provide for the former so that this information is not lost when personnel changes.

The research suggests that ensuring high quality teaching on IFE may be a particular challenge in rural areas and dispersed cohorts. On the other hand, TEIs in cities such as Oxford and Cambridge felt they were well-resourced and could potentially support other TEIs - though it should be noted that these have a particular academic flavour to their IFE. This suggests that there may be potential for collaboration between TEIs, as well as between TEIs and IFCs.

Beyond getting a sense of the big picture in terms of the teaching of IFE in TEIs, the more qualitative aim of this research was to see what the prevailing narratives around the topic are, whether implicitly or explicitly stated. Here it was more difficult to draw conclusions than anticipated. As noted in an earlier section, interfaith centres invited to give a presentation at the conference did not directly outline the narrative

underpinning their approach to IFE, and so accordingly TEI representatives struggled to articulate what this might be in their own institutions. Rather than concluding that this means such narratives do not exist, this suggests that they are more deeply embedded than anticipated. More needs to be done to encourage TEIs to reflect on this, and appreciate that there are different approaches and that they can profile one over another based on which IFC they opt to work with.

Within the qualitative data collected during the interviews and discussions at the conference, several key themes emerged. One issue which arose was the question of the focus of IFE modules, in particular which faith/s they addressed. Four of the TEIs interviewed have chosen to teach solely on Islam, with a fifth stating this was their main focus though other faiths were covered too. While such a move has clear benefits for students who go on to minister in areas with a strong Muslim presence, and so should be affirmed in its pragmatism, it does risk perpetuating the narrative found in media and politics that Islam is the only 'other faith' it is necessary to take notice of. In fact there are significant trends in regard to interest in Buddhism in the UK, particularly amongst young people, as well as the popularity of neo-paganism and alternative spiritualities. Both these examples could be seen to represent quite different cultural and religious shifts to those identified in the growth of Islam. Yet if IFE curriculums are restricted to one faith, will ordinands be equipped to engage with the full breadth of what it means to live in a multifaith society? Introducing students to engagement with various religious traditions broadens the range of pastoral, liturgical and missiological issues which can be explored. However it is clear from the interviews that the constraints of the current curriculum make this unfeasible for many TEIs.

The emphasis on Christian-Muslim relations is in stark contrast to the lack of take up for the Jewish-Christian relations CA module at Level 4 and a seeming lack of interest in the Jewish-Christian encounter more widely. What are the implications of this, when much of a TEI's biblical studies will centre on Jewish settings? Without specific attention of contemporary Judaism, there is a danger that students will be left with the impression that the Judaism portrayed in the Old and New Testament is the same as Judaism in the UK today. Yet there were some notable exceptions – namely Westcott through its engagement with Woolf, Queen's with its first year extra curricula course and the Lincoln School of Theology programme described in the earlier section. All Saints also look at both Judaism and Islam in their summer school, and other TEIs would benefit from considering these myriad ways of affirming the importance of Jewish-Christian relations.

Unsurprisingly, there were numerous practical concerns which recurred in the conversations – first among them being the sense of the curriculum being 'squeezed' by the pressure to meet Ministry Division requirements in a limited number of teaching hours. This meant that some expressed the desire to do more on IFE but felt that time constraints would not allow it. Linked to this was the growing need to be able to demonstrate to students the relevance of what they are being taught to their future ministry. This is representative of broader trends in Higher Education which cast the student in the role of consumer or client, with learning needing to be clearly linked to career outcomes rather than being an end in itself. Given this situation, those interviewed felt that they sometimes faced resistance from students who did not intend to work in inner city contexts, and so did not see the relevance of IFE. This illustrates the necessity of understandings of IFE which release it from the limitations of a particular setting and show its importance for all Christian ministry in today's world – as expressed in the introduction to this report.

Other practical issues raised relate to methods of teaching and learning. Most courses included visits to places of worship, but some stressed the difficulty of setting these up in their geographical locations, although others were based in contexts that allowed excellent access to quality experiences with other faith traditions. Some course-based TEIs talked about the role online resources might play in mitigating these challenges, especially for dispersed cohorts and smaller institutions without specialist teaching staff. For these reasons and others, IFE modules are often taught in an intensive residential setting. There is scope here for future research into whether and how this format affects the learning process, in comparison to modules taught in traditional weekly classes.

Finally, a number of interviewees from TEIs mentioned a desire to better connect their students with people of other faiths, seeing the value of these relationships as a way of moving beyond a tokenistic encounter. Buddy schemes and exchanges were seen to be a positive way of students encountering difference on a deeper level than that permitted by short classroom sessions or visits, as were initiatives such as the Summer School launched in 2015 by the Oxford Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies. This raises the question of whether curricular modules are in fact the most appropriate place for IFE in theological education; although it should be noted that the Buddy Scheme that Queen's engaged in with Leo Baeck suggests these kind of programmes also have their limitations. Yet whether in or outside of the classroom, any experience of contact with other faith traditions needs to be framed within a clearly defined reflective Process. This enables the encounters, however limited, to encourage thoughtful and potentially transformative theological reflection. So while exchanges and summer schools may provide a good opportunity for this, they should not be seen as a way for the TEI to abdicate responsibility for their students' learning in this area.

At the close of the conference there was discussion of what TEIs would find helpful as an outcome of this project. Considering the various suggestions and requests, the research team made the decision to create space on the P&E website to host resources for TEIs. At the time of writing, this is currently in development and will include examples of module outlines as well as details of various IFCs and the sort of programmes they can provide. It is hoped this will serve as a useful resource for educators looking to develop their institution's offering in this area of the curriculum.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for TEIs offering Common Awards modules on IFE

1. Is our information from the Common Awards website about the modules you offer accurate?
2. How are these courses being resourced? (Taught internally vs inviting external person)
3. If the latter, how did you find someone to teach on this module?
4. If you haven't made use of external resources, what kind of things would you find useful?
5. Which courses are currently being taught or have already been taught?
6. What is the student uptake of these courses like?
7. What did you do on IFE prior to Common Awards?
8. If you did something else, have the CA modules replaced it or does it run alongside them?

Questions for TEIs not currently offering Common Awards modules on IFE

1. Do you currently offer any of the Common Awards modules on the subject of interfaith engagement?
2. If so;
 - a. Are these courses optional or compulsory?
 - b. How are these courses resourced – are they taught by a member of staff, an external speaker, or in partnership with a relevant organisation?

3. If not, do you do anything with your students which addresses this topic outside of the accredited curriculum – for example, a study day or community week? If so, is this organised in house or by an external person or organisation?
4. Did you do anything on this topic differently prior to accreditation via Common Awards?
5. Are there particular barriers, other than time constraints, to you addressing interfaith engagement as part of your programme of teaching and formation?
6. What kind of resources, support or networks would be useful to you in developing your provision in this area?

Questions for IFCs

1. Were you involved with theological education prior to Common Award, and if so how?
2. Are you involved in theological education under CA, and if so how?
3. If not, what would you have to offer to TEIs?
4. What do you see as distinctive about your approach to IFE?

APPENDIX B

The Importance of Understanding Islam in the Contemporary World

INTEGRATING ISLAM INTO THE
CURRICULUM

DR RICHARD MCCALLUM

CENTRE FOR MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN STUDIES
OXFORD

Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies, Oxford



The Importance of Understanding Islam in the Contemporary World

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OXFORD

Teaching Islam to Christians

“what is needed now is an interdisciplinary approach. The challenge facing us is to find ways of allowing Islam to impinge on almost every discipline of theology”

(Chapman, 1989, *Vox Evangelica*, xix, 7-31)

“theological education with Islam in mind” (Glaser)

Other reports

GILLIAT-RAY, S. (2003) Ministerial Formation in a Multi-Faith Society. *Teaching Theology and Religion*, 6, 9-17.

- Progress has been made
- Pastorally driven
- “Extreme pressure on the theological curriculum”
- Transferrable skills and reflection
- Learning from the followers of other faiths

“**the human resources** in different faith traditions **are often limited**. The speakers who address students in mosques ... may not be fellow religious professionals but simply community leaders with a facility in English. There is scope for misunderstandings to be reinforced and for beliefs to be misrepresented”

Other reports

MUMISA, M. & KESSLER, E. (2008) The Training of Religious Leaders in the UK: a survey of Jewish, Christian and Muslim seminaries. Cambridge, Woolf Institute

- Jewish seminaries
- Islamic *madrasas*
- Christian seminaries

“the more **evangelical colleges** tend to prefer courses taught from **a Christian-centred theological perspective** with the primary purpose of evangelising; on the other hand, more **liberal colleges** prefer to teach other religions with the primary purpose of promoting **understanding and dialogue**”

Other reports

- MARTIN, R. (Ed.) (2001) *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, Oxford, Oneworld.
- WHEELER, B. (Ed.) (2003) *Teaching Islam*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- BENNETT, C. (2010) *Studying Islam: the critical issues*, London, Continuum.

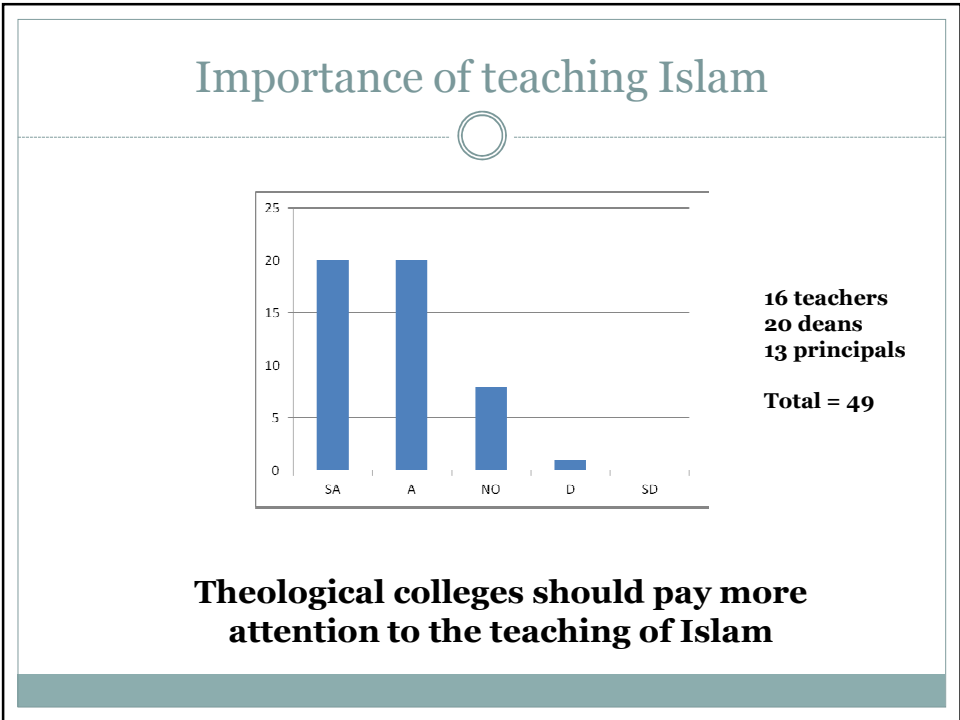
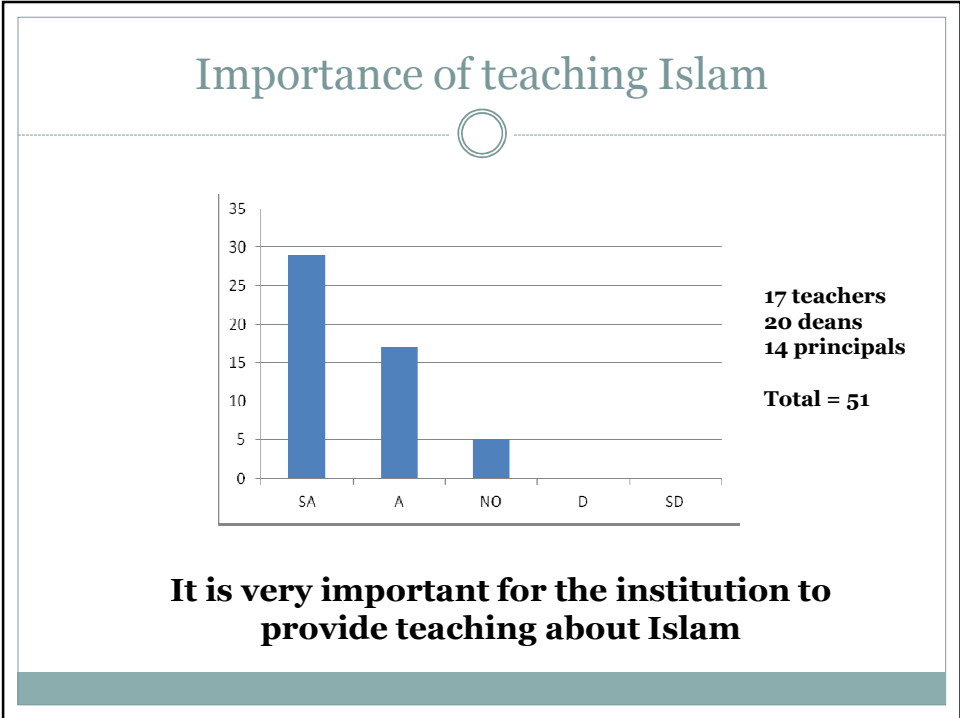
Integrating Islam

A REPORT ON THE TEACHING OF ISLAM
WITHIN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES IN THE
BRITISH ISLES

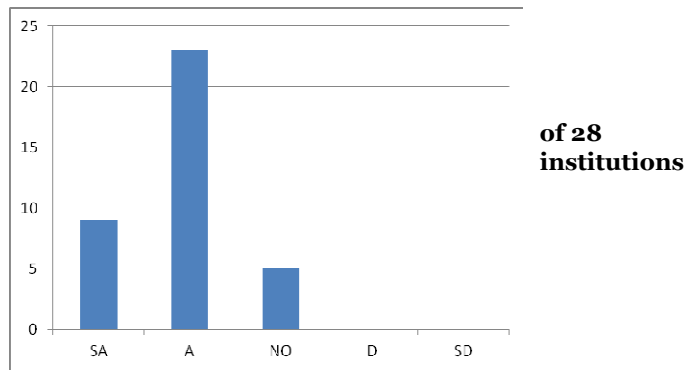
2012

Executive summary

<http://cmcsoxford.org.uk/research/integrating-islam/>

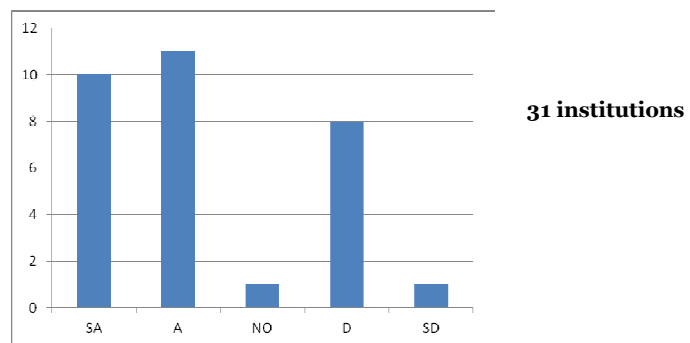


Importance of teaching Islam

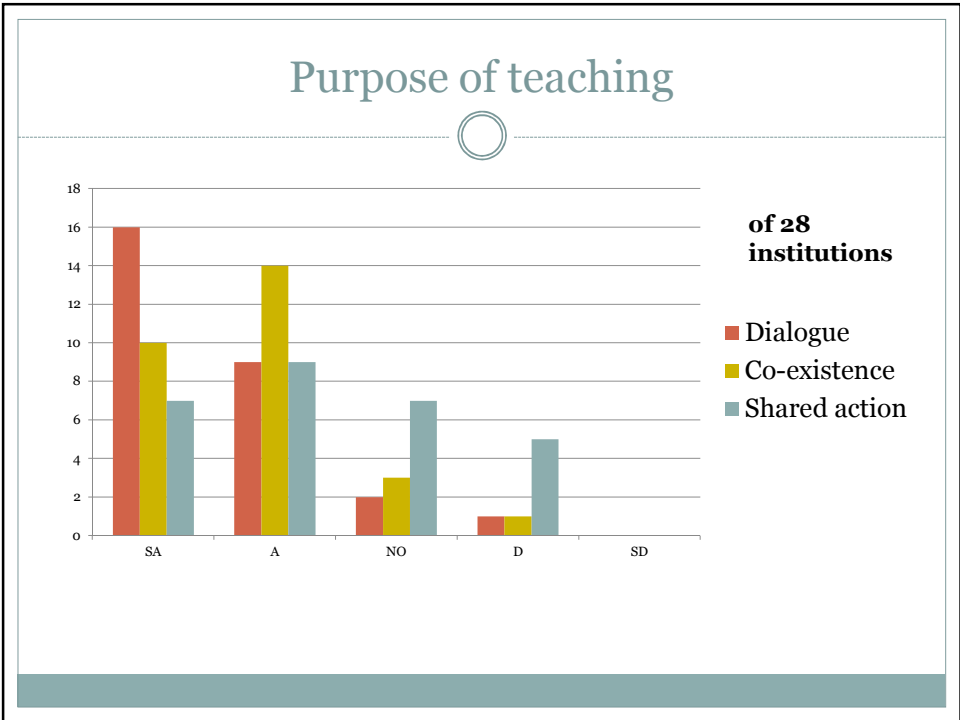
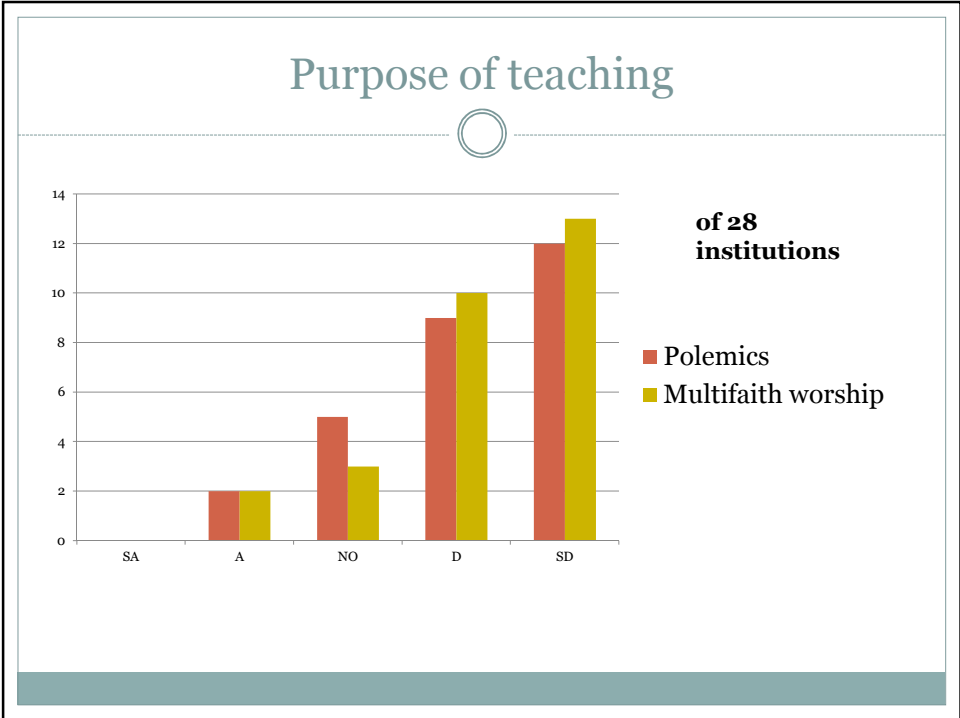


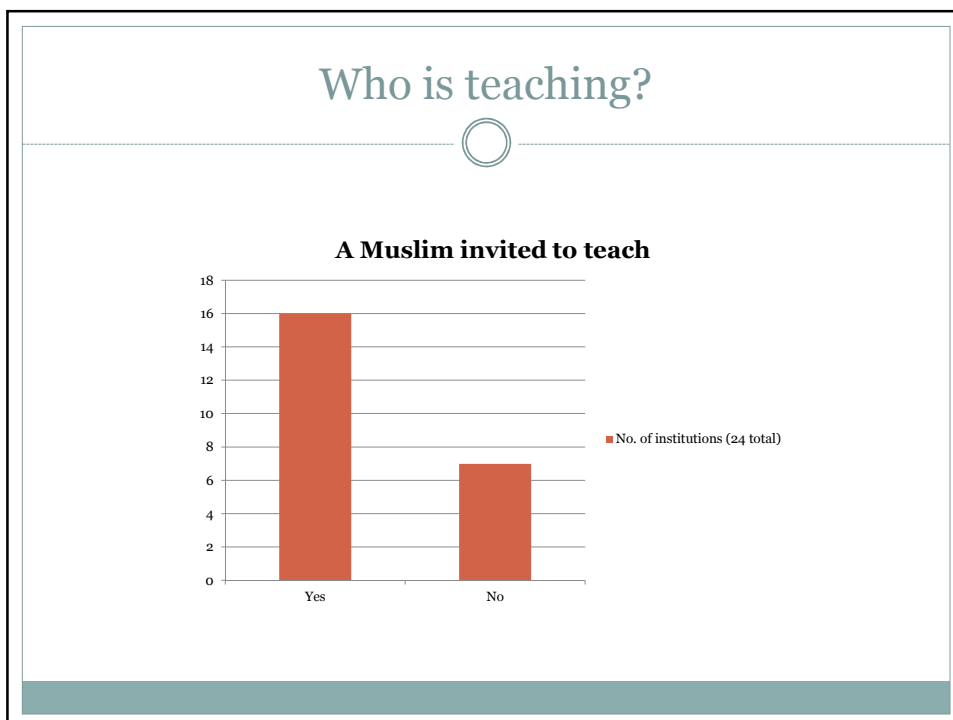
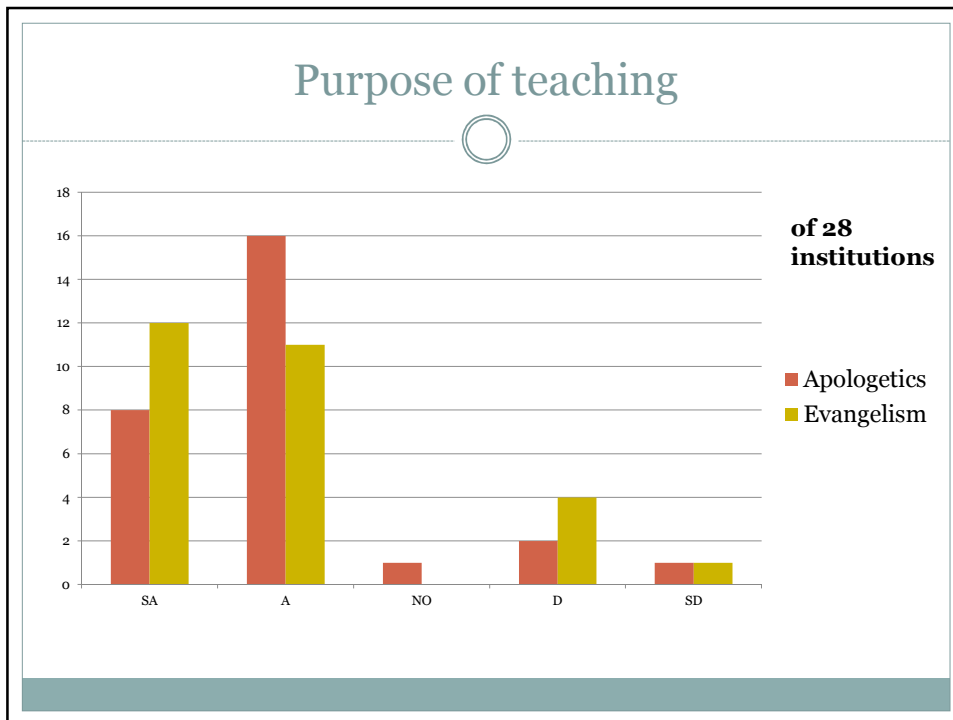
The students are eager and interested to be educated about Islam

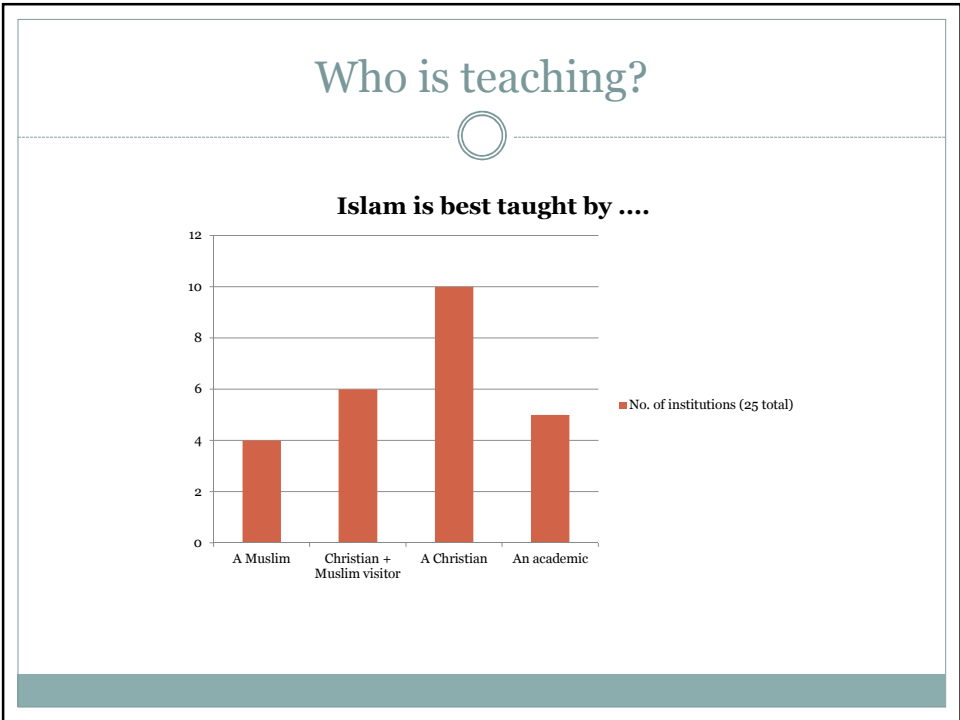
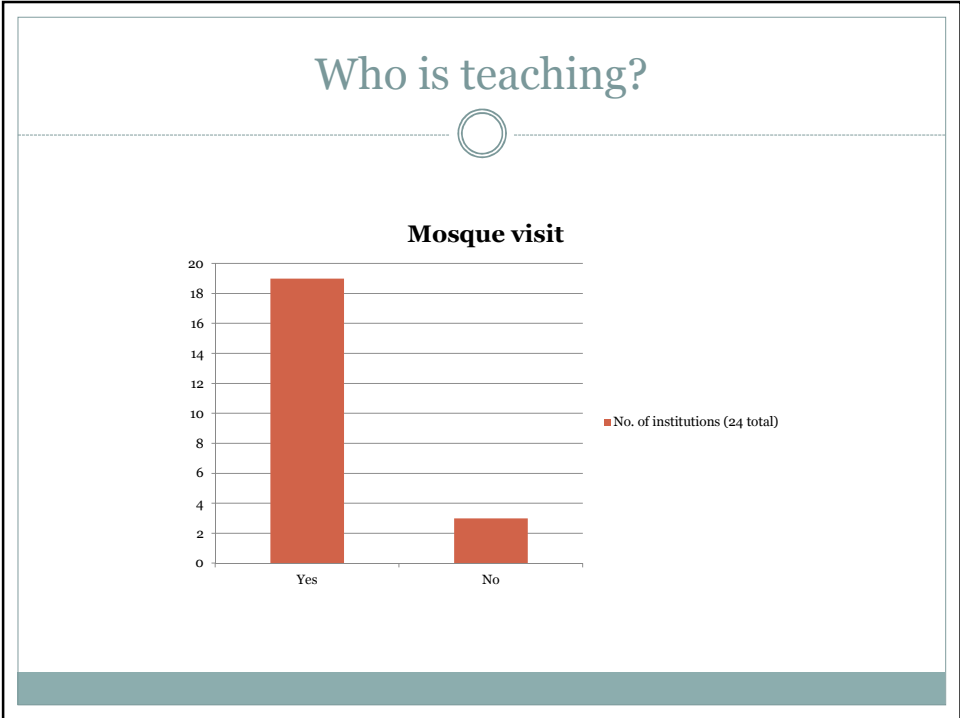
Who is being taught?



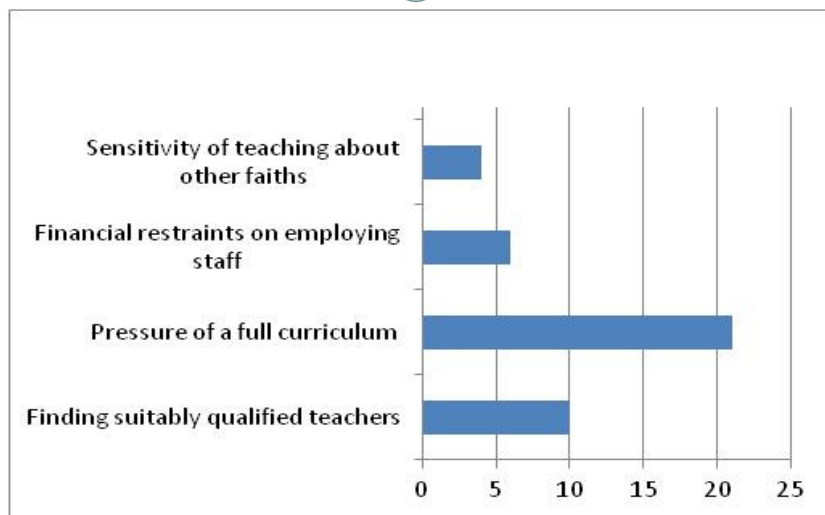
All students receive some basic teaching about Islam







Challenges to teaching Islam



Integrating Islam into the curriculum

- Islam as a specialism
- Islam as part of interfaith relations
- An awareness of Islam across the curriculum

Integrating Islam into the curriculum

- Staff training – INSET sessions

INSET training

Lectionary readings for today

- Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
- Isaiah 58:1-12
- 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10
- Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

INSET training

The Cliff Curriculum

You will be assigned a few of the modules specified below from the Cliff College BA Theology Programme (taken from the website with only a few omissions). How might Islam and the presence of Muslims affect or be relevant to the teaching of these modules? Make a list of as many impacts, challenges or questions as you can think of.

Level 4

CORE UNITS:

1. New Testament
2. Old Testament
3. Introduction to Theology
4. Introduction to Evangelism

OPTION UNITS:

5. Christian Spirituality
6. Christian Discipleship
7. Christian Leadership
8. New Testament Exegesis
9. Mission Placement
10. Church History
11. Preaching Practice
12. Resourcing Christian Worship

Level 5

CORE UNITS

1. Theology in the contemporary world
2. Biblical Hermeneutics

OPTIONAL UNITS

3. Luke in the Holy Land (10 credits)

4. Old Testament Exegesis (10 credits)
5. Missiology (10 credits)
6. Apologetics (10 credits)
7. Contextual Evangelism (10 credits)
8. New Testament Exegesis (10 credits)
9. Philosophy and Ethics (10 credits)
10. Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts (10 credits)

Level 6

OPTION UNITS - students choose five of these

1. Celtic Mission & Spirituality
2. Leading & Pioneering the Emerging Church
3. Mission & Religious Pluralism
4. Public Theology
5. Narrative readings of women in the Bible
6. Biblical Theology
7. New Testament Exegesis
8. Mission & Evangelism
9. Youth Mission

INSET training

Exercise 2

Lesson design

MUSLIM MISSION STUDIES
OXFORD

In what ways do Islam and the presence of Muslims influence or contribute to the various aspects of the following diploma?

Suggest 15 mins of material that could be incorporated at some stage in the programme to sensitise students to the relevance of Islam for this module.

Diploma in Youth Mission and Ministry (description from Cliff College website)

The diploma is a two-year, part-time undergraduate course which is aiming to further the training of youth workers to think theologically about their own practice, to offer insights into cultural issues, and to explore relevant church models and leadership roles with the adolescent world. Alongside our partners Youth for Christ, Urban Saints and Scripture Union, the aim of the course is to produce 'reflective practitioners', students who are rooted in ministry but have reflected on the issues surrounding that ministry. This is offered through a mixture of lectures, seminars, workshops, group tutorials and individual learning. An increasingly large proportion of diploma students now progress onto the BA (Hons) in Mission and Ministry (Youth) degree course.

- The Youth Work Context: Biblical and Contemporary
- Reaching Young People: Mission Theology
- The Youth Worker: Personal and Professional Development
- Youth Culture: Issues facing Adolescents
- Young People: Spirituality and Church
- Research Project (optional)

INSET training

Exercise 2

Lesson design

STUDIES
O X F O R D

In what ways do Islam and the presence of Muslims influence or contribute to the various aspects of the following diploma?

Suggest 15 mins of material that could be incorporated at some stage in the programme to sensitise students to the relevance of Islam for this module.

Diploma in Third Age Mission and Ministry (description from Cliff College website)

In an ageing population, effective and creative work with older people is becoming an urgent need of our time, and thoughtful reflection on the nature of Christian ministry with elderly people is especially needed. The Third Age Mission and Ministry diploma is a two-year part-time and distance learning undergraduate diploma directed at those working with older people whether through Church events, pastoral visitation, weekday clubs, care homes or social centres. The teaching is delivered through a mixture of lectures, seminars, workshops, group tutorials and individual learning.

- The Third Age Ministry Context: Biblical and Contemporary
- Third Age Culture: Issues Facing Older People
- The Third Age Worker: Personal and Professional Development
- Reaching Older People: Mission Theology
- Older People: Spirituality and Church
- Research Project (optional)
- Schools Mission and Ministry (optional)

INSET training

Exercise 3

Questions you may be asked by students.

THE CENTRE FOR
MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN
STUDIES
O X F O R D

Discuss two of the following questions in your group. What underlies these questions? What answers would you give?

1. Is Allah the God of the Bible?
2. Why do politicians say that "Islam is peace"? When I read the Qur'an I can plainly see it is violent!
3. If Christians cannot build churches in Saudi Arabia why should Muslims be allowed to build mosques here? Shouldn't there be reciprocity?
4. My friend's brother has disappeared and gone to Syria. What can I say? How can I help her?
5. I was talking to a Muslim and he said that the Bible had been changed. I didn't know that but he was very convincing. What should I say to him?

Integrating Islam into the curriculum

- Staff training – INSET sessions
- Resource pack – work in progress!

Integrating Islam into the curriculum

INTEGRATING ISLAM

Helping Christian teachers to be aware of the presence of Islam and
Muslims in the theological curriculum

Resource Pack



THE CENTRE FOR
MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN
STUDIES
O X F O R D

2015

Integrating Islam into the curriculum

- Staff training – INSET sessions
- Resource pack – work in progress!
- Oxford Muslim-Christian Summer School
 - Muslims and Christians training for faith leadership
 - British-based
 - Taught by Christians and Muslims (Ebrahim College and Islamic College of Advanced Studies)

The Importance of Understanding Islam in the Contemporary World

INTEGRATING ISLAM INTO THE CURRICULUM

DR RICHARD MCCALLUM

CENTRE FOR MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN STUDIES
OXFORD

APPENDIX C

THE PARTICULARITY OF CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS

Dr Steve Innes, CCJ

There are two notions about the particularity of Christian-Jewish relations that I often come across in my reading as well as in my discussions with practitioners from both traditions. The first is that Christianity is a “monotheistic religion for the Gentiles”. The second is the notion that although Christians need Judaism for its own self-understanding, Judaism does not need Christianity. In the short time we have today, I would like to challenge both of these notions and in so doing, provide a brief sketch of what are some of the distinct features of Christian-Jewish relations and, perhaps more importantly, open up the possibility that there is something about the Christian-Jewish particularity that gives testimony or “witness” to a model of dialogue that can, in a very broad sense, be utilised in other contexts. As we will see, this model is grounded in the conviction that the Other is a disruptive force which works to challenge both Christian and Jewish self-understanding and affirms the character of the divine as both irreducible and unlimited.

One doesn't have to have ever taken part in any formal dialogue between Jews and Christians to know that one of the fundamentally unique aspects of Jewish-Christian relations is that both traditions not only share belief in the same God but also important ethical principles which spring from our shared scriptures and traditions. But of course the relationship is so much closer and

sympiotic in its earliest shared history than this. And it is in this context that we find the notion that Christianity is a religion for the Gentiles somewhat ironic. The historical fact, of course, is that Jesus and his earliest followers were Jews, not Gentiles, and that the conflict between those who claimed Jesus was the awaited Messiah and those who did not was an intra-Jewish debate. Moreover, one of the primary and most urgent questions of the earliest Christian communities was not about whether Jesus was Messiah but whether the good news of the Gospel was for Gentiles and not simply for Jews. As we know, these Christian communities came to the conclusion that the Gospel brought to the Jews should also be brought to the Gentiles.

The historical fact of the Jewish origins of Christianity has several important implications, two of which give witness to the particularity of this relationship:

First, it utterly repudiates any justification or cover for Christian antisemitism, past or present. Although claims for the universalism of Christianity (that is, the claim that Christians are to go into the world and make disciples of *all* nations, that Jesus' death redeems the *whole* world) have often been used to justify antisemitic attitudes and practices throughout history, such claims ignore or suppress the Jewish origins of Christianity.

Second, despite the deep divergence around the significance of Jesus, there has been substantive convergence between the two traditions on both a philosophical-theological level as well as a socio-political level. One can think here of the myriad ways in which Jews and Christians work towards the common good in areas such as the health service, in schools, in Parliament, in charities and other social action organisations. Moreover, there has been significant theological and philosophical engagement between the two traditions - one is reminded of the many ways in which Maimonides, Spinoza, Levinas, Heschel, Buber, Rosenzweig and many others have influenced the way Christians think about ethics, responsibility, and the nature of both God and human beings.

Moreover, the experience of the *Shoah* has, at least in Europe, placed a greater priority upon Christian-Jewish relations than other important dialogue partners (e.g. dialogue between the three Abrahamic traditions). Indeed, the whole concept of dialogue between Jews and Christians came as a consequence of the *Shoah*.

For Christians, the particularity of dialogue with Jews enables a certain level of theological self-reflection. As Pope John Paul observes, the Church discovers a certain understanding of its own mystery precisely through its bond with Judaism. Judaism is not “extrinsic” to us, but rather in a certain way is “intrinsic” to our very identity while remaining distinct. With Judaism, therefore, we have a relationship which is unique to that of any other religious tradition. In the covenant with the God of Israel, the Church makes the claim that she shares (and not exclusively) covenant responsibility with the Jewish people. Pope Paul adds that from this shared blessing of covenantal responsibility arises a unique intimacy of the Church with the Jewish people. This theological intimacy, if it is appropriate to use that term, transcends what is possible for either tradition when merely viewed as politico-social realities. Thus, in seeking to articulate together what it means to be creatures

of the God who enters into covenant with such creatures, Christians and Jews gain a kinship rooted in shared affirmations about God and humanity.

So Christianity is not merely “monotheism for the Gentiles”, but is fundamentally rooted in the Jewish tradition and thus the latter is fundamental to the self-understanding of the former. But is it the case that Judaism does not need Christianity for its own self-understanding? We have now come to the second notion about Christian-Jewish relations that I would like to call into question.

Many of us are familiar with the claim that any genuine encounter with the Other introduces a certain disruption or challenging of certain modes of discourse that have been passively accepted without proper critical evaluation. In the case of Christianity, the second half of the 20th century saw a considerable challenge from multiple sources to interpret the reality of the singularity or particularity of other faith traditions, especially Judaism. This challenge generally takes on the form of opposing Jewish particularity to the “universal truth” claims of Christianity. In other words, the challenge to Christianity is whether it can accept and embrace the Other who *remains* Other. So, as the argument goes, the invitation to challenge its self-understanding that comes from Christianity’s encounter with the Other (in this case Judaism) offers new possibilities: a new logic of reading texts, a way of seeing the trace of God in ways which transcend the often reductive anthropomorphisms, and new ways of understanding and embodying our responsibility for the Other. And as we have seen with documents such as *Nostra Aetate* and its disavowal of both supersessionism and the need for Jews to undergo conversion, the Church is slowly recognising that the universal scope of its mission does not necessarily mean its truth claims constitute a totality.

But is the same true of Judaism with respect to Christianity? Does it need Christianity for its own practice of self-critical reflection?

Rabbi Michael Hilton argues that Judaism “has not remained unchanged since the time of Jesus.”¹ He observes that Christians are mistaken if they think that the rites they see in the synagogue are the same as those that would have been practised in Palestine two thousand years ago. Mary the mother of Jesus lit no Sabbath candles; Jesus could not have had a bar mitzvah; he could not have celebrated the giving of the Torah during the festival of Shavuot; and he could not have recited the Haggadah at a Passover meal. Such practices came into being after the time of Jesus. Most Jews would in fact acknowledge that Judaism is an ongoing, living faith tradition; it has continued to refine and change throughout the centuries. Indeed, some of these rites as practised by Jews today have been influenced by Christian practices or, at the very least, have been adapted by Jews living in predominantly Christian lands.

Moreover, Rabbi Hilton argues that the Christian influence upon Judaism in modern times extends across the denominational spectrum.² For example, he observes the Chasidim have a doctrine of the Tzaddik that is analogous to the Christian concept of sainthood. The United Synagogue in England (Orthodox) is modelled on the established Church of England, with the central organisation owning all the buildings and appointing the rabbis – again a model drawn from the Church. In the second half of the last century only the Chief Rabbi was allowed the title Rabbi – all the other ministers were called by the Christian term “Reverend.” They often wore dog collars, and would put on robes before the service in a vestry, possibly with the assistance of wardens – all terms borrowed from the Church. As the trend in Victorian times was towards larger and larger churches, so the established synagogue adopted cathedral-like buildings (the great synagogue in Rome is one such example).

Perhaps less surprising, as Rabbi Hilton observes, are the ways in which the Reform movement has been deeply influenced by Church practices, not least by the movement towards greater decorum which through Methodism and similar influences

was an issue in the Church before it became one in the synagogue. And there are aspects of Reform which recall the Christian Reformation some three centuries before: indeed the early histories of the subject were called “History of the Jewish Reformation.” Indeed, the very terms “Orthodox” and “Reform” are borrowed from Christian vocabulary.¹

But the modern period is not the only period when Jews have borrowed practices and customs from Christians. Rabbi Hilton explains that many of modern Judaism’s basic rites were born in a rich period of innovation in France and Germany from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries.⁴ This is not generally thought of as a rich period for Christian-Jewish dialogue, but nevertheless conversations did go on, and influences can be seen. From the middle ages Jews have used the Yiddish term *shul* for a synagogue, probably borrowed by Jews from their Christian neighbours who saw the young boys going there for classes. The custom of providing seats for worshippers in a synagogue appears to be a Church practice voluntarily followed by the Jews, to which Maimonides makes reference in the *Mishneh Torah*. Shabbat candles were borrowed from the Church in the middle ages.⁵ It was an ancient custom to light a lamp in the home for Shabbat, but the norm was a single oil lamp, of the kind you can see to this day in Indian Jewish communities. No less an authority than the *Judaica* informs us that “although there is traditional basis for the use of candles in Judaism, undoubtedly their widespread employment in the rites of the Catholic Church encouraged their use among medieval Jewry.” Wax candles had long been used by the Catholic Church, borrowed from Roman religious ceremonies.

So for the rabbis, anything which was regarded as a Christian custom was to be viewed as prohibited under the law of *chukka ha-goy*, a ruling originally designed to prevent the adoption of pagan customs. But the evidence suggests that this was not the perspective of the ordinary people. Jews and Christians have lived side by side in Europe for

1500 years. The people were not concerned about adopting candles and other practices from their Christian neighbours. Indeed as Rabbi Hilton suggests, Jewish culture is a culture of borrowed practices. Over history Jews have been enriched by the peoples in whose lands we have lived. So the rejection of the Jew about the message of Christ did not mean a wholesale rejection of Christian customs.

So what we see with regard to the influence of Christianity and Judaism upon each other is a kind of “dialogue” which gives witness to a shared history that is impossibly intertwined. The particularity of Jewish-Christian relations means, in part, that they can never separate; they can never chart completely separate paths.

But equally it is important to emphasise that the two traditions cannot converge: we cannot and should not become one, but must remain singular in each other’s particularity. The aim of Christian-Jewish dialogue is not coercion or to verify the accuracy of their respective truth-claims. But rather, as I suggested at the beginning of this paper, this model of dialogue is grounded in the conviction that the Other is a disruptive force which works to challenge each other’s self-understanding so as to continually be subjected to a process of self-transformation. Equally, this model of dialogue affirms the character of the divine as both irreducible and unlimited.

What does this Christian-Jewish particularity mean with regard to dialogue with other faith traditions? With its emphasis upon historical

practices that shape human life, Christian-Jewish dialogue emerges as an inevitable fact of our *being-with-other-faiths* in the Heideggerian sense of the term, which means we are all expected to be *in dialogue* with the Other rather than relate to the Other through a reductive polemic. And although there may be a great deal of convergence on certain shared concepts and social concerns, the scope of Jewish-Christian dialogue is not the overcoming of differences but the sharing of experiences mutually resisting, disrupting and transforming the constitution of our own religious self-identity. This should also be the goal of any interfaith dialogue. A commitment to this kind of dialogue gives witness to an exteriority, a transcendence, which human beings are unable to fully grasp and totalize into a universal system. It is what Emmanuel Levinas calls the “more” in the “less.” And it also implies that interfaith dialogue should make space for each tradition, through its own practices and traditions, to give witness to this divine exteriority which eludes our grasp but to which we nonetheless find ourselves in its trace.

Notes

- 1 Rabbi Michael Hilton, from the 1995 Cardinal Bea Lecture entitled “Christian-Jewish Dialogue: How far do we dare go?”, p. 4.
- 2 Ibid., p. 5.
- 3 Ibid., p. 5
- 4 Ibid., p. 5
- 5 HILTON Michael *The Christian Effect on Jewish Life* SCM London 1994, pp. 179 - 182.

APPENDIX D



The Abrahamic Approach to Interfaith Engagement and Theological Education

Interfaith Engagement & Theological
Education Conference

Birmingham, 10th September 2015



Common Awards – BA module: *TMM2631 Jews, Christians and Muslims in Encounter*

- Team-taught;
- Studied from the perspective of encounter with, and experience of, diversity;
- E.G. Exploration of beliefs and practices pertinent to Christian encounter with Jews and Muslims;
- E.G. Interrogation of various accounts of the relationships between the three faiths, and of the challenges and opportunities of dialogue between them;
- Specific topics discussed include: Replacement Theory and Supersessionism, multiculturalism, radicalism and religious extremism, gender issues in the Abrahamic faiths, Scripture, and Israel and Palestine today.

**Common Awards – MA module:
TMM45020 Jewish-Christian-Muslim
Relations: Scripture, History, Theology
and Practice**

- Team-taught;
- Reflect on key historical moments and events in the history of the relations;
- E.G. Explore the impact of the history, and continuing existence, of antisemitism as well as Islamophobia and anti-Christian hatred;
- E.G. Explore the significance of the changing religious landscape in the UK;
- E.G. Reflect on key biblical and Qur'anic texts.

**Woolf Institute – Online Teaching: What makes our
courses TIC? *They are Transformative, have Impact
and create Change in attitude.***

- The key benefit of our online courses is that they create a platform that is **cross-cultural, cross-continental, cross-professional** and **multi-disciplinary**, and enables a network of dialogue between participants from all walks of life.
- **The A-Z Atlas of participation:** Australia, Belgium, China, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, France, Georgia, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Mauritius, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK and US.

Feedback:

- *'I think the cultural diversity has added much value to the course and I have learned a lot from my peer students who have very different cultural and academic backgrounds, especially those who were themselves Muslim or from Muslim countries.'*
- *'I have spent most of my life in the Middle East, mainly between Sudan and Saudi Arabia and until earlier this year..., I had never actually met anyone Jewish. I did not realize how much the media (particularly the Arab media) had affected my understanding of Jewish people and Judaism and it was only after I met and interacted with real Jewish people that I realized how warped, myopic and antiquated my views were.'*
- *'The course changed my opinions greatly, especially toward the notion of dialogue. At the beginning of the course I believed dialogue was simply a political tool, but now I can see the impact it can have. In terms of Muslim-Jewish relations, it has opened my eyes to the shared past that we have, and how we can use this to create a shared future.'*

Woolf Institute – Online Teaching: *Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish- Muslim Encounter*

- Collaboration with American University (Washington);
- Team-taught;
- Explores the history, culture and theology of Muslims and Jews, reflecting both on similarities and differences as well as the major challenges;
- Offers strategies for building bridges between the communities;
- *Module 1: Judaism and Jewish Perceptions of the 'Other';*
- *Module 2: Islam and Muslim Perceptions of the 'Other';*
- *Module 3: Muslim-Jewish Encounters.*

Woolf Institute – Online Teaching: *Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges*

- Team-taught;
- Focuses on the relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims in modern Europe and in European history;
- Addresses challenging questions through case studies and set readings (in sociology, history, anthropology, and theology);
- *Module 1: History;*
- *Module 2: Culture;*
- *Module 3: Religion, State and Citizenship.*

Woolf Institute – Online Teaching: *Online Short Courses*

- Individual tutor support and feedback;
- Flexible: 7-week courses accessible for 10 weeks;
- Current course options:
 - *Is Interfaith Dialogue Important?*
 - *Jewish-Christian Relations in the English Novel*
 - *Shakespeare and the Jewish-Christian Encounter: Beyond The Merchant of Venice*
- Feedback: *'I found the course to be extremely interesting and has helped me further understand the importance of, and the challenges in, engaging in interfaith dialogue as a way to build bridges between faith communities. Certainly, the role of religion in building these bridges has never been more pressing from combating extremism, making room for the 'other' to acknowledging the integrity of those who are not of our own faith.'*



Any questions?

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Dr Emma Harris: eth22@cam.ac.uk



APPENDIX E

Faith, Hope & Love

Inter Faith Engagement as
Practical Theology

The Praxis of Engagement

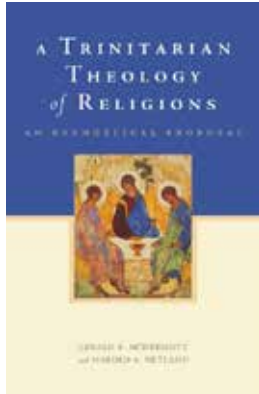
Engaging with different faiths

Exploring what it means to be a
Christian in a context of 'multi faith
consciousness'

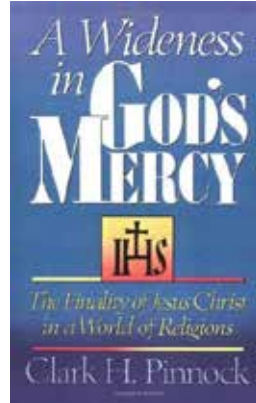
Experiencing dialogue as missional,
theological & spiritual practice rooted
in relationship with Christ

Subject of Study is Self rather than
Other - Autoethnography

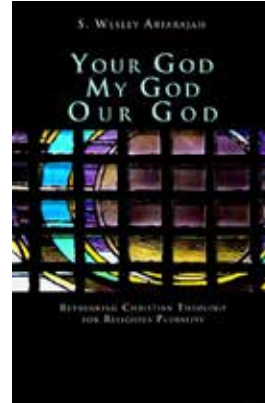
Theology of Religions Typology



Exclusivism



Inclusivism



Pluralism



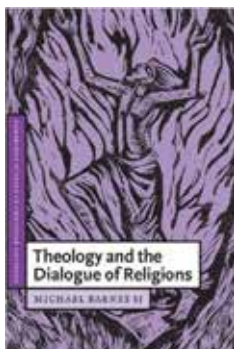
Principle Question

ARE THEY 'SAVED'?



**Principle Method to Address Question
Theological Contestation**

**From Theology of Religions to Theology for Engagement Part 1
– Relating to Each Other**



Exclusivism

witnesses to that **faith** which speaks of what it knows through the specificity of tradition

Inclusivism

looks forward in **hope** to the fulfilment of all authentically religious truths and values

Pluralism

expresses that **love** which seeks always to affirm those values in the present.

LIVING FAITH
BRINGING HOPE
SHOWING LOVE

Principle Question

How do we live Faithfully, Hopefully &
Lovingly in a Multi – Faith World?



Principle Mode to Address Question

Intra- Christian Dialogue

Dialogue V Witness



Dialogue AND/AS Witness



From Theology of Religions to Theology for Engagement
Part 2 – Relating to Other Faiths

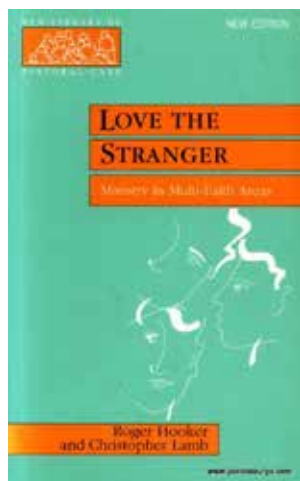
Catherine Cornille



**The Im-Possibility of
Interreligious Dialogue**

“If Dialogue is to be possible, it must find its deepest reasons and motivations within the self-understanding of religious traditions themselves.”

Deepening Christian Self-Understanding for
Engagement



All our unwillingness to get hurt, all our attempts to argue in defence of our Lord stand condemned. So often, when I have allowed myself to be drawn in an argument, especially with Muslims, I have found that these words of Jesus have come into my mind. ‘Sheathe your sword’.

Roger Hooker

Dialogue & Engagement

Engaging with different faiths

Engaging with each other

Engaging with ourselves

Inter Faith Dialogue

Intra Faith Dialogue

Inner Faith Dialogue

Engaging with different faiths

Listening to people talk about their faith

Experiencing other faiths in prayer and practice

Reading 'Sacred Texts' of different faiths

Reading what people write about their faith

Listening to music prayers recitations of different faiths

Sharing our own understandings

Engaging with each other

Difference in Christianity

Welcoming debate and exploration of our theological differences

Exploring different theological perspectives in the wider Christian tradition

Open to learning from each other and other Christians

Engaging with ourselves – A reflective practice

Gifts

Challenges

Questions

Where does my Authority lie?
Experiencing God's grace

Inner

Intra

Inter