

Annual Dialogue Report

on Religion and Values



Editors
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**Annual Dialogue Report
on Religion and Values
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**Introduction: Egyptian Revolution One Year Later
Challenges and Prospects
by Ali Gomaa**

The new year is an opportune time to reflect on the first twelve months of a new Egypt, one that has witnessed momentous change and the emergence of a new set of possibilities in a country that had met with frustration and stagnation. Before the great revolution of the 25th of January, political activism on the part of the masses had become alarmingly impoverished, and public displays of national unity had given way to sectarianism and discord.

This year, we continue in a transitional phase, with elections not yet complete, constitutional design still being considered, and the precise details of governance in the new Egypt yet to be settled upon. The emergence of these new developments are indeed encouraging, as are the care with which these institutions are being designed, and the zeal with which the entire country has participated in political reform, intently watching and voicing their concerns at every stage.

An important element of the new terrain we find ourselves in is the need to understand the contours of the religious field in the new Egypt. Related to this is the question of what must be done to maintain a safe, secure and successful transition which is maximally respectful of the religious sensibilities of the Egyptian people, while still finding a way to forge forward to build a progressive and productive Egypt in the twenty-first century. The current flux associated with the political transition has illuminated many important aspects of the religious field, but the cacophony of voices clamoring to be heard may serve to obscure other features.

Among the former, we have seen the positive role played by the Grand Imam, Shaykh Ahmed el-Tayyib, in brokering an agreement on a way forward through the “Azhar Document”, a blueprint for resolving the constitutional debates and controversies that had threatened to divide the nation in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. This document has been warmly received by both

Egyptians and concerned observers outside the country, as it lays the groundwork for an Islamically authentic mode of arguing for basic human rights, constitutional protections and guarantees for freedoms. Indeed, the impetus towards political reform has reached into the Azhar itself, as the Grand Imam announced plans to return to Azhar's roots by re-instituting the Council of Senior Clerics which had defined the institution for many years. Among the powers of this Council will be the right to select any future Shaykh al-Azhar, a marked departure from the appointment process that had been the sole prerogative of the state.

On the other hand, we have also seen much hand-wringing and dismay over the recent election results, in which Islamist parties have made serious gains. It bears noting that the rise of these parties can be attributed to a number of factors, not least of which is the weakened state of serious political discourse, and as a result any viable political opposition, under the Mubarak regime. As a result, voters were not left with many options that they felt were respectful of their Islamic heritage and their religious sympathies.

Even more significantly, however, despite the widespread use of the word "Islamist," we must be careful not to group all parties and members of these groupings under the same tent. Even among themselves, Islamists represent often widely divergent positions on central issues such as the economy, minority rights, and the precise role of religion in the public sphere. Though I may often disagree with the particulars of their stances, their success should be no cause for serious alarm in the Western world. Indeed, we are optimistic that for the most part, flexibility will take precedence in their political programs over doctrinaire readings of ideology.

In order to ensure that this is the case, however, more attention needs to be paid to what might be termed the Azhari paradigm. This is the long-standing social arrangement of authority, prestige and influence which has obtained between the Egyptian people and the institutions associated with the Azhar. Despite a recent uptick in conservative spirit and fervor, the bond between the Azhar and Egyptians remains strong. It is a bond based on a recognition of Azhari learning, piety, and concern for its constituents, as well as

its willingness to stand up for Egyptian culture and society over the centuries in the face of foreign influence and intrusion.

Egyptian society is by nature a tolerant and understanding culture. Egyptians have centuries of experience dealing with other peoples from all walks of life. This is a reality that cannot be underestimated, and it is one we must understand if we are to make headway in contributing towards the strengthening of a humane, tolerant Egypt, respected among the nations of the world.

The appropriate reaction to the significant gains of the Islamist parties is not to grow pessimistic at the emergence of the phenomenon, but rather to be aware of it, and to remain steadfast and constant in speaking out for moderation and engage with them seriously about the many challenges our country is inevitably facing in the very near future.

Much remains to be accomplished in the transition of the country to a stable and successful model of Arab and Islamic flourishing. However, the Islamic faith teaches us that optimism and activism are constituent features of what it means to live a good life – constantly striving to do good works, with a strong faith that those good works will contribute towards the wellbeing of one's community. Let this be a call to Egyptians, and indeed to their well-wishers across the world, to continue along this path, and to complete that which has been started, with dignity and determination.

II.3. Can We Measure Faith? The Religion Monitor, a Bertelsmann Stiftung project By Martin Rieger and Ferdinand Mirbach

Emotions tend to run high when the topic turns to religion. Few issues in society so predictably set tempers aflame. Indeed, the events of recent weeks have again made clear just how divisive religious sensibilities can be. Plans to build an Islamic cultural center and mosque near ground zero in New York unleashed an often vitriolic debate, in which some portrayed the proposal as unalloyed provocation, while others saw it as a much-needed attempt to dissociate Islam from terrorism. Though canceled at the last minute, plans in Florida to publicly burn copies of the Quran raised fears of violent reprisals throughout the Muslim world. And during the first days of the Pope's visit to England and Scotland, irreconcilable differences divided his loyal followers from skeptical atheists. Each of these events displays the polarization in today's environment. Whereas some denounce religion as evil or as no longer relevant in today's high-tech society, experts such as Hans Joas instead see a "renaissance of religion" underway, in which belief in God is (and will continue to be) a key factor in many lives.

What is actually happening? Is religion growing increasingly relevant or is it fading? Just how relevant is religion for us as individuals or as a society? Do people still believe in God, or do they believe in some form of life after death? Is contemporary religiosity comprised of clear belief structures or has it been replaced by diffuse spiritual paradigms? Do deep-rooted religious beliefs lead to divisive acts and hatred, or do they in fact facilitate greater tolerance toward those of other faiths? And can these beliefs serve as a foundation for dialogue between adherents of different creeds?

These are just a few of the questions addressed by the Bertelsmann Stiftung in the Religion Monitor, a broad academic study of religiosity and spirituality. The 2007 study was based on a representative survey of more than 21,000 people around the world, which yielded an enormous body of data that provide considerable insight into the religious practices and beliefs of people of diverse backgrounds. In what follows, we discuss the context in which the Religion Monitor emerged and the methodology behind the project. In

addition, we draw on the Religion Monitor's findings to shed a modicum of light on the questions posed above, citing several of the project's case studies as examples.

Measuring faith – the Religion Monitor

The Religion Monitor is grounded in an interdisciplinary body of knowledge that includes sociology, theology, religious studies and psychology. As an instrument designed to measure religiosity in a variety of contexts, with the help of a 100-item questionnaire, the Religion Monitor is based on a definition of religion that considers the experience of transcendence to be a key feature. In 2007, the Religion Monitor conducted a survey incorporating aspects of all major world religions in 21 countries around the world. One year later, we conducted a survey of Muslims in Germany, asking them about their religiosity in exploratory interviews.¹ Conscious of the heterogeneity of religious attitudes and practices around the world, the Religion Monitor draws both on theistic and pantheistic spiritual paradigms in order to capture expressions of the broadest possible spectrum of religious faith and experience. In other words, we had to cast a wide net in order to compare widely varying forms of religion – and personal religiosity of both an institutionalized and patchwork nature – in a thorough manner.

The Religion Monitor is unique as a tool in assessing religiosity in that its analytical framework extends well beyond the self-assessment of those surveyed. Indeed, its survey questions target issues outside respondents' religious self-understanding, which is likely to be shaped by cultural contexts and personal experiences. In many societies, for example, declaring oneself to be religious is expected as a matter of propriety. In other societies, seeing oneself as religious is understood to imply active church attendance or ties to an institutionalized form of religion. Thus, respondents often affirm or deny their own religiosity in terms of local social codes. They situate questions or conceptions of religiosity within a framework that is based on local – and not necessarily well-informed – conceptions of religious diversity.

¹ See Religion Monitor 2008 – Muslim Religiousness in Germany, Bertelsmann Stiftung

The Religion Monitor aims to combat stereotypes and cultivate greater understanding by providing the tools for a closer look at religiosity. It does so by outlining not only the subjective features of religious self-understanding but also those aspects of religious views and praxis that can be identified in objective terms. The Religion Monitor can address both of these facets of religiosity due to its focus on exogenous factors, such as public religious praxis, alongside endogenous factors such as personal attitudes toward religious practices or personal religious experiences.

Organizational chart for the Religion Monitor

Sociology theology psychology		General intensity	Specific topics
Core dimensions	Intellect	Interest in religious topics	Religious reflexivity; religious search; meaning; theodicy; spiritual and religious books
	Ideology (belief)	Belief in God or something divine Belief in life after death	Notion of God; world views; religious pluralism; religious fundamentalism; other religious ideas
	Public practice	Church service; congregational prayer; attending temple	Interreligious practice
	Private practice	Prayer – Meditation	Prescribed prayer; house altar
	Experience	Personal experience; Experience of being at one	Religious feelings
	Consequences	General relevance of religion to everyday life	Relevance of religion to various aspects of life (e.g. family, politics); religious commandments
Centrality	Non-religious Religious Highly religious	Religious and spiritual self-perception	

| BertelsmannStiftung

The Religion Monitor distinguishes between the concrete expressions of religiosity on the one hand, and the intensity of religious attitudes and praxis on the other. Its catalogue of questions targets diverse religious practices by drawing upon six core dimensions of religiosity as defined in the field of the sociology of religion (see Charles Glock 1962). Questions pertaining to the “intellectual” dimension address issues regarding one’s spiritual quest, the extent to which one reflects on his or her beliefs, and one’s interest in scripture. The “ideological” dimension of the Religion Monitor ex-

plores beliefs in God and life after death. Grounded in principles of religious pluralism, the Religion Monitor captures a broad spectrum of worldviews and concepts of God. A third dimension of “public practice” explores manifestations of religious affiliation through questions on issues such as the importance attributed to worship services. The meaning of prayer and meditation is addressed by the dimension of “private practice.” Because religiosity is experienced in ways that are not limited to the cognitive, the questions based on the core dimension of religious “experience” focus on how people experience religion emotionally. Finally, the core dimension of “consequences” explores the overall relevance of religion in 11 areas of everyday life. These six core dimensions are expressed in all religious cultures around the world. They therefore provide a solid foundation for the Religion Monitor as a tool for analyzing representative data on religiosity across different cultural and religious contexts. However, these six dimensions can play a widely varying role in individual lives. For example, individuals who regularly attend church or a mosque do not necessarily engage in equally intensive private rituals, while those with an active but private spiritual life may avoid expressing this in public settings. In fact, there are no interdependencies among the core dimensions within any given individual. In order to maintain a sufficiently complex understanding of religiosity, it is important to consider – at least initially – the intensity of each dimension separately.

In a second step, the project seeks to distinguish between the actual presence of religiosity within an individual and the consequences this presence may have in an individual’s everyday life. The intensity of five of these dimensions (i.e., ideology, intellect, private practice, public practice and experience) is expressed in an individual’s attitudes toward religion, or the structure of their personality. By contrast, the responses to questions related to the sixth core dimension, consequences for everyday life, point to the social relevance of personal religiosity.

As an instrument with application in religious psychology, the Religion Monitor features several novel characteristics, one of which is an ability to assess the role religiosity plays within an individual’s psychic organization or personality. It does this by combining the results of the first five “intrinsic” core dimensions to construct

a “centrality index.” The concept of centrality here refers to the potency of religiosity or the intensity of its presence within the personality. The more central religiosity is within a person’s psychic organization, the more it will shape and influence their experience and behavior. The scores derived for the centrality index can be plotted on a scale broken into three categories: the highly religious, the religious and non-religious.²

For those individuals classified as highly religious, religiosity is a key factor in their daily life. More often than not, their faith is critical in shaping their experiences and behavior. Their religiosity structures the coordinates of their private life. By contrast, non-religious individuals hold (at most) only weak or sporadic religious beliefs, and rarely (if at all) engage in religious practices. The third group, the “religious,” lie somewhere in between the two aforementioned groups. These individuals are receptive to religious ideas and practice a more or less personally defined religiosity. In contrast to the highly religious individual, religiosity occupies a subordinate position within this personality’s cognitive and emotional structures.

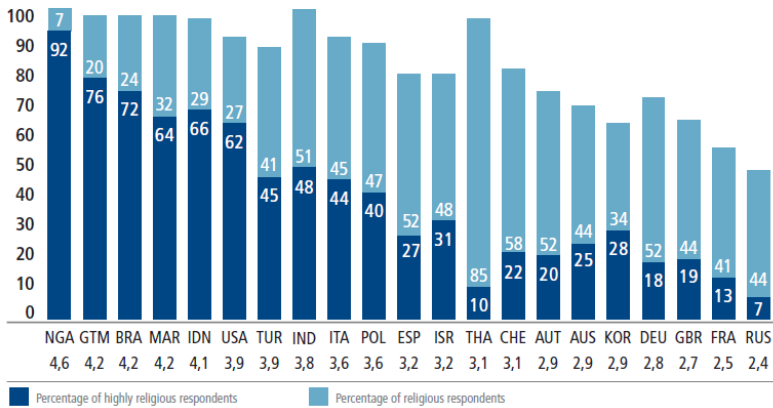
What the Religion Monitor tells us about religiosity around the globe

What concrete findings does the Religion Monitor have to offer? Given the large body of data yielded by a survey of more than 21,000 people around the world, we limit our discussion here to a select few examples. In order to capture an extensive overview of current religious trends globally, the Religion Monitor addresses all major religious traditions and investigates a broad array of cultural environments in a diverse group of countries. This list includes: Austria, Brazil, France, Germany, Great Britain, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Morocco, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, Spain, South Korea, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and the United States.

2 See Stefan Huber, “Structuring Principles, Operational Constructs, Interpretive Strategies,” In *What the World Believes, Religion Monitor 2008*, pgs. 17-51. Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung: 2009.

Unsurprisingly, assessments of religiosity among populations within these states vary substantially. A comparison of findings for individual countries shows most European countries ranking at the low end of the centrality index. Russia, where barely 7 percent of respondents are classified as highly religious, has the smallest share of individuals attaching great personal importance to religion. The traditionally secular countries of France, Great Britain and Germany show somewhat larger percentages of highly religious respondents, though compared to the global average the share of devout believers in these countries is small. Switzerland poses an interesting case, because the degree of religiosity varies considerably across the country’s linguistic regions, with each canton’s values echoing those of the respective neighboring country. In other words, while respondents in the western French-speaking cantons show a low level of commitment to religion, respondents in the Italian-speaking canton of Tessin generally attach greater importance to religiosity. Italy and Poland, as predominantly Catholic countries, stand out as the most religious of the European countries surveyed.

Percentage of highly religious and religious respondents for 21 countries



Centrality of religion averages for each country are given along the x-axis below each acronym, on a scale from one to five
 AUS=Australia, AUT=Austria, BRA=Brazil, CHE=Switzerland, DEU=Germany, ESP=Spain; FRA=France, GBR=Great Britain, GTM=Guatemala, IND=Indonesia, IND=India, ISR=Israel, ITA=Italy, KOR=South Korea, MAR=Morocco, NGA=Nigeria, POL=Poland, RUS=Russia, THA=Thailand, TUR=Turkey, USA=United States of America

Muslim, Latin American and African states show the highest percentages of devout believers. In Nigeria, for example, an impres-

sive 92 percent of respondents are classified as highly religious, and another 7 percent as religious. These findings are emblematic of the profound extent to which religion permeates daily life in many sub-Saharan countries. The United States, where 62 percent of respondents are classified as highly religious and 27 percent as religious, is the only western post-industrial country in the group of high scorers for the centrality index. These results can be attributed to two key factors: North America's historical role as a safe haven for those fleeing religious persecution, and the region's broad spectrum of religious denominations and associated religious pluralism.

The Christian Occident and Islam—what we can learn from stereotypes

As noted, religiosity varies significantly across cultural and religious environments. But the degree of religiosity can also vary significantly across a given continent or within a shared religious tradition. The example of Europe illustrates this well. First, let us briefly address the issue of whether continued references to a “Christian Occident” within the context of Europe are justified.

In terms of confessional affiliation, the Religion Monitor found that between 60 percent (Great Britain) and 97 percent (Poland) of respondents in Europe consider themselves to be Christian. Christianity therefore continues to play an important role in Europe, at least in a formal sense. At the same time, however, the percentage of Europeans not affiliated with a religious community is significant. In fact, more than one-third of respondents in Great Britain and France respectively have no religious affiliation. Nevertheless, Religion Monitor data shows that 74 percent of respondents in the European countries surveyed are religious, and of that group, 25 percent are highly religious. However, 23 percent of Europeans surveyed are not at all religious. Religion in Europe is also increasingly heterogeneous, a development in part due to the demographics of migration.

In sum, the Religion Monitor demonstrates that despite Europe's growing religious diversity, Christianity continues to play an important role across the continent. The degree of importance differs from one country to another, with traditionally Catholic countries showing the greatest intensity of religiosity. The findings show that

church membership – even in religious societies – is increasingly less important. But this does not necessarily mean that classical forms of religiosity are being replaced by a diffuse spirituality. Instead, religiosity and spirituality are likely fueling each other.

What about Islamic societies? Do the findings for the Muslim world differ? Are patterns of religious behavior specific to a given country or Islam itself? The Religion Monitor conducted an additional study in three countries – Indonesia, Morocco and Turkey – with large Muslim populations, and in which the form and historical context of Islamization differs. As countries with significant Muslim populations, Israel and Nigeria were also included. Whereas Muslims in Israel represent a minority (10%), in Nigeria their numbers equal that of Christians.

Within this group, there are notable differences from country to country in terms of religious practice. For example, more than 80 percent of respondents in Nigeria, Indonesia and Morocco report that they pray several times a day, whereas only one in two individuals do so in Turkey. This suggests that particularly among Turks of the middle and upper classes, secularized practices are common. The Religion Monitor also finds that for Muslims in all of the countries surveyed, mosque attendance and participation in congregational prayer are significantly less important than the private practice of personal prayer, although here too, we see significant differences from country to country. In Israel, for example, only one-third of the Muslims polled attend weekly congregational prayers. The low degree of Muslim participation in communal rituals there is presumably related to their minority status in Israel.

Another example illustrating considerable differences within Islam and from country to country is the belief in angels. The belief that angels are at work on Earth is not only a central tenet of the Islamic faith, but is generally also deeply rooted in folk beliefs. Unsurpris-

ingly, 90 percent of respondents in Nigeria, Morocco and Turkey believe strongly in angels. Only 72 percent of Muslims in Indonesia, however, believe in the power of angels. This can be attributed to the fact that the concept of angels is a religious import to Indonesia, with no parallel in pre-existing local faiths.³ In Israel, even fewer Muslims (44%) believe in angels. Given the importance of belief in angels in Judaism, Israeli Muslims' lower rate of belief in angels might be explained by an attempt to distance themselves from the majority population.

Religiosity and heterogeneity in immigration societies—creating a framework for inter-religious dialogue

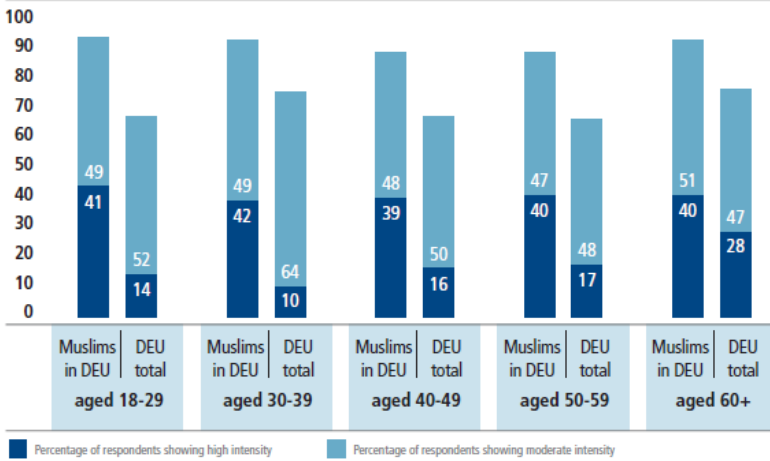
Clearly, religious denomination and cultural environment each shape and influence the degree of an individual's religiosity. This is particularly true for societies with multiple religious communities. Indeed, societies with histories marked by immigration face several challenges related to this fact. However, as the example of Germany shows, the combination of religious heterogeneity and immigrant communities does not inevitably lead to a "clash of civilizations."

Both historically and in the present day, Germany is a predominantly Christian country with a large number of people claiming no religious affiliation. As a result of labor-related immigration policies over the past 40 years, Islam has become a significant religious group in Germany with 4.5 million members, according to recent estimates. A Religion Monitor survey of 2,000 Muslims in Germany allows us to compare findings for members of this "diaspora" religion to other communities in Germany. In doing so, we find some considerable differences. Whereas 90 percent of Muslims in Germany are religious, and 41 percent of that group are highly religious, only 70 percent of German Christians and those with no religious affiliation are religious, and just 18 percent of that group are highly religious. An individual's upbringing appears to be an important factor in explaining these differences. This is

³ See Peter Heine and Riem Spielhaus, "What do Muslims Believe?" In *What the World Believes, Religion Monitor 2008*, pg. 626. Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009.

true particularly for the youngest age group surveyed. Among Muslims, the younger the respondent, the more frequently he or she reports a religious upbringing. Among Christians, we see the opposite trend. A religious upbringing appears to have played a role only among the older generations of this group.

Generational comparison of the centrality of religiousness between Muslims and the total population in Germany



DEU= Germany

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One thing is clear: Oft-cited fears that higher degrees of religiosity will lead to higher rates of radicalism and intolerance are unfounded. Indeed, the Religion Monitor shows that 86 percent of the Muslim respondents in Germany express an openness toward other religious traditions, whereas only 83 percent of Germany’s Catholics and Protestants share this view. For the sake of comparison, considerably fewer—only 67 percent—of those polled in Turkey express openness toward other religious traditions. These findings suggest that tolerance for other traditions can grow within the context of a religious group’s minority experience.

Conclusion—Religion is a global factor

Given the complexities and sensitivities involved with issues relating to religion, it is important that we have reliable data on how re-

ligiosity manifests itself in individuals and society. In a globalized context, interactions between various cultures and religions are growing in number and frequency. Clearly, this situation poses some risks, but also offers ample opportunities. And these opportunities can multiply when people of different religious and cultural backgrounds know and understand something about the context and influences that have helped shape the person standing before them. Knowledge is the enemy of prejudice, and is therefore a sound means to conflict prevention.

The Religion Monitor contributes to this aim by providing a tool that not only provides sound data on the various dimensions of religious beliefs around the world, but also offers insight into individuals' religious self-conception. The examples discussed above represent only a small portion of what the Religion Monitor has to offer, but provide examples of the great potential this instrument holds. As the product of a single survey process, Religion Monitor findings represent a snapshot in time. Repeated surveys in the future would allow us to identify unfolding trends and developments, which would give us more information on the meaning and relevance of various religions around the world.

Nevertheless, the Religion Monitor has successfully exploded some stereotypes and corrected long-held myths about individuals, the societies they live in, and cultural environments both regional and international. It has also provided a more accurate picture of how religious beliefs shape behavior. Religion will continue to fundamentally shape how we live as individuals and therefore affect the social cohesion of communities. This will have profound consequences as globalization continues.

IV.2. Shaping Universities in a Religious and Secular Europe by David Ford

Introduction: Two Great Challenges

Two of the most important challenges facing our world in the twenty-first century are how religions and universities will contribute to the shaping of societies. Billions of people will be affected by the ways these challenges are met.

We are in a world of many religions and many secular forces, with numerous areas of tension and conflict. The late twentieth century saw religion becoming prominent in new ways in the public sphere, usually mixed with other forces and interests, and here in Bosnia you have bitter experience of the tragedies that can result. University education expanded rapidly throughout the twentieth century, and this is continuing. In a world where information, knowledge and learning are central to the economy as well as to other spheres of life, societies are becoming more reliant on universities and related institutions for their teaching, research and know-how. In most countries, growing proportions of the population now have access to universities and increasing numbers of key roles require university-level education.

What about Europe in this global picture? The university is probably Europe's most important historic institutional contribution to the world of the twenty-first century. The medieval European university is the main ancestor of universities today, and it is remarkable how much of its 'genetic code' is still operative. There are similar basic academic values, such as the importance of rational investigation of the world, rigorous public argument appealing to demonstrated knowledge and rules of evidence, respect for the dignity and freedom of the individual, the need for continual self-criticism in the service of improving our knowledge and understanding, and recognition of the pursuit of knowledge as a public good irreducible to economic interest. There are also similar core tensions. The major history of universities in Europe notes that right from the start in the Middle Ages there were tensions between three essential purposes: first, *seeking knowledge for its own sake*, because it is good to inquire, discover, learn, understand, know and test the truth through various disciplines; second, *educational for-*

mation of students, with concern both for intellectual values and also for the ethical formation that is needed to handle something as powerful as knowledge and know-how; and third, *usefulness to society*.¹ Balancing those has always been difficult, but if any one of them is ignored the health of universities suffers badly.

As regards religion, in recent centuries Europe has been one of the main places where the problems of religion in the public sphere have been worked out. The religious wars that followed the Reformation forced each nation to work out ways of ensuring that religious conflict did not destroy its society. They came up with different solutions (think of how differently the Balkans handled it compared with France, Britain, Holland, Germany, Sweden, Poland or Switzerland), and these deserve to be studied afresh to learn from their hard-won wisdom. But the situation today is that those solutions, the various ‘settlements’ that decided how people of different religions and no religion could live peacefully together, are now inadequate. The religious map of Europe has changed, partly because of the huge increase in its Muslim population, but also due to other factors such as large-scale Christian immigration and new Christian and secular movements.² So Europe is renegotiating its settlements, and there is intense debate about what the right twenty-first century solutions might be.

I want to make two proposals:

First, that Europe needs to find a way between the religious and secular extremes that are at present being advocated, and that this calls for an alliance between those religious and secular people who are committed to a pluralist society that can be complexly and wisely both religious and secular.

Second, that our universities, which are at present mostly secular in ways that ignore or exclude religions, have a vital and so far mostly unacknowledged role to play in the flourishing of this reli-

¹ See Walter Rüegg, ‘Themes’ in *Universities in the Middle Ages* Edited by H. De Ridder-Symoens, Volume 1 of *A History of the University in Europe*, General Editor Walter Rüegg (Cambridge 1992-).

² See Philip Jenkins, *God’s Continent. Christianity, Islam, and Europe’s Religious Crisis* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007).

religious and secular Europe. They need both to reflect and to shape their societies by becoming complexly religious and secular in new ways. This will require generating debate; rethinking many aspects of universities; making sure that the questions raised by the religions, between the religions and about the religions are taken seriously across all academic disciplines, and are also the concern of departments dedicated to theological and religious studies; increasing religious literacy in universities; taking more responsibility for public education and understanding; and drawing on religious as well as secular sources of funding to achieve all this.

If Europe were to follow this path, it could lead the world in creatively responding to those two great challenges: how not only religions but also universities can contribute wisely and responsibly to the shaping and flourishing of a religious and secular Europe this century. Europe has many advantages in trying to be the first to meet these challenges, and the rest of the world could benefit greatly from good models of how it can be achieved.

A Vital Alliance within the Religious and Secular Drama

I will first outline briefly my overall proposal for the direction in which Europe should move as it seeks new settlements regarding religion in the public sphere. I do not by any means expect that all settlements will be the same across Europe. On the contrary, each particular situation is different and requires tailor-made approaches, and that variety also is likely to be of most help to the rest of the world. But it is important to see whether Europeans can agree on a general direction.

The direction proposed can be summed up simply. In a situation where, at one extreme, there are secularist positions that advocate the rigorous suspicion and control of religions, and the exclusion of religion from the public sphere as far as possible, and, at the other extreme, there are religious positions that advocate the hegemony of one religion (usually Christian or Muslim), it is urgent that mainstream secular and religious people join together in advocating pluralist solutions that serve the flourishing of whole societies. Both the extremes are actually similar in only being able to conceive of one total framework in line with their own position, and they can therefore sometimes form alliances with each other (e.g. religion and nationalism). Europe has had to learn bitter lessons from at-

tempts to enforce solutions that have been either religious (Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox) or secular (fascist, communist and various types of nationalism or republicanism) or some mixture of the two. The positive lesson is that the totalitarian approach (whether religious or secular or mixed) needs to give way to negotiation aimed at peaceful, non-coercive solutions.

This is what might be called the ‘*religious and secular drama*’ of twenty-first century Europe.³ It is a drama in which no one group has control of the plot, but there is genuine engagement, negotiation and collaboration among groups aimed at working out ‘good enough’ solutions for the common good. It requires some guidelines and rules - patterns of ‘good practice’ as well as formal legal or constitutional provisions – in order to enable the drama to happen at all. But most of the working out has to happen in the various realms of engagement, not only politics⁴ but also media, law, education, healthcare, business and every other sphere of life and work. There will of course be limit situations in which individuals or groups who opt out of the drama and its minimal rules need to be restrained or even coerced – those who choose violence in pursuit of their aims are the obvious examples. But fear of such elements should not be allowed to suspend the drama in favour of a state that has systemic control, rationalised by a total overview and supported by modern techniques of surveillance and coercion.

I suggest that the flourishing of societies in the present century will depend to a considerable extent on how well those working within

³ For more on what follows see Chapter 3 in my forthcoming book in the Wiley Blackwell Manifesto Series, *The Future of Christian Theology*, which is one of a set of three volumes, the others being on the future of Jewish theology (by Steven Kepnes) and the future of Muslim theology (by Aref Ali Nayef).

⁴ There are several current political positions rooted in different traditions that approximate to the position I am sketching here. From the secular side, one of the most insightful and persuasive proposals is that of Jeffrey Stout in *Democracy and Tradition* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2004). Among Christian thinkers, see especially Luke Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics: The Conditions and Possibilities of Faithful Witness* (Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford 2010).

the perspective of a 'religious and secular drama' will be able to converse and collaborate across the boundaries of traditions and commitments. Will there be enough secular people who see their values and practices as not simply aiming to reject or eliminate religions but rather concerned to work out ways of collaborating with religious people and groups for the common good? Will there be enough religious people who are likewise committed to dialogue, negotiation and cooperation? The vision is of a complexly secular and religious society⁵ with a healthy intensity of dramatic engagement in public life and all areas of ordinary life and work. Great things are at stake in this, but the flourishing of societies can only be achieved if there are limits on how any one group can seek to impose its own way.

Towards Complexly Religious and Secular Universities

What about universities within the religious and secular drama? They are deeply problematic and they also have great potential.

Why are they so problematic? Universities have been in the forefront of secular thinking and activity. This has been understandable and often admirable. Many universities became strongholds of religious hegemony, often exercised coercively and strongly resistant to alternative religious or non-religious positions. There are examples of such religiously dominated universities in some countries today. Moves to secularise universities in the name of academic freedom have therefore often been fully justified. The problem has been the tendency to turn academic freedom into secularist domination, sometimes accompanied by ignorance of religion, prejudice against it, and hostility towards it. There has been a secular mindset which assumes that religion as a whole is both untrue and bound to disappear as science progresses and people become better educated. This mindset has been especially common in universities, and continues to be actively promoted within some disciplines⁶

⁵ Cf. Ford, *Shaping Theology*, op. cit., pp. 129-134.

⁶ For a helpful discussion of the various meanings of 'secular' and of the path Western Europe followed during the past 500 years to its present position see Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Belknap

To put the matter sharply, it is not uncommon to find academics, who have never read a serious contemporary work by a religious person at their own level of intellectual ability, education and sophistication, convinced that there is no serious intellectual case for being religious. They find it almost impossible to imagine that intelligent twenty-first century people who are aware of modern science and other areas of knowledge and understanding could with integrity be religious and be worthy of respect as holding a rationally defensible position. Yet there are, of course, numerous such religious people. Their religious commitment is explained away in a range of ways, many of them worked out and taught in universities – there is an abundance of such explanations in philosophy, the human sciences (especially psychology and sociology) and the natural sciences (evolutionary biology being a current favourite). Lack of respect for the intellectual integrity of religious faith, and the lack of engagement with its most intellectually sophisticated proponents, combine with other elements (such as narrow specialization, reliance on public opinion which is often itself formed by what emerges from universities, and fixation in the media on the least intelligent and attractive forms of religious faith) to create an assumption that religion is at least untrue and at worst highly toxic and dangerous. When there is evidence of its widespread importance, and of its resurgence in the public sphere, the reaction is often to increase suspicion, fear and hostility against it. The possibility that it might not be disappearing can stimulate efforts to try to make it disappear because it ought to.

One consequence is that, if religion is seen as worth studying at all (and a great many universities have no department dedicated to it), this is to be done only by seeing it as a phenomenon to be inquired into historically, sociologically, psychologically, and so on. That sort of study is necessary and appropriate, but the engagement is seriously impoverished if it rules out inquiry into religion as possibly true and worthwhile, as a realistic way of life today, or as having a significant contribution to make to thought, culture and the flourishing of our societies. Sadly, such issues, which are raised by the religions and between the religions, are often impossible to ex-

plore academically in many of our universities. Yet billions of people in our world, including many who are highly educated, are involved directly with religious traditions and communities. *There is, therefore, a mismatch between a complexly religious and secular world and many exclusively secular (or exclusively religious) universities.*

Yet this is also a situation of considerable potential. The resurgence of religion in the public sphere, and the realization that in fact religion had been, and was always likely to continue being, strongly present in the lives of billions of people even when written out of secular scenarios of the future, have opened up the possibility of doing fuller justice to the religions in universities. There has also been some disillusionment with aspects of secular worldviews such as confidence in reason, in science, in progress and in human autonomy and control of nature. Many secular people recognize that it is good to have religious allies in support of rationality and humane values, that it is wise to have places where the questions raised by the religions and between them, as well as the questions raised about them, can be openly pursued by both religious and secular people, and to have educated, thoughtful and disciplined discussion about such major issues of truth, practice and beauty. *There is the possibility, therefore, that religious and secular societies could be matched by religious and secular universities.*

Indeed, some universities that might be described as simultaneously and complexly religious and secular already exist – my own University of Cambridge would, I think, qualify, as would several others in Britain, continental Europe, North America and elsewhere. I am not advocating doing away with either religious or secular universities: a pluralist world needs many types of university. But I do suggest that what we need most of all are universities that reflect the complex mix of the world as it is, universities where religions can be studied and the issues arising from them and between them can be explored not only by religious and secular people, but also by people who may not be sure where they themselves stand but are sure that the questions must be addressed by themselves and by twenty-first century universities.

Now I will propose a six-point programme for universities aimed at enabling them to be places where pluralist societies can engage

with their religious and secular dimensions together in ways that respect both.

A Six-Point Programme for Shaping Universities in a Religious and Secular Europe

Debate the Issues

There is intensive debate about religion in Europe and increasing debate about the European university systems, but they rarely connect with each other. There are worrying signs in both debates, as illustrated by two recent documents.

Teaching about Religions in European School Systems. Policy Issues and Trends by Luce Pépin⁷ is one of a series of studies sponsored through the Network of European Foundations Initiative on Religion and Democracy in Europe.⁸ The four include what in my judgement are two excellent volumes, one on Religion and Healthcare in the European Union,⁹ the other on conflicts over mosques in Europe,¹⁰ but the two on religion and prejudice¹¹ and on religion in schools are more problematic. Pépin's study¹² has much valuable material surveying what is going on across Europe in religious education. But it is disturbing in seeming uncritically to take for granted a controlling secular framework without recognition of the alternatives. One might see it as interpreting religious education across the whole of Europe through a secularist

⁷ Alliance Publishing Trust, London 2009.

⁸ I am grateful to Emilio Rui Vilar, President of the Gulbenkian Foundation, a member of the Network of European Foundations, for introducing me to this series.

⁹ *Religion and Healthcare in the European Union. Policy Issues and Trends* by Dimitrina Petrova and Jarlath Clifford (Alliance Publishing Trust, London 2009)

¹⁰ *Conflicts over Mosques in Europe. Policy Issues and Trends* by Stefano Allievi (Alliance Publishing Trust, London 2009)

¹¹ *Religion and Prejudice in Europe. New Empirical Findings* by Beate Küpper and Andreas Zick (Alliance Publishing Trust, London 2009)

¹² I am grateful to Judith Gardom, an experienced teacher of religious education, for sharing her response to this study.

mindset. There is no acknowledgement of the problems associated with her dominant definitions (e.g. religion as values, history and customs), her categories (e.g. neutrality, objectivity, religious facts, religious science) and her assumptions (e.g. politics being separable from religion). She does not appear aware of options beyond a confessional versus a neutral approach to religious education. Her conception is of ‘school as a democratic space, accessible to all and a place for the transfer of objective knowledge, based on science and not on religious convictions.’⁽³⁹⁾ This seems to imply both that a democratic space has no place for religious convictions and, more fundamentally, that objective, scientific knowledge of religion is to be contrasted with, and is educationally and rationally superior to, the understanding of a religion that comes, for example, from years of intelligent practice of it. Pépin wants a religiously neutral educational space in which both teachers and pupils have to bracket out any specific religiously-shaped convictions, practices and wisdom in order to deal with ‘religious facts’ described by allegedly objective outsiders. As Charles Taylor says, “dictating the principles from some supposedly higher authority above the fray” runs the risk of some people not being “included in the ongoing process of determining what ... society is about ... and how it is going to realise [its] goals...”¹³ In university terms, Pépin is advocating a pure secularist ‘religious studies’ approach. I will argue later against the sole adequacy of this and in favour of combined theology and religious studies in which questions of truth and practice can be explored intelligently without pretending anyone is neutral about them. The debate about religion in schools would benefit from being broadened to universities.

The second document concerns universities in Europe and is overall an encouraging one. On June 15-16 2010 an Expert Group on European Universities met in Brussels and issued a Manifesto called *Empower European Universities*.¹⁴ It speaks of ‘an intellectual crisis, as the complexity of the present world – and how to cope with it- is insufficiently transmitted through teaching to the next

¹³ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* op. cit. p. xiii.

¹⁴ I am grateful to one of the signatories, Eduardo Grilo, former Portuguese Minister for Education, for introducing me to this manifesto and explaining its background.

generation.’¹⁵ It has excellent things to say about mission differentiation (one of the most important aspects of which is the encouragement of centres of international excellence), independence and autonomy, the need for private funding, and much else. But amidst mentions of broad, general education, enhancing cultural awareness and democratic citizenship, and dealing with changes in society, there is nothing about religions. The description of Europe is resolutely secular, and religion seems to be subsumed under culture. It is just one symptom of the fact that there is no debate about how European universities relate to the religions, and it probably would not even have occurred to the distinguished authors that this should be an item on their agenda.

Is it too much to expect that this might change? The International Forum Bosnia is now raising the matter and I hope that others will take up the debate.

Draw on the Wisdom of Many Traditions

It is generally recognised that universities are facing many complex problems, most of them interrelated and so requiring thinking and judgements that encompass many areas over a long time-span. Just as scientists and the rest of society slowly awoke in the last century to the dimensions of environmental issues, so the intellectual ecology of our world poses comparable large-scale and long-term questions. Universities, because they gather so many disciplines, are the only institution equipped to respond to these, and they themselves therefore need to take this responsibility seriously. If universities do not cope well then there will be very serious problems for a civilisation that increasingly depends on the education, knowledge and know-how that they provide. I would name seven of the main questions universities are now facing as follows:¹⁶

¹⁵ See www.merit.unu/archive

¹⁶ The following draws on Chapter 7, p.134 in David F. Ford, *Shaping Theology. Engagements in a Religious and Secular World* (Blackwell, Oxford 2007). For further discussion see David F.

First, can there be appropriate forms of interdisciplinarity and communication across fields in a situation of increasing fragmentation, with multiplication of disciplines and sub-disciplines? Second, can teaching and research be combined in the same institution so that both benefit? Third, what, if anything, should be attempted in the way of all-round educational formation of students? Fourth, what sort of collegiality among academics and students is desirable and possible? Fifth, who controls the university, and through what sort of instruments and polity? Sixth, what are the appropriate contributions to society, both national and international, of the university? Seventh, how should universities be funded so as to maximise the contributions of both public and private sources?

Those are questions that demand not only information and knowledge but wise discernment and judgement. The wisdom of any particular tradition, whether secular or religious, will be stretched hard in order to find adequate, practical answers. The Medieval Christian thinkers who developed this extraordinary institution were passionate seekers after wisdom as well as knowledge. Many of them daringly crossed the boundaries of their own tradition in order to engage with what pagans, Jews and Muslims had to say. Today the scope of the challenges is even greater. We need to draw on the deepest wisdom of our traditions and at the same time to dare to take them further.

In relation to universities, my main worry is not that there will be no opportunity for many sorts of Jews, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, agnostics, atheists and others to make contributions to the shaping of universities in the coming century; my fear is rather that when we do have the opportunity we will be found wanting in the understanding, knowledge, discernment and wisdom that are needed. So the second point in my programme is that, as we generate a debate, we all seek wisdom on these matters wherever it is to be found. We must go deeper into our own traditions and deeper into those of others as we work with each other to shape the universities of the future. What would happen, for example, if small groups of

European academic Jews, Christians and Muslims were to collaborate in trying to envision universities in line with their core wisdom, and then try to work out with the many other stakeholders how this might help in answering those seven questions?

Develop Departments of Theology and Religious Studies

If religiously-informed wisdom relevant to shaping universities is to be found it is vital that there be places where academically-mediated understanding of the various religious traditions and of their interactions be thought through. People of faith who are academics in the arts, humanities, sciences and technologies need to try to be as intelligent in their faith as they are in their teaching, research and responsibilities towards the university. If they are, and if they pursue answers to those seven questions together, more of the wisdom needed by our universities will flow.

But it is not enough for this wisdom-seeking to be distributed across the university; it also needs to be focused in departments dedicated to engagement with the religious traditions. A great many universities do not have such departments, and it is worth challenging them as to whether they can fulfil their responsibilities towards society if they ignore, or at least fail to treat coherently, such a significant aspect of our world. Of those that do, there are very different approaches. One tendency is towards confessional departments, identified with a particular faith tradition. Another is towards studying religions through a range of disciplines and refusing any self-identification in terms of faith. As with the discussion of religious universities and secular universities above, I do not want to argue against either confessional theology departments (as they are usually called when they are Christian) or secular religious studies departments, but want to make the case for a third sort in addition, those which combine theology and religious studies.

I have developed the rationale for theology and religious studies elsewhere at length.¹⁷ Here it is sufficient to sum up what has al-

¹⁷ E.g. *Shaping Theology* op. cit. Chapters 1, 2, 7; *Christian Wisdom* op. cit. Chapter 9; *Theology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999) Chapter 2; and forthcoming: *The Future of Christian Theology* (Wiley Blackwell, Oxford 2010)

ready been suggested: in a complexly religious and secular world it is wise for universities to develop departments that can cope with the complexity and with questions that are raised by the religions and between the religions as well as about them. In other words, if they are to fulfil academic responsibilities towards the university and its disciplines, towards religious traditions, and towards society as a whole then they need to be able to grapple with questions of truth and practice as well as description, empirical inquiry, analysis and meaning, and to enable disciplined conversations between people with very different convictions. Such conversations are essential to intelligent discourse on religious matters among those who are and who are not people of faith. My third point, therefore, is that our societies desperately need places where intelligent faith can be thought through, understood, debated and tested, and that the paradigm of a theology and religious studies department is the best way for a university to develop such a place.

Increase Religious Literacy within Universities

Universities address religious issues in many spheres besides academic teaching, learning and research: for example, in admissions, student support, campus relations, food and catering, accommodation, health, discipline, timetabling, counselling, student societies, issues of equality, diversity and discrimination, chaplaincies, and faith and worship spaces. They have very different approaches in such areas, and one way of describing these is in terms of religious literacy.

In a ground-breaking project called Religious Literacy Leadership in Higher Education (supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and led by Dr Adam Dinham at the Faiths and Civil Society Unit in Goldsmiths, University of London)¹⁸ ten Vice-Chancellors together with other leaders and managers have collaborated in order to work out what religious literacy might mean for universities. On the idea of religious literacy the project says: ‘We suggest that religious literacy lies ... in having the knowledge and skills to recognise faith as a legitimate and important area for

public attention, a degree of general knowledge about at least some religious traditions and an awareness of and ability to find out about others. Its purpose is to avoid stereotypes, respect and learn from others, and build good relations across difference. In this it is a civic endeavour rather than a theological or religious one, and seeks to support a strong cohesive multi-faith society, which is inclusive of people from all faith traditions and none in a context which is largely suspicious and anxious about religion and belief. The overall aim may be summarised as seeking to inform intelligent, thoughtful and rooted approaches to religious faith which countervail unhelpful knee-jerk reactions based on fear and stereotype.’

Religious literacy affects the whole ethos of a university, and the project helpfully identifies five broad models of leadership that can be found. At one extreme is the first:

- Leading the secular or ‘neutral’ university – where the university makes a minimal acknowledgement of religion insofar as it must keep the law in such matters as equality and non-discrimination.

At the other extreme is the fifth:

- Leadership of the ‘formative-collegial’ university, which is described as follows:
 ‘This university takes into account the widest experience of its students and staff, seeing their learning and work in terms of their overall human growth and development.. Faith is not seen simply in terms of ‘requirements’ or ‘needs’ which some students have and others do not. Rather, all people’s worldviews, both religious and secular, are taken as essential aspects of identity and culture and as potentially enriching dimensions of learning and growth. [It] ... emphasises the personal and intellectual benefits of obtaining a university education alongside people from different traditions and none, in addition to the economic and material benefits... Good campus relations are ensured by trying actively to create an environment in which faith is ‘at home’ on campus, with religious events and forms of expression enjoyed alongside others, and religiously orientated questions and legacies being on the academic agenda in curricula, teaching and learning. There is outreach to

surrounding communities, including faith communities, which are seen as enriching the university experience within and beyond the campus walls.’

In between these minimal and maximal models are three others:

- Leading for ‘good practice’ in relation to faith
- Leadership for the ‘religiously responsive’ university
- Leadership for engaging with faith broadly as a matter of ‘social justice’

My fourth point is that most European universities are nearer the first model, but the flourishing of our religious and secular societies would be enhanced if they moved towards the fifth, formative-collegial, model.

Increase Religious Literacy in Society with the Help of Universities

The fifth point is simply an extension of the fourth: if religious literacy is good for universities it is also good for society as a whole. There is widespread ignorance, misinformation, prejudice, discrimination and hostility in relation to religions in our societies, but there is also great potential for interesting learning, fascinating experiences, better community relations, cultural and spiritual enrichment, and long term relationships across the differences of religion. Good public education can help reverse the negative and enhance the positive, and universities should take some responsibility for this.

Since becoming Director of the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme, for me one of the most worthwhile developments has been a collaboration with the Coexist Foundation in London, through which we in Cambridge have become increasingly involved in a range of activities that connect our academic study of Judaism, Christianity and Islam (including their relations with each other and with the rest of the world) with the huge challenges of improving public understanding, engaging in inter-faith dialogue, creating long term partnerships across differences of faith, and shaping students who will (often as religious or educational leaders) carry on this work around the world. We hope this will culminate with the foundation, in collaboration with other institutions, of an inter-faith centre in London where high quality exhibitions, education and encounters

can take place.¹⁹ Cambridge is by no means alone in trying to take its wider responsibilities towards society more and more seriously; indeed, as I look around Europe, it is encouraging to see the ways in which universities are integrating more fully into their missions strategic ways of serving the common good.

Draw on Religious and Secular Sources of Funding

The final point of this programme is about funding. The Manifesto *Empower European Universities* discussed above makes a strong point about the need to attract more private funding into European universities. In the world league table there are more top class universities in Britain than any other European country, and it is no coincidence that Britain has the highest level of non-state support for universities. A genuinely mixed economy of state and other funders seems the right way to increase independence, strengthen the ability to innovate and experiment, and have the long term stability that endowment offers (even allowing for the ups and downs of the stock market).

It is also important that probably the strongest motives for private charitable giving in the world are religious. If religions and universities are as important for the twenty-first century as I have been suggesting, then their leaders should come together to encourage religious and secular donors to help realise the sort of programme that I have just outlined. I am confident that, if this becomes increasingly common, there will be many pleasant surprises as benefactors and universities together dream up ways in which they can cooperate in serving the flourishing of our religious and secular societies.

The Heart of the Matter: Collegiality, Friendship and ‘For the music’s sake’

I want to conclude on a more personal note. I have now been in universities as a student and teacher for over forty years. I have had the privilege of studying in Ireland, England, the USA and Germany, and of being involved with many universities elsewhere - in Europe, North America, Africa, the Middle East, India and China.

¹⁹ See www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk.

As I reflect on those years, I have no doubt what has been most important. It has been the face to face relationships.

I think especially of my teachers, students, and academic colleagues, those relationships that have together shaped the collegiality that is the most vital element in the quality of academic life. It is a collegiality that crosses divisions of faiths, disciplines, generations, nations and languages. I think also of the many other crucial relationships – with benefactors and sponsors (again crossing many boundaries, and ranging geographically from Oman to the USA), with administrators and other university staff, and with a series of Cambridge University Vice-Chancellors, each of whom has recognised the importance of the university taking seriously not only theology and religious studies as an academic field but also its long term responsibilities towards the faith communities and the whole of society. Ten days ago the Duke of Edinburgh, our Chancellor, hosted a wonderful farewell party for the most remarkable Vice-Chancellor I have known, Professor Dame Alison Richard, whose energy and vision have made an immense difference to our Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme. I have come to appreciate more and more the institutional and strategic creativity and leadership that are necessary if there is to be collegial creativity within and between universities.

Above all, I think of friendships. I have come to the conclusion that where worthwhile long term projects, movements and institutional developments happen, you usually also find friendships somewhere in the ecology. The generativity of collegial friendships has for me, year after year, been incomparably stimulating and sustaining. I think of Dr Aref Ali Nayed about whose response to the Muscat Manifesto I spoke last night, and of Professor Peter Ochs, with whom both Aref and I have taken part in Scriptural Reasoning. Last week in Dublin I had two days of intensive conversation with one of the friends who has meant most to me, personally, spiritually and academically, Micheal O'Siadhail, the poet. We meditated together on one of his recent poems that for me sums up much of what we are about as we try to conceive of universities for the new Europe. It is called 'Session' and is about playing jazz. I think jazz is one of the great images for living well – deeply rooted in the past, its suffering and its themes, yet endlessly improvising and innovating, and all within the collegiality of players who have to be

exquisitely sensitive to what the others are doing. I will present it first and then comment on a few key phrases.

Session

Deep, deep
The legends and contours of every line,
Tune womb
Of our stories of who begat whom,
And as phrases part or combine.

So fine
A line between what's open and shut.
Proud horns
Above a shivering reed that mourns
What never made the cut.

Power's glut
Of power knows always what's true.
Somewhere
Against the grain, again the flair
Among a jazz's daring few

Some new
Delight in playing face to face
Grace notes
For a line that steadies as it floats,
Without a theory or a base,

Shared space
Holding what we hold and not to fear
Those bar
Where our history clashes or jars
And in lines unsymmetrical to the ear

Still hear
Deep reasonings of a different lore.
No map
Of any middle ground or overlap
Yet listening as never before –

No more –
 Just hunched jazzmen so engrossed
 In each
 Other's chance outleap and reach
 Of friendship at its utmost.

No host
 And no one owns the chorus or break.
 Guests all
 At Madam Jazz's beck and call.
 For nothing but the music's sake.²⁰

There we have collegiality – the
 'Delight in playing face to face'.

We also have the 'shared space' – think of pluralist Europe or of universities. But note that it does not need 'a theory or a base' – there need be no single dominant framework. And the fear of difference and division does not dictate things – we can handle lack of symmetry, the discords of jazz,

'Those bars
 Where our history clashes or jars'.

There is no privileged overview,

'No map
 Of any middle ground or overlap'

and 'no one owns the chorus', yet everyone can join in it.

Instead, what *is* there? There is that 'shared space', mutual space, where we are all guests of each other. There are

'Deep reasonings of a different lore.'

That phrase 'deep reasonings' is taken from the writings of Dr Nicholas Adams²¹ on Scriptural Reasoning, the practice of Jews,

²⁰ Micheal O'Siadhail, *Globe* (Bloodaxe Books, Tarsset Northumberland 2007) pp.115-6.

²¹ Cf. Nicholas Adams, 'Making Deep Reasonings Public' in *The Promise of Scriptural Reasoning* Ed. David F. Ford and

Christians and Muslims studying and discussing together their sacred scriptures and related texts. For me during the past fifteen or more years that has been a core collegial practice of inter-faith engagement, a shared space where some of my deepest friendships have grown.

There is also ‘listening as never before’, the utterly alert attentiveness that is a condition for the best conversation.

And there is ‘friendship at its utmost’, pictured in the sensitive, responsive, trusting, risky interplay and improvisation of jazz players.

The last line may be the most important of all:

‘For nothing but the music’s sake.’

Why play jazz? As the final line of the final poem of *Globe* says:

‘The only end of jazz is jazz.’²²

Just as one lives the life of faith for the sake of God, to the glory of God, blessing the name of God, and delighting in God simply because God is God; and just as one loves friends for their own sake, because of who they are; so, of all the many valid reasons for having universities and pursuing any academic discipline, the deepest is that our ‘jazz’, our ‘music’ is knowledge, understanding, truth and wisdom. All the other things we academics do, important as

C.C.Pecknold (Blackwell, Oxford 2006) For further information about Scriptural Reasoning, see the website of the Society for Scriptural Reasoning, <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/jsrforum/> . For print resources on Scriptural Reasoning, see Chapter 8 in David F. Ford, *Christian Wisdom. Desiring God and Learning in Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 273-303; Peter Ochs, ‘Reading Scripture Together in Sight of Our Open Doors’ in *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 26, no. 1, new series (2005), pp. 36-47; Steven Kepnes and Basit Bilal Koshul (eds.), *Studying the ‘Other’, Understanding the ‘Self’: Scripture, Reason and the Contemporary Islam-West Encounter* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007); and Peter Ochs and William Stacy Johnson (Eds), *Crisis, Call, and Leadership in the Abrahamic Traditions* (Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2009) .

²² ‘Only End’ in *Globe* op. cit. p.118.

they are, and all our other motivations, are kept pure and centred by our desire for these for their own sake – and above all for wisdom. In the final analysis we have our universities for nothing but that music's sake.