Introduction

Since the emergence of Islam as a religion with global presence, dialogue between Christians and Muslims can be found in the common history of the relationships between these religions along, of course, with other modalities ranging from tolerance and parallelism through to pressure and violence.

The focus of this chapter is not so much on the more general shape of Christian–Muslim relations as found in and between the historical societies informed by these religious traditions or on the theoretically interpretive or sociologically descriptive and analytical aspects of these relations which other chapters in this book discuss. Rather, it highlights contemporary examples of specific collective forms for this relationship as manifested particularly in terms of ‘intentional’ movements, organisations and initiatives as both constituted by and concerned with dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Reference is also made to some initiatives, organisations and movements that encompass Christian–Muslim dialogue within a broader set of relationships – and especially those that involve Muslims, Christians and Jews.

Space constraints dictate that what is described and discussed is necessarily selective but will hopefully be illustrative in grounding the chapter’s analysis and evaluative discussion in examples from across a number of contexts.

Geopolitical changes and Muslim–Christian dialogue developments

For the first half of the twentieth century Islam was often perceived as moribund in the western and predominantly Christian world, while the majority of scholars who were concerned with it specialised in linguistic and historical studies of its classical periods or had an approach shaped by Christian apologetics and missionary endeavour. But in reviewing Kenneth Cragg’s seminal 1956 book, The Call of the Minaret, the Muslim scholar M.D. Rahbar commented that it contained ‘little on the theme of the superiority of Christianity over Islam’, and that ‘this tolerance, not least
in its Muslim direction, doubtless owes much to political changes in the world’, noting that the book’s dust cover highlighted that, ‘the West and Communism compete for the favor of emergent Muslim nations’ (Rahbar 1958: 40).

The creation of the Muslim-majority state of Pakistan out of British Imperial India, together with the post-Second World War independence of a number of Muslim-majority Middle Eastern states as well as projects for nation building informed by Islam in countries such as Indonesia and also growing tensions connected with the creation of the state of Israel, both signalled and brought about a shift in relations between the West and the Muslim world (Cantwell Smith 1957).

In due course, and especially following the rise of OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Producing Countries), these diplomatic and international relations contexts combined also with the influence and effect of economics. With resistance to the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and revolution in Iran, violence aimed at achieving political change emerged as a key focus in Christian–Muslim dialogue. This reached its zenith after al-Qaeda’s 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, followed by the impact of growing violence from a range of Jihadist groups culminating in Daesh’s attempt to bring about a caliphate across the territories of Iraq and Syria. Thus the contemporary impetus for Christian and Muslim dialogue initiatives, movements and organisations has come about at least as much from contextual factors that have themselves also played a substantial part in the content of these initiatives, as compared with more internal considerations of religion or theology.

Initiatives in and from the predominantly Muslim world

A Pakistani initiative: Muslim–Christian Federation International

Pakistan has already been mentioned in connection with the geopolitical impact of the creation of a Muslim-majority state, which some have sought to make a theocratic one. From within this context, the Muslim–Christian Federation International (MCFI) has been an example of an organisation concerned with Muslim–Christian relations, in this instance initiated from the Muslim side and in a Muslim-majority state.

Its founding chair is Qazi Abdul Qadeer Khamosh. According to the MCFI’s website, www.mcfi-pk.org/ (accessed 27 March 2016), during the struggle for restoration of democracy from military rule in Pakistan he joined in discussions with Joseph Francis, secretary general of the National Christian Party Pakistan, around an idea ‘to bring the Christian and the Muslim communities closer for national prosperity and religious harmony’. Khamosh has also been president of the religio-political party Jamiat Ulema Ahle Hadith Pakistan and chair of the Islami Yekjehti Council Pakistan, an ‘alliance of Muslim parties of different schools of thought to fight against sectarianism and promote intra-faith harmony and mutual understanding’.

Khamosh argues that the founding father of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, did not, as some have claimed, espouse a theocratic vision. In consequence, the MCFI holds inclusive events such as those in connection with the 11th August Pakistani National Minorities Day. Thus, while the MCFI’s origins were particularly in Muslim–Christian relations and dialogue, in 2002 its work was extended to include Hindu, Sikh and other minorities, which are now all represented on its board.

However, in a way that underlines the complexity of Muslim–Christian relations in the context of wider ‘Western’ and ‘Muslim world’ relations, the MCFI webpage notes of Khamosh that, historically, he had ‘the honor of working with Saddam Hussain’s close aid and Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq Tariq Aziz (himself a Christian), the then Chairman of “Baghdad Conference”, a forum constituted for human service beyond all biases of religion, language and creed, with its
secretariat in Baghdad’. Following the death of Tariq Aziz during his indefinite imprisonment after the fall of Saddam Hussein, the MCFI’s Facebook page (accessed 10 June 2015) carried a message of ‘condolences and sympathies on behalf of the Muslim Christian Federation International (MCFI) to family of Tariq Aziz (Let) and the people of Iraq’.

A Lebanese initiative: Arab Group on Christian–Muslim Dialogue

This reference to Tariq Aziz, who came from a Chaldean Catholic family, underlines the long-standing but often complex presence and role of Christian minorities in the Middle East from the times of earliest Christianity, through the expansion of Islamic rule, the Crusades, the Ottoman Empire and the period of Western colonialism to the twentieth-century emergence of majority-Muslim states. Within this, Lebanon was, of course, for long a country with a politically strong Christian minority that, prior to the Lebanese civil war, held considerable political power. Working from within the very different Lebanon of today is the Arab Group on Christian–Muslim Dialogue. As stated on its website (www.agmcd.org/), this group is ‘based on the belief that peaceful coexistence between Muslim and Christian people is achievable’, and it also states that ‘The group’s central purpose is to achieve a society where, regardless of religious belief, people are entitled to freedom, justice and equality’.

The group works through a combination of publications, conferences, policy roundtables and grassroots level activities to try to secure peace in Lebanon and the wider Middle East. This includes activities in relation to Jordan and, more recently, Egypt, given the deteriorating relationships between Coptic Christians and Muslims there. A key part of its grassroots work is an annual summer camp for 18- to 30-year-olds to engage in shared activities intended to promote mutual learning and to build tolerance, out of which lasting friendships have been established in contexts where previously there has been mutual suspicion and sometimes hostility.

The Group stresses the importance of cooperation among Muslims and Christians to challenge religious extremism and terror violence that appeals to religion for its justification. It also works to prevent more divisions among Muslim traditions and groups and offers skills training to empower women to play a more important role in Muslim–Christian dialogue.

A Turkish initiative: Hizmet

Coming out of Turkey, a key part of the Muslim world that has never been colonised by western powers, is Hizmet, an Islamically inspired movement that has grown up around the teachings, example and influence of the Turkish Muslim religious scholar Muhammad Fethullah Gülen. It originally spread to the Central Asian Turkic republics of the former Soviet Union, but it can now be found in most parts of the world. Broadly speaking, Hizmet reflects a commitment to education, humanitarian service and dialogue, although these are differently emphasised and refracted according to the local conditions of the countries in which the movement’s activities have developed (see Barton et al. 2013; Çelik et al. 2015). Thus, in the Netherlands, in connection with Hizmet organisations and activities one can find Christian–Muslim dialogues around the scriptures of a kind that is not generally found in the UK.

In the UK the London-based Dialogue Society was founded in 1999 (www.dialoguesociety.org). Its name signals its broadly inclusive intent, with regard to both the nature of the organisation (it does not portray itself as an Islamic organisation) and the focus of its activity (the focus is not interreligious or even intercultural dialogue, though these activities are not excluded). Thus not only Muslims and Christians but also atheists are involved in its work and are members of its board of advisors.
The Society now organises its work around three main fields: the academic field, community field and policy outreach. It has initiated a number of projects intended to develop dialogue studies as a distinctive field of study and practice. These include the establishment of an MA in dialogue studies with the University of Keele, the publication of two books on dialogue theories (Sleap et al. 2013, 2016, forthcoming) and the foundation of the *Journal of Dialogue Studies* in 2013 (www.dialoguesociety.org/publications/academia/829-journal-of-dialogue-studies.html).

**Social changes in the Western world and Christian–Muslim dialogue**

Coupled with the impact on Christian–Muslim dialogue of the geopolitical political changes in the Two-Thirds World to work in the countries of the former colonial powers. This resulted in Britain, France and the Netherlands receiving substantial numbers of migrants of non-Christian backgrounds, including substantial numbers of Muslims, while Muslim Turks migrated to contribute to the then-West Germany’s postwar ‘economic miracle’.

Prior to these migrations, people in wider western societies had little opportunity to encounter Islam or to meet Muslims in person. Perhaps ironically it was often former Christian missionaries who had worked in predominantly Muslim countries who played an early and significant role in helping western societies and Christians within them to come to terms with the new opportunities and challenges presented by a more multireligious social reality. For example Wilfred Cantwell Smith points out that, ‘[Kenneth] Cragg began as a Christian missionary among Muslims. He became, quickly and powerfully, a spokesman for Muslims to his fellow Christians’ (Cantwell Smith 1969: 305). In this post-World War II period, as more broadly expressed by the scholar of comparative religion, Trevor Ling:

> one does not properly understand the religion of one’s Pakistani immigrant neighbour if one attends only to the rise of Islam in the seventh century in Mecca and Medina. The modern Pakistani Muslim is heir also to centuries of tradition which have moulded the Islamic tradition of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and have provided him with his present cultural and religious heritage.  

*Ling 1967: 161*

**A British initiative: The Christian–Muslim Forum**

The role of societal change in contributing to the development of specific Christian–Muslim initiatives can be seen in aspects of the historical origin of the Christian Muslim Forum (CMF) in Britain, founded in 2006 (http://christianmuslimforum.org/). The Forum has achieved a significant and trusted role in Christian–Muslim dialogue. It is composed of presidents, specialist members and scholar-consultants and involves Sunnī, Shi‘a, Deobandi, Barelwi, Sufi, Anglican, Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Coptic Orthodox, Pentecostal and Evangelical participants.

Contributing to the origins of the Forum was a small group of Muslims and Christians who worked together on the so-called Initiative in Christian–Muslim Relations that grew out of comments made in 1997 by the then-Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, who (as quoted on the Forum’s website) argued that: ‘For the sake of the health of this country, we need to find ways in which members of our two communities can meet regularly together in a more structured way than has been possible up to now’. This resulted between 2001 and 2004 in a so-called ‘Listening Exercise’, a final report of which was published in 2004 (Planning Group 2004).
A second historic source for the Forum was a series of themed engagements on ‘Faith and Society’ organised by a small group of Christians and Muslims following the 1998 publication of the book *Faith and power: Christianity and Islam in ‘secular’ Britain* (Newbigin et al. 1998). Associated conferences were held at the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity and the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, and a number of those involved in planning these were later also drawn into planning the Archbishop’s Initiative in Christian–Muslim Relations. As explained on the Forum’s website, this loose network of people was, in many ways, ‘a prototype of the Christian Muslim Forum, being based on relationships of trust and focusing on key issues’.

**A German initiative: Christlich–Islamische Gesellschaft**

An example of a national level Christian–Muslim initiative from another European country is that of the Christlich–Islamische Gesellschaft e.V (Christian-Islamic Society), which was founded in 1972 (www.chrislages.de/). The CIG is a founding member of the Koordinierungsrat des Christlich–Islamischen Dialogs in Deutschland (Coordinating Council of the Christian–Muslim Dialogue in Germany) and is a registered not-for-profit organisation based on individual membership. Its purpose is to promote understanding, dialogue and coexistence between Christian and Muslim women and men and Christian churches and Muslim communities of different religious and secular backgrounds. Its website states, ‘Our goal is the positive equality of religious communities in Germany, Europe and in the world community’, and ‘We therefore call for the recognition of mutual legitimate claims of religious communities and individual believers in Germany and abroad’.

Early in its existence it organised Christian–Muslim Dialogue Weeks, although these could not be sustained. However, an important and continuing project initiated by the Society is the Christian-Islamic Forum, started in 2000 in North Rhine-Westphalia (www.chrislages.de/pdf/CIG_CIF.pdf). This meets three to four times a year as a networking group for people with responsibilities in Christian and Muslim institutions in North Rhine-Westphalia, including participants from the two Protestant Landeskirchen and the five Catholic dioceses, together with three mosque associations and six Islamic groups. Its longevity means that it has developed sufficient openness and trust to be a space within which challenging questions of social and interreligious coexistence can be discussed.

**Beyond Europe: The National Muslim–Christian Initiative in the US**

The US has a Muslim minority with a very different social and economic profile from those found in Europe and is a country that has been in a profound state of societal shock since the events of 9/11. Coming out of three decades of relationship-building between Christian communities connected through the National Council of Churches in the USA and Muslim organisations, the National Muslim–Christian Initiative (NMCI) was founded in 2008. The NMCI was inspired by mutual concerns over misrepresentations of Islam and stereotypes of Muslims in North America but also by *A Common Word between us and you*, the open letter originally addressed by 138 leading Muslim scholars and intellectuals to leaders of the Christian Churches (www.acommonword.com/), and the global impetus for dialogue that ensued from engagement with that (Various 2012).

The Initiative’s mission statement set out that: ‘We, from various streams of Muslim and Christian communities, seek to enhance mutual understanding, respect, appreciation and support of what is Sacred for each other through dialogue, education and sustained visible encounters.'
that foster and nurture relationships’. However, the initiative fell into inactivity until revived by a March 2011 meeting in New York that was sponsored by the National Council of Churches and the then-recently formed Muslim umbrella group, the United States Council of Muslim Organizations. This meeting, which involved around 40 senior Christian and Muslim leaders, focused on ‘discussion of Islamophobia in the US and religious extremist ideology abroad’, and it included a public evening programme on the theme of religious freedom in relation to respect for what others hold sacred.

In two of the four examples cited here (that of the MCFI and the Dialogue Society – both of which were initiated from the Muslim side) the dialogical agenda, while beginning with Muslim–Christian relations, has developed beyond those alone. In the case of the MCFI, it was to engage also with other religions; and in the case of Hizmet to dialogue beyond the religions. In connection with this it is important to remember that Christian–Muslim dialogue has also been conducted in forums that from the beginning were intended to be trilateral or multilateral, with the trilateral forums in particular also including Jews.

**Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe**

In Europe, one example of such a trilateral forum has been the longstanding Jews, Christians and Muslims (JCM) in Europe initiative (www.jcm-europe.org/englisch/), the conferences of which originally met regularly in Bendorf, Germany, but now meet in Wuppertal. Among JCM’s key sponsors have been the Leo Baeck College Centre of Jewish Education in London, the Deutsche Muslim-Liga in Bonn, the Bendorfer Forum e.V., the Ökumenische Werkstatt Wuppertal and the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations at the University of Birmingham. JCM does not seek to make common statements or resolutions. Rather its week-long conferences include a programme of lectures, debate in small discussion groups and creative work including art and drama, shared meditation, textual studies and religious celebrations into which those present are invited to participate as far as they feel able. Thus it engages with the challenges faced by all three religions, exploring similarities, building acceptance of differences and encouraging participants to take their experiences from these weeks back into the ordinary lives of their communities and groups.

**International Council for Christians and Jews/International Abrahamic Forum**

More recently, and coming out of a bilateral dialogue between Jews and Christians, the longstanding International Council for Christians and Jews (www.iccj.org/) has facilitated the development of an International Abrahamic Forum (www.iccj.org/Abrahamic-Forum.3410.0.html). According to its website this is ‘an expression of the ICCJ’s renewed commitment to the Jewish–Christian–Muslim dialogue’ that builds on a previous initiative taken in the ICCJ’s Annual General Meeting in 1995. At that meeting the ICCJ had decided to set up an ‘Abrahamic Forum’ in order ‘to contribute from the most successful experience gathered in many years of Christian–Jewish dialogue to the trilateral field of Jewish–Christian–Muslim dialogue.’

The 2010 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the ICCJ, held in Istanbul, called for the revival of the Abrahamic Forum and, during the ICCJ’s AGM in Krakow in July 2011, a steering committee was appointed, with Rabbi Ehud Bandel and Dr Mustafa Baig as co-chairs and Francesca Frazer as project co-ordinator. The forum contributed workshops to the ICCJ conference in Manchester in June 2012 and held its own first public conference in June 2013 in Aix-en-Provence, with over 40 participants.
Dialogue initiatives

The Three Faiths Forum

Similar trilateral initiatives can also be found on national levels including, for example, in the UK the Three Faiths Forum (www.3ff.org.uk/), which was founded in 1997 by the Jew Sir Sigmund Sternberg, the Muslim Zaki Badawi and the Christian Marcus Braybrooke ‘to encourage friendship, goodwill and understanding between people of different faiths, especially between Muslims, Christians and Jews’, and with a focus on leaders from these communities. However, as it has later evolved, and as explained on its website, it no longer works only with leaders, and while ‘Using our experience from years of creating better relations between the three faiths, we now work with people of all faiths and beliefs’ – now working under the name 3FF.

Scriptural Reasoning Society

The Scriptural Reasoning Society is a network of a range of local groups in universities, religious seminaries and synagogues, churches, temples and mosques in the UK that are dedicated to ‘Scriptural Reasoning’, understood as the shared reading of their sacred scriptures by Jews, Christians, Muslims and others (www.scripturalreasoning.org.uk/). Its approach to reading sacred texts in community does not pretend to reach a consensus between what are often divergent religious teachings and practices but rather to understand disagreements more deeply through scriptural study and to ‘build friendships’ out of ‘better quality disagreement’ facilitated through its ‘Oxford Ethic’ (www.scripturalreasoning.org.uk/oxford_ethic.pdf) and the ‘Scriptural Reasoning Covenant’ (www.scripturalreasoning.org.uk/scriptural_reasoning_covenant.pdf).

In 2007, senior Islamic authorities at the Shari’a Court of the London Central Mosque issued a fatwā (www.scripturalreasoning.org.uk/fatwa_english.pdf) sanctioning the participation by Muslims in Scriptural Reasoning. As articulated on its website, Scriptural Reasoning sees itself as supporting ‘a free, democratic and egalitarian practice, which maintains scrupulous parity between all participating faiths and traditions in SR at all times, and in all respects’. It also claims to ‘read our sacred texts for the sake of God alone, never instrumentalised or commodified as part of any government or other agenda of interference in faith communities’ under the motto of ‘three scriptures on the table, no agendas under the table’.

Educational settings for Christian–Muslim dialogue

Different social, geographical and political contexts bring an asymmetry of power not only to the context for Muslim and Christian dialogue but also to its content. While they themselves are also embedded in political, cultural and socio-religious power structures, it is arguable that educational settings and processes can at least contribute to the modification of such asymmetry. Thus, in the Western world, even before the substantial religio-demographic changes that took place consequent upon mass migration, people of other than Christian and Jewish religion had been present in universities as international students. Because of this, a number of university settings became early arenas for multireligious living and dialogue, including between Christians and Muslims.

Of this period in the UK, J.B. Taylor recalled: ‘My first experience of more formal dialogue was with the Muslim Student Society in Cambridge University; the Muslims took the initiative in inviting Christians to discuss spiritual issues with them. We met fortnightly and there was good response from both sides’ (Taylor 1967: 151), and Taylor notes that similar groups were started in many other British universities under the aegis of the Student Christian Movement. In
time, opportunities were developed for Christians to study other faiths in consciously interreligious institutions and, as Taylor said, these were places

[where Christian students engage in Islamic studies and live and work with Muslims who are following the same curriculum, as at McGill University, and increasingly, we hope, at Selly Oak, there are excellent opportunities for profound inter-religious dialogue. The Christian learns to write and speak bearing in mind a Muslim audience, while the Muslim tackles more seriously the problem of communication with the Christian. As friendships deepen, there can be a real sense of uninhibited concern for each other; Muslims will speak quite naturally of praying for their Christian friends and vice-versa.

(Taylor 1967: 151–2).

**The Center for Muslim–Christian Understanding, Georgetown University**

One example of such an educational setting with an international profile is the Center for Muslim–Christian Understanding (CMCU) based at Georgetown University in the US (https://acmcu.georgetown.edu/). This was founded in 1993 through an agreement between the Fondation pour L’Entente entre Chretiens et Musulmans, Geneva (which no longer exists, but was funded by a prominent Palestinian businessman, Hasib Sabagh) and Georgetown University.

The Center’s mission has been to improve relations between the Muslim world and the West and to enhance understanding of Muslims in the West. In 2005 it received a substantial gift (the second largest ever in the University’s history) from HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal in order to support and expand the work of what became a renamed Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim Christian Understanding.

**Project for the Study of Love in Religion**

A recent outworking of the Common Word process in the UK is the development of the Love Project (Fiddes 2015), hosted by Regent’s Park College, a Baptist foundation in the University of Oxford, under the auspices of the College’s Oxford Centre for Christianity and Culture. Among the Christian leaders and bodies that engaged with the Common Word process were key people from within the Baptist World Alliance, among whom were Paul Fiddes, a Baptist minister and Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of Oxford.

Within the overall project, funds to endow in perpetuity the HM King Abdullah II ibn al-Hussein of Jordan Fellowship for the Study of Love in Religion came from the Royal Ahl Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Jordan and from the king himself, facilitated by HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal of Jordan (the original author of *A Common Word* and Personal Envoy and Special Advisor on Religious and Cultural Affairs to the King of Jordan) and from his brother, King Abdullah of Jordan. This fellowship will be held alternately by Christian and Muslim scholars for periods of five years, and is intended to be part of, and contribute to, a wider project on the theme of love in which research colloquia are planned and in which graduate students conducting research on love in religion are to be supported.

**An unexpected example: Dubai Muslim and Christian Dialogues**

The non-Muslim population of the Gulf States is, generally speaking, restricted to migrant workers. So Dubai might not seem the most likely location for the nurturing of dialogue between Muslims and Christians. However, engaging with both Muslims and Christians in the University
of Wollongong in Dubai while also digitally extending around the world has been the Dubai Muslim and Christian Dialogues and its associated website (http://muslimchristiandialogue.org/about). Working with the Christian Fellowship Club of Wollongong in Dubai, its website offers resources, including downloadable English and Arabic texts of both the Qur’ān and the Bible. However, it also recommends as ‘best of all’ to ‘find a friend who is of the other faith and start asking questions’, and to ‘Remember, be a good listener when they answer’.

The origins of this initiative were in a spring 2005 conference of 120 students convened to discuss the differences between Islam and Christianity, about which the organisers claimed ‘Never before had there been a public dialogue on this topic on the Arabian Peninsula that was organized by both Christian and Muslim representatives’ – in this case students. The 2007 dialogue was on ‘Who is Christ Christ?’, the 2009 dialogue on ‘Who is God and how are we saved?’ and the 2011 dialogue on ‘How can we find forgiveness from a holy God?’, while the 2013 dialogue on the same theme was also partnered by Child Care and Islamic Affairs, an Islamically inspired welfare organisation based in Kerala, India (http://cciaintl.com/). The website states that students’ lives were changed by the event, including that one ‘decided to become a Muslim apologist. Others set out into Christian ministry. Many others learned to dialogue peacefully that day and are still in conversation with their friends of different faiths’.

In a 3 May 2015 posting the initiative’s Facebook page notes that permission had not been given for an originally planned sixth event in the series, due to have taken place on 21 May 2015 on the theme of ‘Who is Jesus and what was his message?’, and that the event had therefore had to be ‘indefinitely postponed’ (www.facebook.com/The-Dubai-Muslim-Christian-Dialogues-114881385267661/?fref=nf). The explanation given was that for the first time ever ‘Authorities in Dubai have required approval from the Dubai Islamic Affairs Department in order to hold the dialogue in the freezone known as Knowledge Village’ and that it had not proved possible to either secure Islamic Affairs approval or patronage or to find another location that would host the dialogue, although ‘We believe the Dialogue is in line with the vision of the rulers of the UAE who have repeatedly called for interfaith Dialogue’.

**Some considerations arising**

The social and religious implications of a globalising world can no longer be ignored by either Muslims or Christians. Questions about and arising from interreligious dialogue are now with us all in a thoroughly existential way. New forms of ancient tensions and conflicts have developed, but also new dialogical projects have been stimulated that engage not only with the shared history and sacred scriptures of Islam and Christianity but also with the contemporary and lived realities among people who are neighbours and fellow citizens.

Writing with particular reference to Christian–Muslim relationships (although arguably of relevance to interfaith relationships in general), the Anglican bishop and theologian Kenneth Cragg advocated the critical importance of dialogical practice in multifarious forms on the basis that: ‘The contemporary relationship of faiths is a “doing” that is looking for “knowledge”, aware that the knowledge that may finally justify the doing can be had in no other way. Like Peter in the house of Cornelius, we may feel at once both compelled and compromised in being where we are’ (Cragg 1975: 117).

In parts of the world where social mixing has not yet been so great, educational initiatives can provide both an impetus and contexts for dialogical engagement. In addition, with the ‘annihilation of distance’ that the historian Arnold Toynbee (1958: 36) spoke of as being a feature of the modern world having been taken to a further level of digital meaning and implication, accessibility to the ‘other’ and engagement in dialogue is, at least in principle, no longer restricted by the contingencies of geographical proximity and opportunity.
References


Further reading


