



Ethics of the Cooperation between Islam and Christianity Based on Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) Model of Dialogue and Second Vatican Council



Taher Amini Golestani¹ 

Received: 2024/05/29 • Revised: 2024/07/05 • Accepted: 2024/08/01 • Available Online: 2025/01/10

Abstract

Today, one important method for overcoming interfaith conflicts is the analysis of historical documents, which can provide a model or a way to prevent future conflicts. This article aims to focus on two significant historical documents that hold promise for improvement and progress among the followers of two major Abrahamic religions: Islam and Christianity. These two historical documents are "The Prophet Muhammad's Letter to the Christians of Saint Catherine's Monastery in North Egypt" and the declaration of the Second Vatican Council, also known as *Nostra Aetate*, which addresses the declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions from the Vatican's perspective. It appears that the comparison of these two important documents is being undertaken for the first time in this article, seeking to emphasize a

1. Founder and President of International Institute for Peace and Religions (IIPR.IR).
t.amini@iipr.ir

* Amini Golestani, T. (2025). Ethics of the Cooperation between Islam and Christianity Based on Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) Model of Dialogue and Second Vatican Council. *Theosophia Islamica*, 5(1), pp. 112-152.
<https://doi.org/10.22081/JTI.2025.72157.1095>

Article Type: Research; Publisher: Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy

© 2025

"authors retain the copyright and full publishing rights"



<http://jti.isca.ac.ir>

positive impact among the followers of these two religions, which constitute more than half of the world's population. The research method of this article is based on exploratory, thematic, and descriptive study relying on library research.

Keywords

Ethics, Islam, Christianity, dialogue, prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Second Vatican Council.

Introduction

The past decade's history is filled with examples of human suffering and conflict, which can be attributed to some religious individuals' misunderstanding of religion's role in their lives. However, in any effort to achieve peace and social justice among the world's people, religion cannot be overlooked. Contrary to the predictions of Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, and other Enlightenment theorists who viewed religion as a crutch that would be cast aside with the advancement of scientific knowledge, religion has not only failed to disappear but has also maintained its position. Among just the two main religions discussed in this article (Christianity and Islam), over three billion people still shape their lives (with varying degrees of depth and commitment) around the meaning they find in Christ or the Quran. This reality demonstrates that religion, despite its challenges and misunderstandings, remains a massive and influential force in the lives of a large portion of the world's population¹.

Islam and Christianity are two of the most populous and influential world religions today. These two faiths share many commonalities. Most importantly, they both trace their lineage back to a common ancestor, Abraham, who is considered the spiritual father of these religions, hence their designation as Abrahamic religions. Given this, it's essential for any religious person within these two faiths to strive for greater proximity, especially considering the world's current challenging and tense situation, including the potential for a Third World War. This perspective has drawn many scholars to the subject, highlighting significant reasons for Christian theology to engage with Islamic theology and doctrines. These efforts stem from a desire for deeper insight and the belief that Christianity and Islam

1. Richard H. Morgan, Professor, School of Social Welfare, Stony Brook University.

have much to say to each other. Relevant issues include the conception of God, the God-human relationship, and the formation of religious identity. Dialogue, or peaceful negotiation, is the path recommended by Islam. Islam is founded on the principle of dawah (invitation), which is another term for peaceful negotiation, clearly indicating that violence is completely forbidden in Islam. The Prophet of Islam (PBUH) began his mission—to communicate his ideology to people—by conversing with them, listening to their objections, and trying to convince them of his viewpoint through arguments. In a situation where many people are under the impression that Muslims are close-minded and unwilling to engage in discussions with people of other faiths, dialogue and effective communication based on tolerance, respect, and love are highly constructive. This is particularly true given that the Holy Quran provides very clear guidelines and encouragement for Muslims to participate in interfaith dialogue.

So, as one conflict resolution, for Christians and Muslims in particular, it would seem that there is much room and much need for this kind of dialogue to come to a better mutual understanding and appreciation as demonstrated in Küng's¹ review of the foundations of each faith in his demonstration as follows:

- No peace among the nations without peace among the religions.
- No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions.
- No dialogue between the religions without investigation of the foundations of the religions. (Küng, 2007: p. xxiii).
- And there will be no life on the earth without Global Ethics

1. Richard H. Morgan, Professor, School of Social Welfare, Stony Brook University.

Starting this process of dialogue from the point of view of a Global Ethic or from the mutual concern for social justice and the promotion of peace seems like a particularly important place to begin because it allows the dialogue to occur between the two faiths at many levels. Accordingly, this essay brings about two important evidences from Islam and Christianity to shed light on the foundation of conflict resolution and peacemaking found in the texts to seek approximation.

The main questions of this article are: "Do historical documents exist to pave the way for interfaith dialogue?" and "Is the ethics of dialogue between Islam and Christianity acceptable based on historical examples?"

The research methods employed in the initial stages of a research project, namely exploratory research and library studies, are utilized when there is limited or scarce existing information or knowledge about a subject. This is a dynamic and flexible approach aimed at gaining insights, discovering trends, and generating initial hypotheses. The examination of the Prophet Muhammad's Letter will also be conducted based on a thematic analysis approach, which can reveal more practical results.

1. Letter of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Among the letters and treaties sent by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to various leaders, places, and kings, there is a letter addressed to the bishops and Christians of Saint Catherine's Monastery. Based on this letter or covenant, which was written by Imam Ali (AS) on the third day of Muharram in the second year of the Hijra (623 AD) in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina and sealed with the Prophet's (PBUH) seal, one can discern the spirit of ethics, peace-seeking, and the Prophet's dialogue-based way of life. This document, in turn, is considered a masterpiece in defending the rights of religious

minorities. This letter is one of the most documented manifestations of peace, recognized by Muslims, Christians, and Jews, and its original copy is still preserved in the monastery. The text of the letter is as follows:

The Charter of Prophet Muhammad with the Christians of Saint Catherine's Monastery

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

This is a covenant written by Muhammad ibn Abdullah, the Messenger of God, for all Christians. This letter is written by Muhammad ibn Abdullah for all people, to give them glad tidings and to warn them, so that after the Prophet, people will have no argument against God. And God is Almighty and Wise. He wrote this letter for the people of his nation and for everyone who is Christian, whether in the East or West of the world, whether far or near, whether an eloquent Arab or a non-Arab, whether known or unknown. This letter is a covenant for them, and whoever breaks this covenant, and opposes it, and transgresses what has been commanded, has certainly broken the covenant of God, trampled upon the covenant of God, mocked the religion of God, and is deserving of a curse; whether they be rulers or believing Muslims. What is for the Christians is like what is for me, my relatives, my nation, and my friends; they are like my family and my protected people (Ahl al-Dhimmah). We forbid any harm or abuse against them. Therefore, no bishop shall be asked to change his bishopric; no monk shall be forced to abandon his monasticism. Whoever is in a monastery shall remain; whoever is traveling may return. None of their church buildings and places of worship shall be destroyed; nothing belonging to the churches shall be brought into the mosque building and the homes of Muslims. Whoever does so has broken the covenant of God and opposed His Prophet. There shall be no

jizya (poll tax) nor tribute for monks and bishops; and I shall protect them wherever they are; on land or in the desert, in the East or West, in the South or North, they are under my protection and my covenant, and are safe from all evil. Similarly, whoever worships in the mountains or holy places shall also be protected, and do not take tribute or zakat from their produce; do not dispute with them except in the best manner. Whoever opposes the covenant of God and acts contrary to it, has opposed the covenant of God and opposed the Messenger of God. No one who remains steadfast until the end of the world shall oppose this promise until the end of the world.

The history indicates that several important companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), such as Abu Bakr ibn Abi Quhafah, Umar bin Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, Abu Darda, Abdullah bin Masoud, Abbas bin Abdulmutallib, Zubair bin Awam, Talha bin Abdullah, Saad bin Muaz, Saad bin Ubadah, Thabit bin Nafis, and Zaid bin Thabit, witnessed this letter. This demonstrates that the letter is well-documented (Taheri Akerdi, 2009, p. 72).

It's also reported that the original copy of this agreement, which could be termed the first international treaty, was obtained by Ottoman Sultan Selim and is currently preserved at Saint Catherine's Monastery in Egypt. This treaty has been published on several occasions and in various languages, including in Paris in 1630 AD in Arabic with a Latin translation. It was also published in London in 1655 in Arabic and Latin, and in Egypt on 28 Shawwal 1298 AH (corresponding to September 22, 1881 AD). (Ahmadi Mianji, 1419 AH, Vol. 3, pp. 757-762)

This covenant stands as the first model and historical document of prophetic dialogue, and it is considered one of the most prominent testimonies to the peace-seeking spirit of the Messenger of God (PBUH), which was rooted in dialogue. The serious pursuit of

this letter by international organizations in Islamic countries is strongly anticipated.

1-1. Recipients of the Letter

Regarding which group of Christians this letter was addressed to, there are two well-known possibilities:

1- The Christians of Najran: One possibility is that this letter was addressed to the Christians of Najran in southern Arabia. The Christians of Najran were initially idol worshipers. However, before the advent of Islam, they converted to Christianity through the invitation and miracles of Faymiyun, who was an important Christian leader at that time. They also remained Christian throughout the Prophet's (PBUH) lifetime.

2- Christians of Saint Catherine's Monastery: The second possibility is that this letter was addressed to the bishops and monks residing in Saint Catherine's Monastery in southern Egypt, written near Mount Sinai. Based on the research conducted, it appears that the letter in question is more consistent with the second recipient. In any case, the important point about this letter is that it was a letter of trust requested by the custodians of Saint Catherine's Monastery from the Prophet (PBUH); therefore, the content of the covenant also confirms this.

1-2. Analyzing the Contents of the Letter

To more accurately analyze the provisions of this covenant, it's essential to examine its key terms. This can open a window for drawing conclusions and adapting a model for interactive communication between Islam and Christianity. The examination of this covenant will be conducted using a thematic analysis approach, which can yield more practical and applicable results.

This method, one of the most common approaches to qualitative content analysis, first extracts the main content and theme of each phrase in the letter that contains a core message, in accordance with the research method. Then, by bringing these themes together, the main topics are formed, and their interconnected network is mapped by referencing other propositions present in the text of the covenant.

In this agreement, all seven principles (7 Cs) of effective communication are observable. These are:

1. Clear
2. Concise
3. Concrete
4. Correct
5. Coherent
6. Complete
7. Courteous

This means that by examining the content and themes present in this letter from the perspective of these seven principles of effective communication, it becomes entirely clear that, firstly, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) expressed his promises in a clear and unambiguous manner. Precision in word choice and their consistency with general Christian expressions is evident. Furthermore, the meaning of the themes and words is completely consistent and coherent with the verses of the Quran. The form of address is also entirely polite, encompassing all aspects of effective communication.

1-3. The Principle of Perpetuity of the Contract

The first and last sentences of this covenant/letter are decisive,

and the reasons for this are as follows:

After beginning the letter with the name of God and mentioning His attributes of mercy and compassion, this letter was not exclusively addressed to a specific group of Christians. Instead, its scope was extended to all Christians. This is significant, especially considering that only a specific number of individuals had requested a letter of protection from the Prophet (PBUH).

This is the covenant that Muhammad bin Abdullah - the Messenger of God - wrote for all Christians.¹

As also emphasized at the end of the letter, this covenant is considered enduring and alive until the Day of Judgment. Therefore, this agreement remains valid for Christians until the Day of Resurrection, and its observance is obligatory for all Muslims—whether Arab or non-Arab, noble or captive, rich or poor. Violating this covenant is considered a breach of the covenant and agreement with God:

Any person is alive until the end of this world; should not oppose this promise until the end of the world.²

The result is that the generality of the letter and its perpetuity or eternity are the two main themes of the first and last sentences, which have also attracted the attention of Christians.

One of the most important rules of effective communication is to take the lead in communication in order to gain confidence. Pioneering in sending this covenant to Christians shows prophet's high spirit regarding his mercy to the worlds. The principle of immortality and indisputability of the contents of the letter also fully indicates its

1. Part of the letter

2. Part of the letter

universality. The eternality of the letter speaks of the foresight of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and as if he knew one day terrorist groups in the name of Islam would come to divide and tarnish the image of Islam by assaulting Christians, so he expressed the contents of the letter with great concern, so that first of all, there was a dispute in interaction between the Islamic Ummah¹ and Christians, and secondly, since they are people of the book and under the responsibility of Islam, their blood should be respected and protected.

1-4. The Principle of the International Treaty of This Agreement

One of the main themes of this covenant, after its unique characteristic of permanence, is its nature as a formal international agreement. A crucial point at the beginning of the letter is the interpretation of the word "ahd" or "covenant," which distinguishes it from merely a letter that typically conveys news or an invitation. When a covenant is made, it becomes legally binding and enters the realm of treaties. Since the provisions of this treaty are international in nature, it can be considered one of the first international treaties in history, concluded 14 centuries ago. This can be a source of pride for Muslims as a manifestation of peace. This covenant is, in fact, considered one of the first international treaties and human rights charters.

Since the word "Peymān" (پیمان), translated here as "treaty" or "covenant," is the infinitive form of a verb in Persian, it effectively conveys the meaning of mutual participation and action by both

1. Ummah is an Arabic word meaning Muslim identity, nation, religious community or the concept of a Commonwealth of the Muslim Believers (أمة المؤمنين ummat al-muminīn)

parties. Therefore, "Peymān" can be understood to mean a bilateral agreement, a mutual vow, or similar concepts, as defined by lexicographers. This aligns with the meaning of the Arabic word "'ahd" (عهد), which has been translated here as "covenant" or "treaty."

1-5. The Principle of Evangelism and Warning (Good News and Admonition) in the Covenant

According to the content of the covenant, its message is both evangelistic (bearing good news) and admonitory (warning). The good news and praise are for Muslims who act upon the covenant of peace and friendship; they will receive its reward. Conversely, this covenant warns against violating its provisions, as its breach is considered a mockery of the agreement, and the violator will be deserving of divine punishment and retribution. Qur'an addresses Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

We sent you with the truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner,
(Fatir: 24)

According to the verse, it seems that the tone of the verse is as warning, that O Prophet! Do your duties; if they accept they will be in the right path; and if they mocked your words, God is powerful and wise in their punishment.

1-6. The Principle of non-excusibility and Inviolability

Another important theme of this agreement is its non-excusibility; therefore, any attempt to violate this agreement is not allowed. This means that from the legal point of view, as it was said,

this is considered an international treaty, and from the Shari'a¹, jurisprudence and even moral point of view, violating this covenant is considered a crime and a sin because it is also an individual attempt to commit a crime. It is also considered social crime because it distorts the image of Islam. The main question in this section is why the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was so worried about the transgression of this agreement. It seems that the foresight of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) proved that he was aware of the situation that will plague the Islamic society in the future and religious and minority massacres will take place. Therefore, they emphasize the importance of loyalty to this letter.

1-7. The Divinely Curse on the Transgressor of the Agreement

In another phrase of the contract, it is stated as follows:

Whoever breaks the covenant in it, and opposes it, and transgresses what was ordered; Indeed, he has broken God's covenant, violated God's covenant, and mocked God's religion, and he deserves a curse.²

It's noteworthy that this clause of the agreement is repeated three times in the text, and each time, its violation is equated with trampling on the divine covenant and mocking God's religion. The inclusion of such strong warnings seems to indicate the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) concerns. These concerns might have stemmed from the conditions or events of that time, or even from the future (our present world), where such covenants are continually violated.

1. Sharia الشريعة is the fundamental religious concept of Islam—namely, its law. The religious law of Islam is seen as the expression of God's command.

2. Part of the letter

Yes, absolutely. History is indeed full of events that clearly demonstrate the reasons for the Prophet's (PBUH) concerns. Whether it was during the time of some caliphs, which led to the expulsion of Christians from Islamic lands, or the Crusades, which lasted for about 200 years, or insults directed at priests or churches and similar incidents. All these events led to reciprocal behaviors and ultimately created an anti-interactive atmosphere between Muslims and Christians.

It seems that if the followers of all religions throughout history had benefited from this prophetic example and His Holiness's human rights declaration, the history of humanity would not have witnessed so many massacres and genocides. Therefore, an examination of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) practical life clearly demonstrates the right of the People of the Book to reside in Hijaz and, generally, in other Islamic lands.

1-8. The Principle of Inclusiveness and Religious Contiguity in the Agreement

In a paragraph of this contract, it is stated as follows:

He writes this letter for the people of his nation, and for everyone who is a Christian in the east or west of the world - whether he is far or near, whether he is an eloquent Arab or a stranger, whether he is known or unknown - this letter is a covenant for them.¹

In light of these provisions, the temporal, linguistic, spatial, and human inclusivity in the covenant and trust expressed by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is completely evident. This means that all Christians fall under the responsibility of the Prophet (PBUH) and

1. Part of the letter

the banner of Islam. This covenant is not specific to a particular sect or denomination of Christians, in a particular region or using a specific language, nor does it encompass a distinct nationality. Therefore, physical proximity is not the criterion; rather, intellectual and ideological proximity is what matters.

Therefore, this section of the covenant represents an important chapter of human rights from the perspective of Islamic civilization. It carries an anti-racism message and supports the message of human rights and the rights of religious minorities.

This is precisely the model that Muslims today present in contrast to Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory, and even Fukuyama's "End of History" theory; a model deeply rooted in Islamic history.

This analogy demonstrates that in today's world, where we often witness media wars, propaganda, indoctrination, and deceptions that in some ways lead to the formation of a specific type of globalization based on strategic goals (both long-term and short-term), we can, in contrast, theorize a culture and civilization that moves towards a world full of justice and spirituality by highlighting the Prophetic interactive and humanitarian model. This is precisely what pure human natures throughout history have longed for.

Another aspect of this inclusivity is its governmental dimension. This means that even rulers, who hold legal and official power and responsibility, are on equal footing with ordinary individuals. They do not have the right to coerce in their interactions with minorities; rather, their responsibility in this regard is even greater.

Considering such a foundation, the famous saying of Amir al-Mu'minin Imam Ali (AS), the first infallible Imam of the Shi'ites, comes to mind. Fourteen centuries ago, in a letter to Malik al-Ashtar

al-Nakha'i, his governor whom he was sending to Egypt, he stated:

«إِنَّهُمْ صِنْفَانِ إِمَّا أَخٌ لَكَ فِي الدِّينِ وَإِمَّا نَظِيرٌ لَكَ فِي الْخَلْقِ»؛

There are two types of people: either they are your religious brothers, or they are human beings and in terms of creation, they are the same as you (Nahj al-Balagha: letter 53).

Therefore, the theme of temporal, spatial and human inclusiveness along with the theme of religious and intellectual proximity instead of physical proximity is the message of this part of the contract.

1-9. The Principle of Peaceful Coexistence and Prohibition of Harming Christians

It is stated in a part of the contract between the Holy Prophet of Islam and the Christians of St. Catherine's Monastery:

It is for Christians, what is for me, my relatives, my nation and my followers; the same is for them as if they are my relatives and people of Dhimma. We forbid any kind of harassment (from Muslims' side to them).

Based on this article, one of the fundamental principles of human life is revealed: the principle of peaceful coexistence and cooperative peace. The Prophet (PBUH) referred to Christians as Dhimmis (meaning under protection and covenant), considering them dependent on him and akin to his own relatives.

Based on this, just as within a family, its members observe the principles of proximity, and despite the existence of possible differences, in the face of people outside the home, they show themselves united, Christians and Muslims also as two brothers should be together in peace and friendship, and put aside seditious

differences.

According to Islamic law and jurisprudence, the decision of the people of the book to stay in the Islamic land is as follows, that if they are in the territory of the Islamic government they should choose one of these three things:

- 1- Acceptance of Islam
- 2- War
- 3- Adherence to the terms of Dhimma and paying Jizyah.

Jizyah technically refers to a tax, which the Islamic government collects from the people of the book (Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Sabeits) for their residence in the Islamic country, and immunity from the aggression of others - based on the Dhimma contract.

According to the Qur'an (At-Tawbah: 29), it is not only recommended to take jizya; Rather, it is obligatory, and it was received from the People of the Book during the time of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Therefore, Dhimma means safety and official support, and a Dhimmi¹ non-Muslim is someone who lives in an Islamic country, and has made an agreement with Muslims, to observe their social regulations, and to pay a certain tax as well; And in return, his life and property should be safe. These people are called Ahl al-Dhimma or Dhimmi. (ذمی او اهل الذمة).

As a result, the preservation of life, property, and honor of

1. Adjective form of the word Dhimma which comes before the noun referring to a non-Muslim.

every individual from the People of the Book—and even non-believers—who comes under the responsibility of Islam, is obligatory, just like that of co-religionist citizens. Harming them is forbidden in Islamic law. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) even exempted religious leaders, including monks and bishops, from paying jizya, which can be considered a privilege and an honor for Christian leaders.

1-10. The Principle of Religious and Social Security Based on the Principle of Fraternity

In one paragraph of the contract, it is stated as follows:

No bishop is required to change his episcopate; No monk needs to give up his monasticism; Whoever is in the monastery can stay; Whoever is in trip, turn around; No buildings of churches and Christian businesses should be destroyed, and nothing belonging to the churches should be brought into the building of mosques and houses of Muslims. Whoever does this, has broken God's covenant and opposed His Messenger.

Considering this passage from the contract, which is a translation of the verse "La ikraha fi al-deen «لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ»" (Al-Baqarah: 256) translated as "Let there be no compulsion in religion" some of them, out of ignorance of the history of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH), thought that the Prophet, like the tyrants and tyrannical rulers, acted by force and pressure. It will change people's opinion; But these unchangeable principles - clearly - showed that religion and ritual is not a category that can be propagated with reluctance and compulsion; Especially the fact that in the light of clear reasons and obvious miracles, the path of truth has been revealed from falsehood, and there is no need for these matters.

Based on this, the religion of Islam does not seek to impose an opinion, and it does not want to induce something by force, reluctance, sword, and military power. This topic is so far concerned by religion, which does not even allow a father to pressure his child to change his opinion. It is also clear that this basis is not only related to the People of the Book, and the rule of the honorable verse has not been abrogated; Rather, it is an eternal rule and in harmony with the logic of reason.

On the other hand, in terms of social security, using buildings belonging to religious minorities, confiscating their properties, and trespassing on their properties are considered forbidden, and the sensitivity of this issue politically - especially in the contemporary era - is higher than other times that Islam and Muslims are accused of violence, and sectarianism, murders, and genocides are spread in the name of Islam and the rules of Islam.

Based on this, this part of the agreement is informative and pleasant, and it is due to the existence of these paragraphs that this agreement has become eternal; So that it is still fresh after fourteen centuries.

Therefore, we come to the consonance and honorable verse:

«وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا»؛

And hold fast to the rope of God, and do not be scattered (Al Imran: 103).

So God the Almighty likes and calls for brotherhood, sympathy and friendship. He does not Like separation and war.

1-11. The Principle of Special Respect for Religious Leaders

In one of the passages of the contract regarding honoring

Christian elders, it is written:

There is no jizya or tax for monks and bishops, and I maintain their duty wherever they are - in the land or desert, in the east or west, in the south or north - they are under my support and covenant. And they are safe from any harm.

This part of the contract overlaps with the seventh and eighth parts - stated - in a way; But it is distinguished because it exempts Christian monks and bishops, who are considered religious leaders of Christianity, from the obligation to pay Dhimma, which is a kind of glorification of the position of religious leaders; Also, he considers them to have the advantage of immunity from all evil and social harms.

131

Theosophia Islamica

Ethics of the Cooperation between Islam and Christianity Based on Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) ...

1-12. The Principle of Honoring Christian Holy Places

The phrase from which this principle is derived is as follows:

Anyone who worships in mountains or blessed places is like this; do not take tribute or zakat from their crops.

Respecting and consecrating the holy places of Christians and other followers of the Book, as well as exempting them from paying Dhimma, jizya, tribute and zakat, is one of the important points of this agreement. In some periods of history, it has been observed that after conquering and occupying a nation, holy places were used as stables or storage places for trophies, which according to this passage of the treaty, the lives and property of the residents of these blessed places were respected; In such a way that the preservation of this building has been essential.

In Quran we read:

«وَلَوْ لَا دَفَعَ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهَدَمْتُ صَوَامِعَ وَبِيَعٍ وَصَلَوَاتٍ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا وَلَيُنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ»

And if God does not repel some of the people by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques in God's would be destroyed; And God Helps those who help Him; God is strong and invincible.

According to this covenant/text, it is God who preserves holy places; if they were in human hands, people would destroy them. God loves unity, and by mentioning all holy places together in the verse, God favors coexistence among religions.

1-13. Respectful Argumentation

In another phrase of the agreement, attention has been paid to the topic of respectful argumentation and dialogue in facing Christians: Do not argue with them except for something good.¹

This section of the letter is a rendition of Verse 46 of Surah Al-Ankabut (The Spider) from the Holy Quran, which the Prophet (PBUH) utilized in this covenant. Respectful dialogue forms the foundation of a fruitful conversation. Therefore, the meaning of this statement is that the words used when addressing others, as well as during discussions and debates, must be polite. The tone should be friendly, and the content must be well-reasoned. The voice's cadence should be free from yelling, contention, violence, and insults. Similarly, hand gestures, eye and eyebrow movements, all facial expressions, and body language—which typically complement human expression—should also be conveyed in this same polite and

1. Part of the letter

respectful manner.

All these emphases in Islam are because the goal of discussion and dialogue is not superiority or arrogance, nor forcing the other party to change their religion. Instead, the aim is for the impact of words and the influence of speech, ethics, and behavior to penetrate the depths of the other party's soul. The best way to achieve this goal is precisely this Quranic method. Sometimes, if an individual reflects the truth in such a way that the other party perceives it as their own thought—and not the speaker's—they will show flexibility more quickly. This is because humans are as fond of their own ideas as they are of their own children.

According to Quranic verses, there are 14 criteria for a fruitful dialogue:

1. Lack of superiority in conversation and argumentation; (Saba: 24).
2. Demanding proof from the other party; (Al-Anba: 24).
3. Acceptance of the word of truth - for expediency – even if it is unacceptable; (Al-Baqarah: 219).
4. The opportunity to think and reflect on the other side; (Al-Touba: 6).
5. Observance of politeness and moderation in speech and behavior; (Al-An'am: 108).
6. Observance of fairness and not judging everyone with one eye; (al-Rum: 33).
7. Piety in words and a logical conversationalist; (Al-Nahl: 125).
8. Soft, gentle and lenient speech; (Taha: 44).
9. Right speech; (Al-Naba: 38).

10. Not insisting on words or insisting on accepting your opinion; (Taha: 44).
11. Good listening; (Al-Touba: 61).
12. Honorably responding the audience; (Al-Nisa: 86).
13. Generous rejection; (Al-Nisa: 86).
14. Audienceology or enough knowledge on audience. (Ibrahim: 4).

In conclusion, based on a meticulous examination of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) historical covenant, it's clear that the best model for interfaith dialogue is one built upon love, respect, honor, trust, and brotherhood. All the images we often see today in the media, or similar platforms, that contradict this model, are not authentic to the teachings of Islam and Christianity, nor to any other divine religion.

2. Second Vatican Council Declaration (Nostra Aetate)

In the official document of the Second Vatican Council, a positive and clear stance on Islam and Muslims is evident. The Second Vatican Council in Christianity was a council that transformed the Catholic Church and the world, as well as the Catholic Church's approach to other religions. This council is the twenty-first ecumenical council of the Catholic Church, proposed by Pope John XXIII in 1959 and held four years later, in 1962. Unlike other Christian councils, the Second Vatican Council was not held in an atmosphere of conflict and hostility towards followers of other religions. This council had countless effects, including liturgical (worship), theological, biblical, and social developments, which are incomparable to previous councils. This council opened a new way of thinking for the Catholic

Church. A new approach and perspective towards other religions were adopted, along with acceptance and reconciliation with them.

The Vatican document, for the first time in the history after the rise of Islam, praises Muslims with a respectful view and invites everyone to forget the past and sincerely strive for mutual understanding and work together to preserve and spread the benefits of all. Strive for humanity, social justice, moral values and peace and freedom (Nostra Aetate, 1965, para. 3). Nostra Aetate which is the last document of twelve important documents has 5 parts and in the third article of this document, which most Persian sources mention only this part of the document as the works of this council, we read:

The church also respects Muslims. They worship the one, living and righteous God who is kind and capable and the creator of heaven and earth and who has spoken to humans. Muslims try to wholeheartedly submit to God's unseen commands. Just like Abraham who surrendered to God and Islamic faith is eager to connect itself to Abraham. Although Muslims do not recognize Christ as God, they respect him as a prophet. They also respect Mary, his virgin mother, and sometimes even ask her for help sincerely. Moreover, they are waiting for the Day of Judgment, when God will reward all those who are resurrected on that day after death. Finally, they value moral life and worship God especially through prayer, charity and fasting (NA: 3).

In the appendix of this article you can find the full text declaration and just to briefly elaborate here some lines are pointed out. The Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, commonly known as the Second Vatican Council or Vatican II, was the 21st and most recent ecumenical council of the Catholic Church. The council met in Saint Peter's Basilica in Vatican City for four periods (or

sessions), each lasting between 8 and 12 weeks, in the autumn of each of the four years 1962 to 1965.

Pope John XXIII called the council because he felt the Church needed "updating" (in Italian: *aggiornamento*). In order to better connect with people in an increasingly secularized world, some of the Church's practices needed to be improved and presented in a more understandable and relevant way. Support for *aggiornamento* won out over resistance to change, and as a result the sixteen magisterial documents produced by the council proposed significant developments in doctrine and practice, notably:

1. *Lumen gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church on "the universal call to holiness"
2. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, a decree on The Apostolate of the Laity
3. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, a decree On Eastern Catholic Churches
4. *Dei verbum*, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation emphasized the study of scripture as "the soul of theology"
5. *Sacrosanctum concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy to restore "the full and active participation by all the people"
6. *Gaudium et spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World concerned the promotion of peace, the gift of self, and the Churches mission to non-Catholics
7. *Dignitatis humanae*, a declaration on religious freedom
8. *Unitatis redintegratio*, a decree on Christian ecumenism
9. *Nostra aetate*, a declaration about non-Christian religions

The council had a significant impact on the Church due to the scope and variety of issues it addressed. Some of the most notable changes were in performance of the Mass, including that vernacular languages could be authorized as well as Latin. (O'Malley, 2008).

2.1. The Relationship with Islam Before the Second Vatican Council

From the beginning of the emergence of Islam in the 7th century AD, Christianity did not have a violent relationship with Islam for about three centuries. They encountered a new phenomenon and needed an opportunity to get to know it. During these three centuries, Christianity was stagnant. The new logic, strong revelation support and dialogue approach in the doctrine of Da'wah¹ were the attractive features of Islam. During this time, Islam covered many lands of the Middle East and even Spain. In the 11th century AD, Pope Gregory VII incited Christian society to confront Muslims by proposing the idea that fighting for a just cause to promote good in society was not only not a sin, but also rewarded. Pope Urban II issued a command for war against the Muslims, and many groups of Christians took up the cross to fight them. Many atrocities and acts of plunder occurred during these wars. For example, in 1099, the Crusaders successfully captured the city of Jerusalem (Bayt al-Maqdis). After the city's capture, the commander of the Christian army wrote to the Pope: "If you wish to know what happened to the enemies who fell into our hands in Jerusalem, know only that our people rode in the Solomonic portico in a sea of Muslim blood, and the blood reached up to the knees of the horses."

It is estimated that more than 70 thousand people were killed

1. Invitation to Islam

in Al-Aqsa Mosque. Crusade War lasted until 1291. Continued From the 13th century to the middle of the 20th century and until the Second Vatican Council, the church's approach towards Muslims was a cultural approach. Although sometimes military or provocative actions were carried out by the Catholic Church, the dominant approach of this period was the cultural approach and the destruction of the image of Islam.

Shortly after the conclusion of the fourth and final term of the Second Vatican Council, on December 8, 1965, Pope Paul VI created a series of commissions in the Organization of Rome to translate the Council's conclusions into Church action. He created two commissions on the issue of Jews and non-Christian religions.

This document is well reflected in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which is the covenant of the church and believers and was written thirty years after this council. In the case of Jews, Muslims and other religions, the same thing as the instructions of the believers is what the Second Vatican Council stated in this document.

2.2. The Approach of the Vatican to Other Religions in the Contemporary World

The current state of dialogue with other religions in the organization of the Catholic Church is significantly different from the past. The Roman Catholic Church has ambassadors in countries with other religions and accepts ambassadors from them. The Holy See (Vatican) participates in joint conferences and meetings and welcomes religious dialogue projects. Of course, it is possible that in practice, believers of any religion may go against the orders of the elders of that religion or extremes in religious matters. Simultaneously with the holding of the Second Vatican Council and after it, the Roman

Catholic Church made a serious decision to study other religions and opened numerous papal centers and institutes in the field of studying them or strengthened existing centers in this field. One of these centers is the Pontifical Institute of Islamic Arabic Studies (PISAI). This institution, which was opened in Tunisia in 1926 by the African Missionaries Association with the aim of shaping evangelistic activities in the Arab Islamic countries, was transferred to Rome in 1964 and in the context of the Second Vatican Council, and under the patronage of Pope Paul VI, to the title of Interfaith Dialogue Center continued to operate.

2.3. Analyzing the Declaration

Now, as we analyzed the letter of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to Christians, here we should also do the same to this letter of Vatican to the Christians.

2.3.1. Principle of Communication with God

In the view of Christianity, other religions are rooted in life and complete love for Christ (Lamb and Levering, 2008, p. 397) Christians have reconciled with God through Christ and love Him and other religions also in a different way go to God for guidance. Church also believes other religions also respect Christianity so this should be mutual. According to the new approach of Vatican, every religion has a ray of light that we should not despise and we should not extinguish it because these religions are serving humans need, or the miracle of Christ's light, which is the truth.

2.3.2. Principle of Respect

Based on the declaration "N.A." (Nostra Aetate), since Muslims respect Christians, Christ, and Mary, this respect should be reciprocated

by Christians.

2.3.3. Principle of Monotheism

Both Islam and Christianity believe in monotheism and the oneness of God. While there are fundamental differences in this regard that are beyond the scope of this discussion, both religions have learned to respect each other. Christians believe that the Trinity signifies "one" triangle, which in their belief is considered a form of monotheism. Nevertheless, Muslims and Christians can come together around a discussion table to discuss common problems, which we will address in the next section (Section 7).

2.3.4. Principle of Dialogue

After nearly 2000 years, Christians are striving to move past historical grievances and adopt an approach based on dialogue. This statement and this approach present a truly unique opportunity for both religions to find common ground and engage in further discussion and exchange.

2.3.5. Principle of Global Awareness

After two millennia, the Vatican has decided to confront modernism and global changes. In the modern era, Christianity has transformed in rapid and unprecedented ways. Ecclesial, biblical, and mystical Christianity are still recognizable, but they've flowed into new combinations and are forming new churches and denominations. Accordingly, this global awareness and respect for Islam are significant due to the fact that Islam is now the world's second-largest religion, and the Christian and Muslim populations constitute over half of the world's population. If these two religions are at peace, it means the entire world can be at peace.

2.3.6. Principle of Global Ethics

In the last sentence of the declaration which we brought at the beginning of this chapter we read:

They value moral life and worship God especially through prayer, charity and fasting (Nostra Aetate, 1965, para. 3).

Based on this section, it's easy to conclude that ethics and spirituality are one of the strong common foundations in both Islam and Christianity, just as similar expressions can be found in the letter of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which emphasizes ethics in dealing with Christians and their property.

There are many similarities in the realm of ethics among various religions, including Islam and Christianity, meaning that one cannot claim the principle of ethics has two different meanings. However, regarding ethical manifestations, while there are many commonalities, sometimes instances arise where ethical principles might differ. There's no doubt about the historical relationship between religion and ethics, and in every religion, a significant portion of its texts, recommendations, and focuses are dedicated to ethical issues. From this perspective, and from an interfaith standpoint, ethics are an inseparable part of different religions. After the formation of philosophical thought in humanity, these two subjects have raised many issues in philosophical discussions. For a long time, the question of the relationship between these two ideas has attracted many thinkers in both fields, giving rise to diverse viewpoints.

3. Different Types of Interreligious Dialogue

Before we begin this section, it's important to note that, based on various perspectives on the types of dialogue, traditionally, seven types can be extracted from this significant reality:

3.1. Dialogue to Convert

The old approach to interfaith dialogue focused on converting the other person. That is, the goal was to lead people of other faiths to adopt one's own religion and guide the dialogue in that direction. The view of missionaries in the past, who considered themselves righteous and intended to spread their religion, was largely along these lines. Even the presence of many religions in other societies, which found the opportunity to emerge, primarily had the aspect of converting people living in a different culture. This type of approach receives little attention in today's society.

3.2. Dialogue for the Fault Finding

The second approach to interfaith dialogue can involve trying to find an opportunity within the conversation to attack the other party's religion and highlight its weaknesses and shortcomings. This is usually done indirectly. In this method, which is also old and obsolete, individuals attempt to present the weaknesses and ambiguities of opposing religions and the strengths of their own faith, often in the form of polemics. By doing so, they aim to pave the way for the acceptance of their own religion. This approach is essentially a continuation of the previous one (conversion-focused dialogue). However, in a globalized society influenced by current world conditions, religious dialogue no longer addresses such issues.

3.3. Dialogue between Religions in Order to Understand the Cultural Conditions of Different Societies and Religions

In this approach, which can be considered an improved version of the previous two (conversion and polemic), religions strive to view

society from a secular perspective and examine how religion functions as a cultural element. Within any society, there are various cultural components such as language, customs, dress codes, and housing types; religion can be one of these elements. In this type of approach, phenomenological viewpoints typically dominate, evaluating all religions through a secular analysis. The focus here is on investigating what impact a religion can have on society and the ways in which these impacts have manifested.

3.4. Dialogue between Religions to know Strengths and Weaknesses

The fourth approach is based on the premise that to know ourselves, we must know the other. We achieve self-respect only when we show respect for others. This becomes clear when we recognize the nuanced presence of others alongside us.

3.5. Mutual Understanding of Religions from each Other

The fifth approach in interfaith dialogue is mutual understanding of religions. This means that in the dialogue process, we aim to comprehend what the other religion entails and how our own faith fits within that context. Unfortunately, in the relationship between Islam and Christianity, we encounter many instances where our Muslim perceptions of Christianity, and Christian perceptions of us Muslims, are completely different. Through dialogue, we can resolve these misunderstandings.

3.6. Dialogue between Religions to Find the Commonalities of Religions

The sixth approach in interfaith dialogue involves simply

identifying commonalities and differences. This attitude often views the conversation as a raw exchange of information. Both sides acknowledge some shared aspects and some distinctions, superficially attempting to emphasize the commonalities. Unfortunately, many popular religious discussions, including recent ones in our society, often devolve into mutual compliments without yielding any concrete results. In such interfaith dialogues, one side typically affirms what the other says, and vice versa, in an effort to express common ground. They talk and talk, but ultimately, no tangible conclusion is reached. While this type of conversation is an improvement over the previous five, it still falls short. The next type of dialogue is more effective.

3.7. Interfaith Dialogue for Joint Cooperation in Facing Common Problems

The seventh approach that can be very effective and fruitful is planning for cooperation in the contemporary world in the face of human disasters by relying on the basic beliefs of religions. In the current world, many human disasters threaten humanity, for which the interaction of religions can be a cure. Decline of moral values, decline of global ethics, loneliness, aimlessness and emptiness of human being enclosed in technological life, environmental catastrophes, oppression and injustice, disintegration of family, lack of identity all and all, are the consequences of secular life. Religions can present their common solutions to prevent these human disasters in dialogues between themselves with a pragmatic interaction and provide much cooperation for the growth and spiritualization of the troubled humanity of the current era. This type of interreligious dialogue can be the most fruitful interreligious dialogue. Religions should cooperate with each other, interact and sit together to make practical plans and step by step show their important presence in the world society and

actively participate in the era of globalization and have their unique role. (Ayatollahi, 2012).

That is why this article tries to give an ethical model through the seventh type of dialogue which is based on ethical and moral approach which will be discussed in next part.

Conclusion

Based on the preceding chapters, ethics serve as the central and unifying point between Islam and Christianity. Drawing upon the two historical documents mentioned, a global model can be extracted, rooted in ethics and spirituality. This model would encompass love, respect, peaceful coexistence, courtesy, and other dimensions and principles outlined in those documents. In various religions, the ethical system is built upon ontological, epistemological, valueological, anthropological, and theological foundations. To uncover the ethical elements of any religion, it is essential to first identify these foundations and, with an understanding of them, endeavor to analyze that religion's ethics. According to the seventh type of interfaith dialogue discussed in Chapter 4, interfaith dialogue should first focus on finding common ground. Second, it should help to solve shared problems, and ultimately, it should serve God and humanity, who are created in the image of the Almighty.

Appendix

Full Text of the Declaration

Nostra Aetate

<http://jti.isca.ac.ir>

Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-christian Religions

Second Vatican Council

October 28, 1965

146

Theosophia Islamica

Vol. 5, No. 1, 2025

1. In our day, when people are drawing more closely together and the bonds of friendship between different peoples are being strengthened, the church examines more carefully its relations with non-Christian religions. Ever aware of its duty to foster unity and charity among individuals, and even among nations, it reflects at the outset on what people have common and what tends to bring them together.

Humanity forms but one community. This is so because all stem from the one stock which God created to people the entire earth (see Acts 17:26), and also because all share a common destiny, namely God. His providence, evident goodness, and saving designs extend to all humankind (see Wis 8:1; Acts 14:17; Rom 2:6-7; 1 Tim 2:4) against the day when the elect are gathered together in the holy city which is illumined by the glory of God, and in whose splendor all peoples will walk (see Apoc 21:23 ff.).

People look to their different religions for an answer to the unsolved riddles of human existence. The problems that weigh heavily on people's hearts are the same today as in past ages. What is humanity? What is the meaning and purpose of life? What is upright behavior, and what is sinful? Where does suffering originate, and what

end does it serve? How can genuine happiness be found? What happens at death? What is judgment? What reward follows death? And finally, what is the ultimate mystery, beyond human explanation, which embraces our entire existence, from which we take our origin and towards which we tend?

2. Throughout history, to the present day, there is found among different peoples a certain awareness of a hidden power, which lies behind the course of nature and the events of human life. At times, there is present even a recognition of a supreme being, or still more of a Father. This awareness and recognition results in a way of life that is imbued with a deep religious sense. The religions which are found in more advanced civilizations endeavor by way of well-defined concepts and exact language to answer these questions. Thus, in Hinduism people explore the divine mystery and express it both in the limitless riches of myth and the accurately defined insights of philosophy. They seek release from the trials of the present life by ascetical practices, profound meditation and recourse to God in confidence and love. Buddhism in its various forms testifies to the essential inadequacy of this changing world. It proposes a way of life by which people can, with confidence and trust, attain a state of perfect liberation and reach supreme illumination either through their own efforts or with divine help. So, too, other religions which are found throughout the world attempt in different ways to overcome the restlessness of people's hearts by outlining a program of life covering doctrine, moral precepts and sacred rites.

The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. It has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from its own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women. Yet it proclaims and is in duty

bound to proclaim without fail, Christ who is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 1:6). In him, in whom God reconciled all things to himself (see 2 Cor 5:18-19), people find the fullness of their religious life.

The Church, therefore, urges its sons and daughters to enter with prudence and charity into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions. Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life, acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians, together with their social life and culture.

3. The church has also a high regard for the Muslims. They worship God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth,¹ who has also spoken to humanity. They endeavor to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God, just as Abraham submitted himself to God's plan, to whose faith Muslims eagerly link their own. Although not acknowledging him as God, they venerate Jesus as a prophet; his virgin Mother they also honor, and even at times devoutly invoke. Further, they await the day of judgment and the reward of God following the resurrection of the dead. For this reason they highly esteem an upright life and worship God, especially by way of prayer, alms-deeds and fasting.

Over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The sacred council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values.

4. Sounding the depths of the mystery which is the church, this sacred council remembers the spiritual ties which link the people of the new covenant to the stock of Abraham.

The church of Christ acknowledges that in God's plan of salvation the beginnings of its faith and election are to be found in the patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. It professes that all Christ's faithful, who as people of faith are daughters and sons of Abraham (see Gal 3:7), are included in the same patriarch's call and that the salvation of the church is mystically prefigured in the exodus of God's chosen people from the land of bondage. On this account the church cannot forget that it received the revelation of the Old Testament by way of that people with whom God in his inexpressible mercy established the ancient covenant. Nor can it forget that it draws nourishment from that good olive tree onto which the wild olive branches of the Gentiles have been grafted (see Rom 11:17-24). The church believes that Christ who is our peace has through his cross reconciled Jews and Gentiles and made them one in himself (see Eph 2:14,16).

Likewise, the church keeps ever before its mind the words of the apostle Paul about his kin: "they are Israelites and it is for them to be sons and daughters, to them belong the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race according to the flesh, is the Christ" (Rom 9:4,5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. It is mindful, moreover, that the apostles, the pillars on which the church stands, are of Jewish descent, as are many of those early disciples who proclaimed the Gospel of Christ to the world.

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize God's moment when it came (see Lk 19:42). Jews for the most part did not accept the Gospel; on the contrary, many opposed its spread (see Rom 11:28). Even so, the apostle Paul maintains that the Jews remain very dear to God, for the sake of the patriarchs, since God does not take back the gifts he bestowed or the choice he made.² Together with the prophets and that same apostle, the church awaits the day, known to

God alone, when all peoples will call on God with one voice and serve him shoulder to shoulder (Soph 3:9; see Is 66:23; Ps 65:4; Rom 11:11-32).

Since Christians and Jews have such a common spiritual heritage, this sacred council wishes to encourage and further mutual understanding and appreciation. This can be achieved, especially, by way of biblical and theological enquiry and through friendly discussions.

Even though the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (see Jn 19:6), neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his passion. It is true that the church is the new people of God, yet the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy scripture. Consequently, all must take care, lest in catechizing or in preaching the word of God, they teach anything which is not in accord with the truth of the Gospel message or the spirit of Christ.

Indeed, the church reproves every form of persecution against whomsoever it may be directed. Remembering, then, its common heritage with the Jews and moved not by any political consideration, but solely by the religious motivation of Christian charity, it deplores all hatreds, persecutions, displays of antisemitism directed against the Jews at any time or from any source.

The church always held and continues to hold that Christ out of infinite love freely underwent suffering and death because of the sins of all, so that all might attain salvation. It is the duty of the church, therefore, in its preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's universal love and the source of all grace.

5. We cannot truly pray to God the Father of all if we treat any people as other than sisters and brothers, for all are created in God's

image. People's relation to God the Father and their relation to other women and men are so dependent on each other that the Scripture says "they who do not love, do not know God" (1 Jn 4:8).

There is no basis therefore, either in theory or in practice for any discrimination between individual and individual, or between people and people arising either from human dignity or from the rights which flow from it.

Therefore, the church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against people or any harassment of them on the basis of their race, color, condition in life or religion. Accordingly, following the footsteps of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, the sacred council earnestly begs the Christian faithful to "conduct themselves well among the Gentiles" (1 Pet 2:12) and if possible, as far as depends on them, to be at peace with all people (see Rom 12:18) and in that way to be true daughters and sons of the Father who is in heaven (see Mt 5:45).

NOTES

1. See St Gregory VII, Letter 21 to Anzir (Nacir), King of a. Mauretania: PL 148, col. 450 ff.
2. See Rom 11:28-29; See Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium.

References

The Holy Quran

Nahj al-Balagha

Ahmadi Mianji, M. A. (1419 AH). *Makatib al-Rasul*. (Vol. 3) Qom: Dar al-Hadith al-Thaqafi Institute. [In Arabic]

Ayatollahi, H. (2012), *Criteria in Contemporary Religious Studies*, Tehran: Research Institute of Human Sciences and Cultural Studies, first edition.[In Persian]

Küng, H. (2007). *Islam: Past, present & future*. Oxford: Oneworld Publication.

Lamb, M, & Levering. (2008). *Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition*, First Edition, New York, Oxford University Press.

Nostra aetate. (1965). Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions. TheSecond Vatican Council.

O'Malley, J, W. (2008). *What Happened at Vatican II*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. ISBN 978-0-674-04749-5.

Taheri Akerdi, M, H. (2009). The Prophet's relationship with Christians: interaction or confrontation?, *Marafet*, 149, pp. 88-69. [In Persian]