

CMCU

JOHN L. ESPOSITO

**The Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding: History and International Affairs (CMCU) was established in 1993 by Georgetown University and the Fondation pour l'Entente entre Chrétiens et Musulmans, Geneva, to foster the study of Muslim-Christian relations and to promote dialogue between the two great religions. The Center focuses on the historical, theological, political and cultural encounter of Islam and Christianity, the Muslim world and the West. Located in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, the Center combines teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels, research and public affairs activities.**

The establishment of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding reflects the role of religion in the contemporary international system. Both Georgetown's Catholic-Jesuit heritage and its location in Washington have shaped the University's abiding interest in the study of religion and international relations. The global presence and impact of Islam is a fact of international life. Understanding this fact, relating it to other dimensions of world affairs and to the role of Christianity in the world is a central concern of the Center's programmes.

#### **Certificate and MA Programme**

Courses on Islam and the history of Muslim-Christian relations are offered for undergraduate and graduate students at the University. The undergraduate 'Certificate in Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations' places emphasis on the study of Islam as a complement to the study of Western and Christian traditions involved in core curriculum requirements. The Master's Degree in Liberal Studies, with a specialization in 'Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations' was created to foster a better understanding of Islam and Muslim-Christian relations. Students focus on the present conditions under which Muslims and Christians interact on a global scale and in societies like the

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United States. The MA also offers coverage of the broader historical experiences of the Muslim and Christian communities as they developed and interacted in the past fourteen centuries.

#### **Muslims in the American Public Sphere**

CMCU is currently undertaking a major research project, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, to examine the role and contribution of the Muslim community in American public life. This three-year project intends to: publish a volume on the participation, contribution and role of the Muslim community in the American civic life; produce two major reference books; implement a two-stage national survey of Muslim communities; and disseminate research findings through workshops, regional seminars, a national conference, newsletters and other media. It will also develop a comprehensive website as a search engine, research (survey) tool and resource, and organize an intra-community dialogue with the nationally recognized religious leadership. The principle investigators are: Zahid Bukhari and Sulayman Nyang; and the coordinator is John L. Esposito.

#### **Research and Public Affairs**

The Center's research and public affairs activities seek to interpret Islam and the Muslim world for the diverse communities in Washington involved in international relations and the Muslim world. The focus of the Center's activities, both national and international in scope, is achieved through lectures, symposia, international conferences and extensive media coverage and publications (books, occasional papers, and mono-

graphs). The Center has sponsored or co-sponsored more than 16 major conferences, 117 seminars, and 373 presentations in more than 20 countries in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the United States. Altogether, the Center's core faculty has published more than 50 books and 200 articles, including such works as: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (4 vols.); *The Oxford History of Islam* (forthcoming, January 2000); *Islam, Gender and Social Change*; *Muslims on the Americanization Path*; *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*; and *Women, the Family, and Divorce Laws in Islamic History*. CMCU is co-publisher of the journal *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, along with the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Birmingham University, United Kingdom.

#### **Recent and Upcoming Events**

- 'To be a European Muslim: Muslim Identity in a non-Islamic Environment' Guest Speaker: Tariq Ramadan, College of Geneva and University of Fribourg Georgetown University / 27 October 1999
- 'The Message of Islam for Pluralist Societies' Guest Speaker: Farid Esack, University of the Western Cape, South Africa Georgetown University / 16 Nov. 1999
- 'Religion and Secularism' Co-sponsored with the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, Qom, Iran / Georgetown University 2-3 December 1999
- 'Islam and the West' Co-sponsored with the United Association for Studies and Research, Inc. Georgetown University 26-27 January 2000

- 'International Workshop on Asian Islam in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' Co-sponsored with College of Islamic Studies, Prince of Songkla University Bangkok, Thailand 23-24 February 2000
- 'Becoming American: Immigration and Religious Life in the United States' Co-sponsored with Hartford Seminary Georgetown University 11-12 May 2000

CMCU's faculty include: John L. Esposito, Director; John O. Voll, Deputy Director; Yvonne Y. Haddad; and Amira El-Azhary Sonbol. The Center has an endowed chair, the Malaysia Chair of Islam in Southeast Asia. In addition, the Center has had research associates and fellows from countries around the world, including Tajikistan, China, Bangladesh, Belarus, Lebanon, Egypt, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, India and Sudan. ◆

For more information please visit our website:

[www.cmcu.net](http://www.cmcu.net)

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