

Muslims, Catholics and the Common Purpose of Justice and Peace

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Introduction

It is the argument of this chapter that Muslims and Catholics are natural partners in the work of justice and peace. This partnership comes from their mutual respect for each other's religions and the recognition of salvific aspects of each religion that allow them to mutually identify commonalities in beliefs and values. It also comes from the common ground of the belief they share in the unity of God and in his attributes of mercy, compassion and forgiveness. Finally it comes from the example of Muhammad and Jesus themselves, who advocated and practised peace, and from the Holy Books that guide the lives of Muslims and Christians. This chapter first establishes that the Catholic Church holds Islam in esteem as a religion that mediates salvation to its people. It then identifies a common platform of belief which puts Muslims and Catholics together in a world where the work for justice and peace is paramount. Then it identifies four particular areas – human dignity, freedom of religion and conscience, the drive to eradicate poverty and the search for peace – in which Muslims and Catholics are natural collaborators. In order to build the argument we first consider the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding the credentials of other religions to mediate salvation to their followers, for it is on this teaching that the Church's attitude of respect for other religions rests.

The Catholic Church and the Salvific Potential of Other Religions

Not Pluralism

The Catholic Church takes an inclusivist rather than a pluralist view of other religions. In a pluralist view all religious paths have the same purpose and lead to the

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same destination, the Reality of God (Hick, 1989, p. 235). In this view, differences in religions exist because religions are human constructs, socially and culturally enmeshed, each putting its own interpretation on the mystery of Real. The religion itself, in the conscious and unconscious awareness of the individual and community, shapes perceptions of the Reality often referred to as God. Therefore there are differences and often conflicts between religions, but they are all equally valid ways of approaching the mystery at the centre of the universe.

The pluralist approach to religions requires one to forsake any view of one's own religion as unique and therefore is difficult for the committed believer. The committed Muslim respects what has gone before in Judaism and Christianity, but sees Islam as the true fulfilment of these religions and as the fullness of God's Revelation. The Christian wants to assert the unique place of Jesus Christ in salvation, and the Jew, while respecting the later developments of Christianity and Islam, sees them as departures from the original covenant. For those who want to hold to individual religious convictions, and yet openly engage in dialogue with other religions, the philosophical position with which they are most comfortable is inclusivism, and this is the position which since the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) the Catholic Church has adopted in relation to other religions.

Inclusivism: the Perspective Transformation of the Catholic Church¹

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) demonstrated a perspective transformation in which the Church officially moved from an exclusivist to an inclusivist position in regard to the salvific potential of other religions. We now briefly trace some of the steps in this perspective transformation before explaining the present theology of the Church in relation to other religions.

The axiom of no salvation outside the Church (*The Decree for the Jacobites*, Council of Florence, pp. 1431–1445) reflected a time when it was believed that the world was co-extensive with Christianity, and therefore that all had the opportunity of hearing the gospel. The command of Jesus to take the gospel to the ends of the earth appeared to be a geographical possibility (Sullivan, 1992). This was challenged by the discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Jesuit missionaries to China and India (Mitchell, 1980) found religions much more ancient than Christianity, and 50 years after the axiom “no salvation outside the Church” was formalised in the Council of Florence, Columbus discovered America. It became clear that there were countless people beyond the then known world who had not heard of the gospel of Christ. Indeed these people had their own religions, often far more ancient than Christianity, and which often espoused similar values to those of

¹For a fuller treatment of the material in this section, see Engebretson, K. (2008). Why Should Catholic Schools teach about Religions of the World? *Australian E-Journal of Theology*. Issue 11. Institute of Theology, Philosophy and Religious Education. Australian Catholic University.

the gospel of Christ. Did a loving God who willed the salvation of all choose to deny these good people any possibility of becoming members of the Church, outside of which, it was believed, they could not be saved.

Theologians too numerous to mention, among them notably the Dominicans and the Jesuits,² sought to reconcile the teaching of no salvation outside the Church with their belief in the universal salvific will of God. The Flemish theologian Albert Pigge (1490–1542) for example claimed that all that was necessary for those who had not heard of Christ was faith in God (Hebrews 11:6). This led him to the question of whether Muslims, who believed in the one God, could find salvation through their own faith. A conviction was growing among these theologians that contrary to the axiom of no salvation outside the Church, adherents of other religions might be saved through their sincere faith in God expressed in their own religions. This conclusion rested on both an expanded sense of geography and a developing psychological understanding that until people were convinced of the truth of Christianity they could not be guilty in their rejection of it.

Without going into the complex discussion of this issue which took place in the Church in the first half of the twentieth century, by the years leading up to the Second Vatican Council it was accepted Catholic doctrine that there were people in the state of grace and on the way to salvation who would never be visibly joined to the Catholic Church. The influence of the best known argument in support of this, Rahner's (1966) controversial concept of the "anonymous Christian", can be seen in these passages from the documents from Second Vatican Council.

Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or his Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do his will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience (*Lumen Gentium*, p. 16).

and

Since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery (*Gaudium et Spes*, p. 22).

In regard to the great majority of people in the world who have neither Christian faith nor baptism, the Second Vatican Council affirmed that they are not only related to the Church by the grace that the Holy Spirit offers to them, but that the Church is also the sign and instrument of their salvation. The *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions* (Nostra Aetate, 1965) advocated Christ as the "way" of salvation, but argued that "certain ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth" . . . "often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men" (2).

²Francis Xavier (1506–1552), Robert Bellamine (1542–1621), Francisco Suarez (1548–1619) and Juan de Lugo (1583–1660).

The key element in the teaching of Pope John Paul II, in regard to other religions, was respect for the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit within them, action which existed even before Christ, in history and “outside the visible body of the Church” (*Dominum et Vivificantum*, p. 53).

The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the Church. Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all. But it is clear that today, as in the past, many people do not have an opportunity to come to know or accept the gospel revelation or to enter the Church. The social and cultural conditions in which they live do not permit this, and frequently they have been brought up in other religious traditions. For such people salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation. This grace comes from Christ; it is the result of his Sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit. It enables each person to attain salvation through his or her free cooperation (1986, p. 10).

Even the controversial and conservative *Dominus Iesus* (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2000) asserted that while Christ is necessary for salvation, the Kingdom of God is bigger than the Church, and that the elements of truth in other religions may certainly be channels of salvific grace. It is on the basis of this “generous, tolerant inclusivism” (Kung, 1988, p. 255) that the religious believer is able to claim the uniqueness of their own religion and yet enter into dialogue with those of other traditions. As Pope John Paul II declared in 1987: “The truth that the plan of salvation includes all who acknowledge the Creator offers us a solid basis for dialogue and for peaceful co-existence with Muslims.”³

The Catholic Church Teaching About Islam⁴

Having established that the Catholic Church takes an inclusivist position in relation to other religions, we now examine Church documents to find what the Catholic Church teaches about Islam, and thus to establish on what basis Catholic–Muslim dialogue and collaboration may proceed.

From the Second Vatican Council and in numerous other instances the Church has pointed out that every religion is an effort on the part of human beings to ponder the divine mystery at the centre of life. They are ways in which the spirit of humanity finds expression.⁵ This search for understanding of God brings all people together

³Pope John Paul II addressing the Bishops of Tanzania on their Ad Limina visit, Rome, December 4, 1987.

⁴Qur’anic verses in this chapter are taken from *The Qur’an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English*, by Ali Unal, New Jersey: Light Publications and the New Testament references are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

⁵Nostra Aetate, 1: Pope John Paul II speaking to the 50th General Assembly of the United Nations Organization. New York, October 5th, 1995.

in a common humanity, and into a unity under God of the entire human race, and the common Fatherhood of God. “God is the common Father of the entire human family. His design for humanity embraces the life and well being of every human person” declared Pope John Paul II in 1989.⁶ This common Fatherhood is both the platform for and the imperative towards dialogue. So the first thing that brings Catholics and Muslims together in faith is their common monotheism. This principle of divine unity and oneness (*Tawhid*) is the knowledge that God has revealed to humankind in all ages through his prophets from Abraham down to Muhammad (PBUH). In *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church from the Second Vatican Council, the Church declares:

The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place amongst these there are the Muslims, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, *along with us* adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind (16).

It is not surprising that the Council gave recognition to the monotheistic nature of Islam, for this is the fundamental characteristic of Islam and the first of its five pillars. What is significant is the phrase “together with us”. Muslims *together with us* adore the one God. Our differences about the nature of Jesus Christ do not, in the mind of the Church, take away from the fact that we are united in the worship of the one true God. “We would like you to know that the Church recognises the riches of the Islamic faith – a faith that binds us to the one God”⁷ declared Pope Paul VI in 1972. In another speech in 1976 he referred to Muslims as “Our brothers in faith in the one God.”⁸

In another significant document, *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council acknowledged some of the Beautiful 99 names of God, and in so doing recognised that for Muslims Allah is not one dimensional. His unity is a richly layered and complexly beautiful amalgam of Creator, the One who is all Merciful, the One who is All Powerful, the One who Judges, the One who Forgives and many other Beautiful names. Catholics also admit these characteristics of God as they have been revealed to us through Jesus Christ (Psalm 8; Psal 139; Exodus 19).

A further factor that unites us is that we both look to Abraham, father of Ishmael and Isaac, as prophet and forefather in faith. This is acknowledged not only in *Nostra Aetate* but also in many other papal speeches and writings. The common family legacy we have of Abraham’s response to his call, his fidelity to the one God, his unwavering faith in God’s plan for him and for his descendents, gives us a familial bond from which we can collaborate for the common good. “We assure our Muslim brethren” declared Pope John Paul II in 1994, “who freely laid claim to faith in Abraham, that we wish to collaborate with them. . .in working for the peace and

⁶Address to the Latin Bishops of the Arab regions on their Ad Limina visit, Rome, February 3, 1989.

⁷To the new ambassador of Pakistan, Rome, September 9, 1972.

⁸To the new ambassador of Morocco, Rome, June 4, 1976.

justice which alone can give glory to God.”⁹ In the holy Qur’an the covenant bond between Jews, Christians and Muslims is expressed in this way. “And remember when we took from the prophets their covenant, and from you (O Muhammad) and from Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant.” (S. 33:7)

Other foundations of unity between Muslims and Catholics can be found in their common obedience to God, submission to God’s plan, commitment to prayer and to service of others. In this regard it is enlightening to draw some simple parallels between the holy Qur’an and the New Testament, and these are presented in Table 1.

There is certainly more common ground between the Catholic Church and Islam than the brief analysis given here, but these three foundations are those referred to most commonly in Catholic Church documents: that is the monotheism that brings Catholics and Muslims together in common worship of the one God, the common family relationship with Abraham and their common desire to submit to the will of God, to commune with God in prayer, to seek humility and simplicity and to serve God in others. It is particularly this last foundation that we will now develop. What does the Church see as the work that Catholics and Muslims must do together into their service of humanity?

Table 1 Common ground between the Qur’an and the New Testament on almsgiving

From the Qur’an	From the New Testament
Those who <i>believe</i> in the Unseen, establish the <i>Prayer</i> in conformity with its conditions and out of what we have provided for them (of wealth, knowledge, power, etc.) they spend (<i>to provide sustenance for the needy</i> and in God’s cause, purely for the good pleasure of God and without placing others under obligation) (S. 2:3)	Do not be afraid little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. <i>Sell your possessions and give alms</i> . Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief draws near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is there your heart will be also (Luke 12:32)
Now O Human kind, worship your Lord who has created you as well as those before you (and brought you up in your human nature and identity) so that you may attain <i>reverent piety</i> towards him and His protection (S. 2:21)	Rid yourselves then of all malice and all guile, insincerity, envy and all slander. Like newborn infants long for the <i>pure spiritual milk</i> so that by it you may grow into salvation (1 P. 2:1)
Seek help through patience (and fasting which requires and enables great patience, and through the Prayer. Indeed the Prayer is burdensome, but not for those <i>humbled by their reverence of God</i>) (S. 2:45)	<i>Humble yourselves</i> therefore under the mighty hand of God so that the may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxieties on him because he cares for you (1 P. 5:6)

⁹Pope John Paul II: A Message for the Special Assembly of the Synod of the Bishops of Africa: Rome, May 6, 1994.

Catholics and Muslims Working Together

Working Together in Support of Human Dignity

Human dignity is the first of the fundamental principles of Catholic social teaching and it refers to the inalienable dignity of every single person, for every person has been created by God and their destiny is in God's hands. St Paul has said that human beings are God's masterpiece, created for a life that God has prepared for us from the beginning (Eph 2:10): This is echoed in the holy Qur'an: "He it is who created you from clay and then decreed a term of life for you, and there is with him another unchanging term determined by and known to him" (S. 6:2). Created by God the person, body and soul, is a child of God. Yet around the world there are numerous abuses of human dignity, and *Gaudium et Spes* identifies some of these as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children and disgraceful working conditions. In Australia we can add the desperate conditions in which some of our indigenous people live (GS, 27).

In 1993 Pope John Paul II called Muslims and Catholics together to work for the upholding of human dignity particularly through education of the young.¹⁰ Earlier, speaking to the leaders of Ghanaian Muslims in 1980 he had said: "I pray that the almighty and merciful God will grant peace and brotherhood to all the members of the human family. And may the harmony of creation and the great cause of human dignity be advanced through our fraternal solidarity and friendship."¹¹ So the first task to which Catholic-Muslim partnership should attend is the identification of local, national and global abuses of human dignity and work to eradicate these, a work called for in our sacred books.

Defence of Freedom of Religion and Conscience

"There is no compulsion in Religion" declares the Qur'an (2:256). The right of religious freedom, according to the Second Vatican Council, impels people to seek religious truth, and once it is known to order their lives in keeping with it. This is only possible if people are free of coercion, both physical and psychological. This right of religious freedom applies not only to individuals but also to religious communities, and the related rights of religious communities are self-government, public worship, assistance and instruction of their members, and the development of institutional infrastructures to support their members in the practice of their religions. Religious communities have the right to select and train their own ministers, communicate freely with other groups within their religion, build places for prayer and worship, raise funds and purchase property. They have the right not to be hindered

¹⁰ Address by Pope John Paul II to representatives of the Muslims of Benin, Parakou, February 4, 1993.

¹¹ Pope John Paul II to the leaders of the Ghanaian Muslims, Accra, May 8, 1980.

in their teaching and public witness when this is without coercion and unworthy persuasion, and to establish educational, social and charitable organisations. In addition, according to Second Vatican Council, parents have the right to determine the kind of religious education that their children are to receive and the right to freedom of choice in education. To quote *Dignitatis Humanae*, (5) “The rights of parents are violated, if their children are forced to attend lessons or instructions which are not in agreement with their religious beliefs, or if a single system of education, from which all religious formation is excluded, is imposed upon all.” Religious freedom must be protected by government, citizenry and social and religious groups, with Government in particular having a duty not only to protect but also to foster favourable conditions for the practice of religions.

Abuses of religious freedom include state control of and repression of religions, imprisonment, torture and other ill treatment of religious leaders, and the imprisonment and harassment of people who attend non-state-controlled religious worship. Religious freedom is abused when particular religions are denied legal status, resulting in arrest and imprisonment of people for their religious practice; when governments intimidate religious minorities or fail to address intolerance and attacks against religious groups; and when there is state favouritism towards majority religions and discrimination against others. Religious freedom is also in danger when public vilification or blasphemous portrayals of religions go unchecked. Public debate about religions needs to take into account the rights of those who practice them and to temper these considerations with the necessary principle of freedom of speech.

In 1980, speaking to the Catholic bishops of Burkina Faso in West Africa, Pope John Paul II urged them to work with the Muslims, the other principal religious group in the country, to understand the requirements of religious freedom and to work together to promote it.¹² Ten years later he used these words to the Bishops of the Philippines:

I would encourage you to seek agreement with your Muslim brothers and sisters on the fundamental question of religious freedom. The foundation of mutual respect and understanding among those of different religious beliefs lies in the right of every individual to freedom of conscience. Everyone has an inalienable right and a solemn duty to follow his or her upright conscience in seeking and obeying religious truth. Religious freedom is not a privilege but a requirement of human dignity.¹³

Here then, the understanding and promotion of religious freedom, and concerted protest when it is abused, is the second work of collaboration between Catholics and Muslims.

¹²Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of Upper Volta, Ouagadougou, May 10, 1980.

¹³Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of the Philippines on their Ad Limina visit, Rome, November 30, 1990.

Working for Human Development and the Elimination of Poverty

In 1967 in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, Pope Paul VI called development “the new name for peace” and argued that

When we fight poverty and oppose the unfair conditions of the present, we are not just promoting human well-being; we are also furthering man’s spiritual and moral development, and hence we are benefiting the whole human race. For peace is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day toward the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect form of justice among men (76).

This document is still the benchmark of the Catholic Church’s commitment to the eradication of poverty and the development of the world’s struggling nations. In February 2009, speaking to the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development, Pope Benedict XVI reminded his audience that the Catholic Church shared its commitment to overcome poverty and hunger and to come to the aid of the world’s poorest people. Through its many social justice agencies, the Catholic Church supports projects that assist indigenous communities around the world to flourish on their own soil and to live in harmony with their traditional culture, instead of being forced to uproot themselves in order to seek employment in overcrowded cities, teeming with social problems. The teaching of the Church is a preferential option for the poor and a consistent love that cannot tolerate injustice or deprivation, love that refuses to rest until poverty and hunger are banished from the globe.

We see this command to succour and support the world’s poor in the Muslim imperative of Zakat. The holy Qur’an in numerous verses exhorts almsgiving to the poor in ways that preserve the dignity of the poor and do not profit the giver: “If you dispose your alms openly it is well, if you conceal it and give to the poor in secret this is better for you, and God will make it an atonement to blot out some of your evil deeds. God is fully aware of all that you do (S. 2:271)” and “God deprives interest (which is thought to increase wealth) of any blessing and blights it, but makes almsgiving (which is thought to decrease wealth) productive” (S. 2:276). Work for human development, and for the ultimate eradication of world poverty, is thus the third area on which Muslims and Catholics can collaborate in a spirit of honour for their respective sacred books which call them to this task.

Building Peace Nationally and Internationally

In his social justice encyclical *Centissimus Annus* (1991) Pope John Paul II claimed that religions, now and in the future, would have a prominent role in building peace. (*Centissimus Annus*, 1991). Previously, speaking in Kenya in 1985, he had observed that in light of the human dignity of all, the challenge facing the Church and its collaborators in other religions was to help the world to live in peace and harmony.¹⁴

¹⁴Address to Muslim and Hindu representatives of Kenya, Nairobi, August 18, 1985.

The work for peace and harmony requires reconciliation of nations and groups who have been estranged from each other, even at war with each other. In following the just, forgiving and merciful God, Pope John Paul II said, this can be achieved:

Both the Bible and the Qur'an teach that mercy and justice are two attributes most characteristic of God. He, 'the Just One' the 'Merciful and Compassionate' can bring about these qualities in mankind if only we open our hearts to allow him to do so. He wants us to be merciful toward each other. Along this path there are new solutions to be found to the political, racial and confessional conflicts that have plagued the human family throughout history.¹⁵

Muslims and Christians agree that the call to be peacemakers issues from the God who is peace. The Qur'an says that "God is . . .the sovereign, the All Holy and All Pure, the supreme author of peace and salvation and the supreme author of safety and security" (S. 59:23). St Paul prayed for the believers that the God of peace would be with them (Rom 15:33) and said that "God is not a God of disorder but of peace" (1 Cor 14:33).

Furthermore, both Holy books call on believers to be peacemakers, drawing in this on the examples of their leaders and prophets, Muhammad and Jesus, who were people of peace. Table 2 shows close comparisons between the Qur'an and certain Hadiths regarding the peace-making characteristics of Muhammad and Jesus, and the call to be peacemakers in both the Qur'an and the New Testament.

In 1988, on the basis of this common concern for peace and the common expectation of peace-making between the two religions, Pope John Paul II reiterated the respect of the Church for Muslims, a respect that includes readiness to cooperate with them for the good of humanity and to search with them for peace and justice.¹⁶ Later, speaking to Islamic representatives in Assisi in 1993 and referring to the war-torn regions of the Balkans, he used these words, calling on the witness of Christianity and Islam to search for peace:

We stand in solidarity with these victims of oppression hatred and atrocities, with all those whose villages have been burned and bombed, with those who flee their own homes and seek refuge elsewhere, with those unjustly arrested and placed in camps. Both Christianity and Islam inculcate in us a commitment to persevere in the pursuit of justice and peace for them and all victims of conflict.¹⁷

Therefore, in response to the God who is peace, and in following the directives of the Prophet Muhammad and Jesus Christ, Muslims and Christians are united in their common vocation to be peacemakers, on family, neighbourhood, national and global levels.

¹⁵Address to a group of Christians, Jews and Muslims, Rome, February 26, 1986.

¹⁶Address to the new Ambassador of Nigeria, Rome, October 27, 1988.

¹⁷Address to the representatives of the European Islamic community, Assisi, January 10, 1993.

Table 2 Muhammad and Jesus and the requirement for their followers to be peacemakers.

The holy Qur'an	The New Testament
There was a dispute among the people of the tribe of Bani 'Amr bin' Auf. The Prophet went to them along with some of his companions in order to <i>make peace between them</i>	He came and <i>proclaimed peace</i> to you who were far off and peace to those who were near (Eph 2:17)
Once the people of Quba fought with each other till they threw stones on each other. When Allah's Apostle was informed about it, he said, "Let us go to <i>bring about a reconciliation between them</i> " (Sahih Hadith Bakhari, 3:49)	Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you
No good is there in most of their secret counsels except for him who exhorts to a deed of charity, or kind equitable dealing and honest affairs and <i>setting things right between people</i> (S. 4:114)	Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God (Mtt 5:8-10)
Do not make thoughtless oaths by God and do not in striving to keep your oaths, make Him a hindrance by your oaths to doing greater good, acting from piety and <i>making peace among people</i> (S. 2:224)	If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, <i>live peaceably with all</i> (Rom 12:18)
And their greeting to each other and from God and the angels will be <i>Peace</i> (S. 10:10)	Let us therefore <i>pursue what makes for peace</i> and for mutual upbuilding (Rom 14:19)
<i>Make peace between your brothers</i> and keep from disobedience from God (S. 49:10)	Agree with one another, <i>live in peace</i> and the God of love and peace will be with you (2 Cor 13:11)

Conclusion

I have argued that Muslims and Catholics are natural collaborators on social justice and peace issues because their common beliefs, their holy Books and their respective religious leaders (the prophet Muhammad and Jesus Christ) call them to this. It is relevant to conclude the arguments of this chapter with a quote from *A Common Word between Us and You* (13/10/2007), an open letter from leaders of Islam to leaders of Christianity:

Muslims and Christians together make up well over half of the world's population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians. The basis for this peace and understanding already exists. It is part of the very foundational principles of both faiths: love of the One God, and love of the neighbour. These principles are found over and over again in the sacred texts of Islam and Christianity. The Unity of God, the necessity of love for Him, and the necessity of love of the neighbour is thus the common ground between Islam and Christianity.

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