

Contemporary Western Christian Perceptions of Islam

A Comparative Approach

Mahmut AYDIN

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Hacı Bayram Mah. Boyacılar Sk. No: 14/1 06050
Altındağ-Ankara/TÜRKİYE • Tel: +90 (312) 310 08 60
www.fcr.com.tr • fcr@fcr.com.tr

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About the Author

Mahmut AYDIN

Professor of history of religions at Ondokuz Mayıs University in Türkiye. He received his PhD in Christian-Muslim Relations from the University of Birmingham in England (1998). He was appointed professor of history of religions in the faculty of theology at Ondokuz Mayıs University (2009). He is especially interested in Muslim-Christian Relations, Interreligious and Intercultural Relations, Modern Christian Theology, Theology of Religions and Religious Pluralism. His many books include *From Monologue to Dialogue* (2001), *Is Jesus God or Humanbeing* (2002), *Historical Jesus: From Krygmatic Christ to the historical Jesus* (2002), *What Happened to Jesus*, (2011), *History of Religions* (2018).

About the Book

Contemporary Christian Perceptions of Islam

This book provides an in-depth examination of contemporary Christian perceptions of Islam, analyzing theological, cultural, and socio-political dimensions of interfaith relations in the modern era. Drawing from a range of Christian theological writings, media portrayals, and public discourse, it explores how Christianity, particularly in Western contexts, has engaged with Islamic beliefs, practices, and global presence. The study situates these perceptions within the broader historical trajectory of Christian-Muslim relations, tracing developments from medieval polemics and missionary encounters to contemporary dialogues and tensions. Special attention is given to how factors such as religious pluralism, globalization, migration, and international conflicts have shaped Christian narratives about Islam. The work critically examines both positive and negative portrayals, highlighting constructive efforts in interfaith dialogue alongside persistent stereotypes and misunderstandings. Through comparative theological analysis, it identifies key areas of convergence and divergence between the two traditions, addressing topics such as the nature of God, prophecy, revelation, and salvation. Employing perspectives from theology, religious studies, and sociology, the book argues that contemporary Christian perceptions of Islam are complex, multifaceted, and often contested. It further considers the implications of these perceptions for peacebuilding, social cohesion, and mutual understanding in increasingly diverse societies. By offering a balanced and scholarly account, this study aims to contribute to more informed and respectful Christian-Muslim engagement in the 21st century.

Keywords: Christian-Muslim Relations; Interfaith Dialogue; Contemporary Christian Views of Islam; Religious Pluralism; Theology and Perception of Islam

LIST OF MAIN ABBREVIATIONS

AJISS	: American Journal of Islamic Social Science
BHMIIS	: Bulletin of the Henry Martin Institute of Islamic Studies
CD	: Current Dialogue
DG	: The Drew Gateway
EAPR	: East Asian Pastoral Review
EQ	: The Evangelical Quarterly
FE	: Foreign Affairs
HI	: Hamdard Islamicus
HJ	: The Hibbert Journal
IBMR	: International Bulletin of Missionary Research
IC	: Islamic Culture
ICMR	: Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations
IJMES	: International Journal of Middle East Studies
IMA	: Islam and the Modern Age
IRM	: International Review of Mission
JAAR	: Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JES	: Journal of Ecumenical Studies
MT	: Modern Theology
MW	: The Muslim World
NS	: New Statesman
NTR	: New Theology Review
PISAI	: Pontificio Instituto di Studi Arabi e d'Isلمistica
PMVB	: Pro Mundi Vita Bulletin
OCP	: Orientale Christiana Periodica
RS	: Religious Studies
SID	: Studies in Interreligious Dialogue
SJRS	: Scottish Journal of Religious Studies
SJT	: Scottish Journal of Theology
SM	: Studia Missionalia
TJT	: Toronto Journal of Theology
ZMR	: Zeitschrift fur Missionswissenschaft und Religionwissenschaft

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Scope of The Study	2
Outline of The Study	4
Objective of The Study	5
A Personal Comment	6
CHAPTER ONE	8
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH’S TEACHING ABOUT NON-CHRISTIANS IN GENERAL AND MUSLIMS IN PARTICULAR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL	8
1.1. Introduction	8
1.2. A Brief History of Catholic Teaching Until Vatican II	8
1.3. Theological Interpretation of non-Christian Religions	12
1.3.1. Louis Massignon and Karl Rahner	13
1.4. The Second Vatican Council and Non-Christian Religions	18
1.4.1. Nostra Aetate	21
1.5. The Second Vatican Council and Muslims	24
1.5.1. Muslim Doctrine of God	25
1.5.2. Our Common Father Abraham	27
1.5.3. Muslim Veneration of Jesus and Mary	29
1.5.4. Eschatological Beliefs of Muslims	30
1.5.5. Religious and Moral Life of Muslims	30
1.5.6. Salvation of Muslims	32
1.6. Salvation within Non-Christian Religions	35
1.7. An Assessment of The Teaching of the Second Vatican Council	38
1.8. Conclusion	40
CHAPTER TWO	43
POST VATICAN II DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH’S TEACHING ON NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS IN GENERAL AND MUSLIMS IN PARTICULAR	43
2.1. Introduction	43
2.2. The Establishment of the Secretariat For Non-Christian Religions	43
2.2.1. The Period of Cardinal Marella [1965-1973]	45
2.2.2. The Period of Cardinal Pignedoli [1973-1980]	47
2.2.3. The Period of Archbishop Jadot [1980-1984]	49
2.2.4. The Period of Cardinal Arinze [1984-]	49
2.3. Pope Paul VI and His Dialogue Activities [1963-1978]	52
2.3.1. Ecclesiam Suam	52

2.3.2. Evangelii Nuntiandi	54
2.4. Pope John Paul II and His Dialogue Activities	56
2.4.1. Encyclicals	57
2.4.1.1. Redemptor Hominis	57
2.4.1.2. Redemptoris Missio	58
2.4.2. Addresses to Christian and Non-Christian Religious Leaders	61
2.4.3. Pope John Paul II's Statements Concerning Muslims	62
2.5. Guidelines For Dialogue Between Christians and Muslims	65
2.6. The Documents of the Secretariat Concerning The Relationship Between Mission, Proclamation and Dialogue	67
2.6.1. Dialogue and Mission	68
2.6.2. Dialogue and Proclamation	71
2.7. Assessment of Post-Vatican II Developments	77
2.8. Conclusion	78
CHAPTER THREE	81
OFFICIAL TEACHING OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ON PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS IN GENERAL AND MUSLIMS IN PARTICULAR	81
3.1. Introduction	81
3.2. Brief History of the Idea of Dialogue in the Ecumenical Movement	82
3.2.1. Karl Barth and Hendrik Kraemer	85
3.3. Christianity and Non-Christian Religions in the 1960s	87
3.3.1. The Kandy Consultation [1967]	88
3.3.2. The Developments after Kandy	93
3.4. Dialogue With People of Living Faiths	96
3.4.1. Addis Ababa Meeting	97
3.4.2. "Interim Guidelines and Policy Statement"	98
3.4.3. Dialogue Activities of the WCC after The Establishment of DFI	99
3.4.3.1. The Nairobi Meeting [1975]	103
3.4.3.2. The Chambesy Meeting [1976]	106
3.4.4. The Consultation Of Chiang Mai [1977]	107
3.4.5. Guidelines On Dialogue	111
3.4.6. The Significant Points of Guidelines on Dialogue	113
3.5. Developments after Guidelines on Dialogue	114
3.6. Conclusion	121
CHAPTER FOUR	124
CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN EVALUATIONS OF THE STATUS OF THE QUR'AN	124
4.1. Introduction	124

4.2. W.Montgomery Watt	126
4.3. Wilfred Cantwell Smith	132
4.4. Kenneth Cragg	138
4.5. Hans Küng	145
4.6. Keith Ward	150
4.7.Conclusion	152
CHAPTER FIVE	157
CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN EVALUATIONS OF THE PROPHETHOOD OF MUHAMMAD	157
5.1. Introduction	157
5.2. W. Montgomery Watt	161
5.3. Kenneth Cragg	168
5.4. Hans Küng	174
5.5. David Kerr	179
5.6. Conclusion	181
CHAPTER SIX	185
THE STATUS OF JESUS CHRIST IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN ACCOUNTS	185
6.1. Introduction	185
6.2. John Hick	188
6.3. Paul F. Knitter	198
6.4. Hans Küng	210
6.5.Conclusion	220
CONCLUSION	223
Positive Developments	224
Shortcomings	227
New Chances for Future Dialogue	228
A Muslim Response to Christian Dialogue Concerns	230
APPENDIX	232
Is Inter-religious Dialogue on the Threshold of Bankruptcy?	232
BIBLIOGRAPHY	239
I- Official Documents	239
Ii- Other Materials	242
III- Articles and Parts of Books	249

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The first edition of this work was published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in 2002 in the USA. I am glad, grateful and relieved that my book is going to be published again by Eskiyeeni in Turkey. For this occasion I would like to thank Huseyin Nazliaydin of Eskiyeeni for his keen interest in the publication of this work.

While revising this study for the second edition I did not find it appropriate to touch the main argument and assumption of this study by adding new comments in the light of new developments concerning interreligious dialogue in general and Christian-Muslim dialogue in particular that occurred from 1998 to our day. Instead, I have translated one of my articles, which was published in Turkish on the occasion of the previous pope Pope Benedict XVI' Regensburg speech in which he has expressed rather offensive statements about the Prophet Muhammad and Islam by referring to the Byzantine Empire Manuel Palaiologos II. I intend to demonstrate to our reader the present position of interreligious dialogue in terms of official Christian establishments.

Mahmut AYDIN
Samsun, February 2021