Missiological Understandings

Arising from Muslim–Christian Marriages

in Indonesia and Australia

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Charles Sturt University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Charles Sturt University or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged.

I agree that this thesis be accessible for the purpose of study and research in accordance with the normal conditions established by the Executive Director, Library Services or nominee, for the care, loan and reproduction of theses.

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This thesis would not have been possible without the willingness of interfaith couples themselves to share their first-hand experiences. Whilst their names have been changed for the sake of confidentiality, it is the real-life stories of these couples that are the heart and soul of this study. I wish to thank all who generously agreed to be interviewed, individuals and couples, young adults who have grown up in interfaith families, and a number of religious and community leaders.

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_Helen Richmond_
ABSTRACT

We live in critical times particularly in terms of the relationship between Muslims and Christians where increased tensions have highlighted the need for greater understanding. A key contemporary challenge for both Islam and Christianity is responding to the reality of religious diversity. The search for new missiological approaches that will contribute to the building of peaceful and inclusive communities is therefore essential.

In an attempt to discover creative responses and strategies for living in a multifaith world this inquiry engages in practical theological reflection drawing on the lived experience of Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages in Indonesia and Australia. This inquiry examines missiological implications that arise from the testimonies of those who have been able to develop loving relationships across religious differences. Indepth interviews reveal the rich and complex lives of these couples as they negotiate areas of difference while retaining their religious convictions. Through narrative inquiry this study investigates what motivates couples to embark on a life-long interfaith union and what helps them build a life together of intimate friendship.

Muslim–Christian relations in Indonesia and Australia have been shaped by different historical, legal, cultural, religious and political factors. A historical overview of marriage and intermarriage in Islam and Christianity and an examination of the changing landscape of mission and da‘wah provide the background and context for this study. In Indonesia, people of different faiths have lived alongside each other for centuries but an upsurge in communal violence has revealed religious fault-lines particularly in the relationship between Muslims and Christians. Australia, which has become one of the most culturally and religiously diverse nations in the world, faces the challenge of utilising the gifts and responding to the needs of an ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse population. In both contexts changing religious landscapes
invite a reassessment of the relationship between different religious communities.

Muslims and Christians are bound together in a dialogue of life with all its difficulties and promise. The narratives of the couples in this study are a hopeful sign that Muslims and Christians can live in partnership. The findings of this study including the development of a ‘Typology of Missiological Approaches’ contribute to missiological reflection on ways Muslims and Christians can navigate differences and in positive ways respond to the challenge of living and witnessing in a religiously diverse world.
NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

In this thesis transliterated terms from Bahasa Indonesia and Arabic appear in italics throughout the text. A list of Indonesian terms, in Bahasa Indonesia and key Arabic terms used are provided in the glossary. The transliteration of the Bahasa Indonesia narrative texts and Indonesian titles in the bibliography are transliterated by the author. Standard Indonesian transliteration in most cases is used for Arabic legal terms. The New International Version is used for Bible references. The Koran Interpreted, a translation by A. J. Arberry is generally used for Qur’anic texts unless another translation is indicated.
GLOSSARY OF RELEVANT INDONESIAN AND ISLAMIC CONCEPTS

Ahl al-Kitab (or Ahli Kitab or Ahlu Kitab) Feminine: kitabiyya – Literally ‘People of the Book’ and is usually understood to refer to Jews and Christians.

Akad nikah – The marriage contract which consists of the ījāb (offer) and qabūl (acceptance) performed by the groom in the presence of the person who officiates, the wali (guardian) and two witnesses.

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika – Indonesia’s National motto: Unity in Diversity

Catatan sipil – The civil administration that arranges marriages of non-Muslims. Up until the early 1980s Muslims could marry non-Muslims by applying to the Kantor Catatan Sipil.

Da’i – A Muslim preacher, someone who invites others to the way of Islam

Da’wah or dakwah – Literally means ‘call’ or ‘invitation’, denoting the missionary imperative to convey the message and commandments of God revealed through the Prophet.

Exclusivist and Exclusivism – An approach within the study of religions which affirms one particular religion as the only path of salvation.

Fatwa – A legal pronouncement or religious decree to settle a question where Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) is unclear. In some countries a recognised mufti is competent to issue judgments on Islamic law. In Indonesia fatwa are delivered by various bodies such as the Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI).

Five pillars of Islam – also known as Rukn. These include: making the Muslim testimony of faith, praying five times a day; fasting during Ramadan, paying the tax or tithe (zakat), and going on the pilgrimage to Mecca if one is able.

Fiqh or Fiqih – Islamic jurisprudence and the codification of principles of conduct drawn up by religious scholars, interpreting the Qur’an and Hadith. In Sunni Islam there are four schools of law or madhab (Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki and Shafi’i). The Shafi’i madhab has exercised greatest influence in Indonesia. ‘Usul al-Fiqh’ is the study of syariah, the origins and practice of Islamic, Islamic legal theory and the rulings of Islamic scholars and jurists.

Hadith – The record of the teachings and sayings of the prophet Muhammad and his first Companions that comprise the traditions or Sunnah.

Haj or hajj – The most significant Muslim pilgrimage takes place in the last month of the lunar calendar of Islam and is the fifth pillar of Islam making it a religious duty for all Muslims.

Halal – That which is permitted or lawful according to Islam.
Haram – That which is religiously forbidden.

Ibadah – Religious observance, worship, religious duties, rituals and all expressions of service to God, including the pursuit of knowledge, humility and charity.

Ijtihad or itijhād – Interpretation of Islamic Law using independent judgment, the making of legal decisions using the legal sources, the Qur’an and the Sunnah. This practice was advocated by Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) and 19th century scholars such as Muhammad Abduh. Indonesian scholars such as Nurcholish Madjid have described ijtihad as an ongoing duty of Muslims to interpret texts taking into consideration the social and religious context.

Imam – A term of respect for persons attached to the mosque who lead prayers and take on other functions. The terms kiai and ustad are also used in Indonesia to refer to religious leaders. In Australia the term sheikh may also be used.

Inclusive or inclusivism – An approach within the study of religions which affirms that accepts the presence of religious diversity and recognises other religious traditions as having theological validity.

Kafir – Non-believer, literally, someone who conceals or hides from the truth.

Kalam – Islamic theology or philosophy of religion (‘ilm al-kalam). Muslims do not tend to give to kalam the same prominence they give to fiqh.¹

Kejawen – An identity and set of beliefs that draws on Javanese ethical and spiritual values. Similar to ‘kebatinan’ a form of Javanese spirituality/mysticism.

Kitabi, fem. kitabiyya – See Ahl al-Kitab.

Legalist Traditionalists – Muslim scholars who argue for the maintenance and implementation of Islamic law, as conceptualised by the four classical schools of religious jurisprudence.²

Mesjid – Mosque

Missiology – A discipline or branch within theology that studies mission theory including the definition, goal and foundation of mission, and engages in critical analysis of past missionary practices and the mission task in contemporary contexts.

¹ See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, On Understanding Islam (The Hague: Mouton 1981), 281. He suggests that the law is to Islam what theology is in Christianity.

Muhammadiyah — A Sunni modernist Islamic organisation founded in Indonesia in 1912 which calls for reform and renewal of Islam, the second largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia.

Musyrik or Mushrikāt — Idolaters

Mujtahid — A religious scholar who has become an authority on Islamic law, and is qualified though years of study to practise ijtihad.

Neo-modernists — A progressive Indonesian Muslim approach which argues for a major change in the methodology of Islamic law to meet the needs of contemporary Muslims. They argue for an interpretation of Islam that accommodates religious pluralism.

Nakah — Muslim term for marriage and literally means ‘to come together.’ According to the Syafi’i mazhab there are five main elements required for a Muslim marriage: the presence of a man and a woman, an offer and acceptance; the presence of two qualified witnesses, the presence of a guardian (wali) and mahar (a dower given by the husband to the wife).

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) — An influential Sunni organisation established in Java in 1926. Its leaders are trained in Qur’anic studies and interpretation of Islamic law. Traditionalist in approach, NU has supported the establishment of Indonesia based on Pancasila.

Pancasila — Five Principals of the Indonesian State that provide the national foundation for the Republic contained in the 1945 Constitution. These include belief in God; humanitarianism; the unity of Indonesia; democracy and social justice for all.

Penghulu — A Muslim religious leader able to conduct Muslim marriages and act as a Muslim marriage registrar.

Pengadilan Negeri — Civil Courts.

Sholat or salat — The five daily obligatory prayers for Muslims. Ritual prayer performed is considered the second Pillar of Islam.

Sunnah (sunnah al-Nabi) — Meaning ‘the trodden path’, the corpus of customary practice or traditions that derive from the example of the Prophet and his Companions found in the collections of hadith.

Sunni — The majority stream of Islam whose adherents accept the entire first generation of Muslim leaders as legitimate (in contrast to the Shi’a who accept only Caliph Ali and his descendants). Most Indonesians are Sunni.

3 Modernists wish to return to Islam as it was originally practiced and condemn deviations and accretions to Islamic practices. They also believe revelation does not clash with reason and Islamic law should reflect social change.
Syahadat or shahâda – the Islamic testimony or profession of faith: *La ilaha illa Allah. Muhammadun rasulullah* (“There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God.”). Pronouncing the syahadat in front of witnesses is a requirement for joining the Muslim community.

Syari’ah or Shari’ah (or Syariat Islam) – Literally means ‘the path to a watering hole’ and refers to the divinely given and eternal law and moral code which guides Islamic life. It is based on the Qur’an and Sunnah and the basis for Islamic law and jurisprudence.

Tabligh – To deliver, inform or spread the message of Islam, a central role of the Prophet and the task of all Muslims.

Talaq – Divorce

Tawhid or Tauhid – The doctrine of the unity, oneness and transcendence of God.

Treaty (or Constitution) of Madinah (or Medina) – The Prophet Mohammad developed principles for cooperation between Muslims and others in 622 C.E. Muslim today refer to these principles as providing a basis for supporting religious plurality.

Ulama – Learned Muslim scholars, judges, arbiters of Islamic law and Islamic intellectuals who are regarded as custodians of the faith.

Umma – Muslim believers formed in Medina. The term refers to the community of Muslim believers worldwide.

Wahhabism – a form of Sunni revivalism expressed in a strict and literalistic interpretation of Islam which originated with the 18th century with Muhammad ibn ‘Abd-al-Wahhab (1703-87). It is a form of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia and other parts of the world.

Wali Songo – Nine Muslim saints who are accredited with bringing Islam to Java.
INDONESIAN ACRONYMS

KCS (Kantor Catatan Sipil) – Civil Registration Office (Births, deaths and marriages)

KAWI (Majelis Wali Gereja Indonesia) – Bishops Council of Indonesia

DDII (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia) – the Indonesian Council for Islamic Mission/the Propagation of Islam) formed in Indonesia in 1967

DPR (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat) – People's Representative Assembly, House of Representatives

G.H.R. (Regeling op de Gemengde Huwelijken S. 1898 No 158) – The Dutch marriage law

KUA (Kantor Urusan Agama) – Muslim District Religious Affairs Office where Muslim marriages are registered.

KHI (Kompilasi Hukum Indonesia) – The Compilation of Indonesian Muslim (Family) Law formally received in 1991 and used as a guide for judges in the implementation of Islamic law in the Religious Courts in Indonesia.

MPR (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat) – People's Consultative Assembly

MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia) – Council of Indonesia Ulama

NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) – The largest Indonesian Muslim organisation

PGI (Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia) – Indonesian Fellowship of Churches

QS (Qur’anic Sura) – The Qur’an is comprised of 114 chapters or sura and each is comprised of aya (Indonesian: ayat) or verses.

UUP (Undang-undang Perkawinan) No 1/1974 – the Indonesian Marriage Law
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC

1.1.1 Purpose of this inquiry

There have been renewed calls to enhance understanding and co-operation between different faith communities, particularly between Muslims and Christians. In a world where religious and cultural differences often become a source of conflict and rivalry it has become increasingly important to search for theological approaches and missiological responses for living creatively with difference.¹

The purpose of this missiological inquiry is to reflect on what faithful witness means for Christians and Muslims in the context of contemporary religious plurality. It has been noted that a frequent cause of tension between the two faiths arises from the fact that both have a universal vision and are da‘wah or missionary-oriented faiths.²

Interfaith or interreligious marriage is the linking by marriage of people who belong to different religions. Such marriages between Muslims and Christians has been a largely ‘untapped source’ for our understanding of interfaith dialogue.³ Interfaith marriages have also been identified as an ‘obstacle that remains’ in relations between the two faiths.⁴

² See “Issues in Christian-Muslim Relations: Ecumenical Considerations”, was a report was received by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in 1992 and circulated to the churches for discussion. ‘Da‘wah’ is the mission impulse within Islam and literally means ‘summons’ or ‘call’ and denotes God’s invitation delivered to humanity through prophets and apostles and re-issued by the Prophet Mohammad. http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/c-merl-e.html (accessed 10 March, 2008).
This study does not set out to promote or discourage interfaith marriage but seeks to learn from the experience of Muslims and Christians who forge bonds of love and understanding across religious differences.

In recent years a number of studies which examine the experience of Muslim–Christian couples have been undertaken. These have tended to highlight the difficulties they face as well as their strength and resilience. The distinctive approach offered in this study is that the experience of Muslim–Christian couples in Indonesia and Australia is investigated as a source for our understanding of mission and da‘wah. Missiological questions are central to this inquiry which examines how interfaith couples build a life together while retaining the salient characteristics that define their religious identity.

1.1.2 Key research question

The principal research question in this inquiry is: “What can be learnt from the experience of Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages in Indonesia and Australia for our understanding of Christian mission and da‘wah in religiously diverse settings?” Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages embody a living dialogue in the most intimate of relationships. Their experience becomes a lens to examine responses to the challenge of living with religious plurality.

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Sperber makes this observation in the section entitled ‘Mixed Marriage—the highest form of dialogue’ in the context of Muslim–Christian dialogues which have been sponsored by the World Council of Churches.


5 See “Issues in Christian–Muslim Relations: Ecumenical Considerations”. Difficulties for couples and problematic areas mentioned in this WCC discussion paper include such subjects as whether interfaith marriages are prohibited according to Islam; conflict over the religious upbringing of children; questions about polygamy and divorce; and custody according to Islamic family law. Four important studies in particular are relevant to this study: Gé M Speelman, Keeping Faith (2001); An-Na‘im ed., Inter-religious marriages among Muslims (2005); Ahmad Baso and Ahmad Nurcholish ed., Pernikahan Beda Agama: Kesaksian, Argument Keagamaan dan Analisa Kebijakan [Marriage between People of Different Religions: Testimony, Religious Argument, and Policy Analysis] (2001) and A.W. Ata, Christian-Muslim Intermarriage in Australia (2003). A book on Muslim intermarriage in South East Asia from the Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore is forthcoming.
1.1.3 Some terms – Mission and da‘wah as comparative concepts

‘Mission’ and ‘da‘wah’ are key terms used in this inquiry. Each carries with it an extensive body of scholarship and is rich in meaning. The understanding and practice of Christian mission and Muslim da‘wah have been developed in considerably different ways, been influenced by particular historical events, and are expressed through distinctive rituals, traditions and teachings.

Christians and Muslims each believe that they share in the purposes of God in the world. Through Christian mission the good news of the Gospel has been proclaimed and embodied in word and deed with a view to inviting people to experience fullness of life in Christ and share in the work of God’s Kingdom. Through da‘wah the perceived blessings of Islam have been communicated to those within the Muslim community and beyond with a view to calling people to align themselves with God’s will. The history of Christian mission relates to the history of how the message of Christianity spread and continues to impact the lives of people and communities. In a corresponding way Muslim da‘wah relates to how the message of Islam has been communicated throughout the world and shaped human communities.

Over centuries, relations between the two faiths have been marked by antagonism, rivalry, misunderstanding and distrust. Instances of friendship and harmonious and fruitful exchange as well as amicable co-existence and constructive co-operation have often been overshadowed by polemical discourse and confrontation. In thinking about ‘mission’ and ‘da‘wah’ it is important to be aware of the history of relations between the two faiths.

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Da‘wah is rooted in the Arabic verb meaning ‘summons’ or ‘call’, and denotes God’s invitation delivered to humanity through prophets and apostles and re-issued by the Prophet Muhammad who was obedient to the prophetic impulse he received.9 Qur’anic texts provide the central source for understanding the nature of da‘wah. The Prophet’s message invited people to surrender their lives to God and called people to reorientate themselves to the One who is merciful and forgiving, the Sustainer and Sovereign Lord of all.10

Following the example of the Prophet, Muslims are to speak courteously, with humility, patience and sincerity, and point others to the path of repentance and setting before them an example.11 Within Islam there is widespread agreement that the central task of the Prophet and the larger purpose of Islam is to spread the blessing of God’s peace and mercy to all of creation or rahmatan li al-‘alamin.12 A Muslim becomes a da‘i or muballigh, a caller to Islam.13 Islamic da‘wah includes efforts to convert non-Muslims but also focuses on strengthening and deepening the faith of Muslims and incorporating the principles of Islam into the lives of believers.14 ‘Da‘wah bi al-lisan’ is da‘wah through one’s words and ‘da‘wah bi al-hal’ is da‘wah’ through one’s example and actions. ‘Bilmal da‘wah’ takes the form of practical assistance and concrete help.

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9 See for example QS 16: 125 “Call men to the path of your Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation. Reason with them in the most courteous manner.”Da‘wah is closely associated with another term tabligh which has as its meaning: to deliver, inform or spread (the message of Islam), a central role of the Prophet as the Messenger.


11 See Qur’anic text QS 16:125.


As Islamic teachings and values become embedded in the lives of individual Muslims and their families the influence of Islam moves outwards in circles permeating society. The quality of one’s life (tarbiyah) is therefore integral to da’wah.

According to Christian theologian and missiologist David Bosch the Church is intrinsically missionary. Biblical texts, particularly the example of Jesus and stories of the early church, provide a central source for understanding the nature of Christian mission. Bosch does not recommend one definitive definition of ‘mission’. He notes that during various periods of history the Church has emphasised different dimensions of mission.

‘Mission’ has been closely associated with ‘evangelism’: the proclaiming and sharing of the good news and the establishing of Christian congregations. The urge to proclaim the Gospel in all the world that inspired the modern missionary movement drew on texts such as the ‘Great Commission’ in Matthew 28:19-20. Making Christian disciples has been understood as a key mission objective. In the second half of the twentieth century, ‘mission’ increasingly came to be understood as Missio Dei – the activity of God.

‘Being Christ’s witnesses’ meant sharing in the mission of God in the world, showing God’s love in action, working for justice, peace and reconciliation and being signs of the Kingdom of God. Christological understandings of mission have highlighted the saving purposes of God revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. How the Holy Spirit works in the world beyond the church has been a matter of debate within missiology. Chapter Two will explain in more detail the changing landscape of Christian mission and Muslim da’wah.

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17 The notion of Missio Dei became dominant in Protestant mission from 1952 following the International Missionary Conference in Willingen. In a post-colonial context there had been a change from ‘missions’ to the existence of vibrant and independent churches. The new mission understanding recognised that the Church was privileged to be invited to participate in the Missio Dei.
Whilst Muslims and Christians have lived alongside each other for centuries in some places, in Western contexts it has only been in recent decades that Muslims and Christians have lived as neighbours and been forced to give serious consideration to the reality of religious plurality. Important initiatives to encourage dialogue between Muslims and Christians have highlighted the possibility of new relationships based on mutual understanding and enrichment.\(^\text{18}\) Indonesian missiologist Jonathan Woly suggests that missiological reflection begin with “neighborology”.\(^\text{19}\) Each brings their own distinctive sense of call and understanding of mission but Woly believes Muslims and Christians as neighbours need to spend time ‘sitting on each other’s veranda’. The dual task involves bearing witness to one’s own faith and bearing witness to the richness and beauty of the works of God in other religious traditions.\(^\text{20}\) He believes it is possible for Muslims and Christians to see each other as partners in God’s mission.

_Misi_ in the Indonesian language refers to, “religious call and tasks carried out to fulfil one’s religious duties.”\(^\text{21}\) This broader understanding of mission has been used by some Indonesian Muslim scholars.\(^\text{22}\) For the purpose of this inquiry the term ‘mission’ or ‘missional’ is used to denote this broader notion that

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\(^{19}\) Woly believes that Christian witness and service need to be carried out in ways that build healthy relations with neighbours of different religious communities. See Nicolas Jonathan Woly, _Meeting at the precincts of faith. A Study on Twentieth Century Christian and Muslim Views on Interreligious Relationships and its Impact on Missiology._ (Kampen: Drukkerij van den Berg, 1998), 423–426.

\(^{20}\) Ibid, 411. Muslim and Christian understandings of mission and _da’wah_ derive from their respective texts, teachings and traditions, and express mission in distinctive ways.

\(^{21}\) See _Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) [Comprehensive Dictionary of Indonesian Language],_ 3rd ed. ed. http://pusatbahasa.diknas.go.id/kbbi/ (accessed 15 December, 2008). The word _misi_ is defined in the broadest sense as a further meaning relates the term more specifically to Christian mission.

encompasses how Christianity and Islam respond to God’s call, and conceive of and share in, God’s purposes in the world.\footnote{The term ‘Christian mission’ refers specifically to how Christians conceive of and share in God’s purposes in the world.}

‘Missiology’ usually refers to a branch of Christian theology that studies mission theory including the definition, goal and foundation of mission, analysis of past missionary practices, and the mission task in contemporary contexts.\footnote{For definitions of ‘missiology’ from a Christian perspective see Hans-Jürgen Findeis, “Missiology”, in Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives, ed., Karl Müller (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 229-303. See also John M. Hull, Mission Shaped Church: A Theological Response (London: SCM Press 2006), 28.} For the purpose of this inquiry the term ‘missiology’ is used in a broader sense to refer to the study of how Islam and Christianity understand their role and communicate their message, and how mission and da‘wah are understood and expressed in different contexts.\footnote{See Andy Dermawan, “Landasan Epistemologis Ilmu Dakwah [Foundations for Dakwah Epistemology]”, in Metodologi Ilmu Dakwah [The Methodology of Da‘wah] (Yogyakarta: LESFI, 2002), 54-78.} This study seeks to examine how Muslims and Christians hear and respond to God’s call, and understand and participate in the purposes of God in the world.

1.2 THE METHODOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS INQUIRY

1.2.1 A comparative missiological study of two contexts

One of the purposes of this inquiry is to provide a comparative study of the complexity of issues facing Indonesia and Australia as they manage cultural and religious diversity. It was necessary to develop a methodology that brought into dialogue the experiences of Muslims and Christians in Indonesia and Australia, and their respective mission understandings. Developing a methodology suitable for a cross-discipline comparative missiological study presented some particular difficulties.
1.2.2 A cross-discipline empirical study

For this cross-discipline study the researcher developed a ‘missiological inquiry method’ drawing on traditional methods of historical inquiry, practical, contextual and feminist theological understandings, and qualitative research methods. A survey of relevant literature in the areas of mission and da ‘wah, an overview of marriage and intermarriage in Islam and Christianity, and a study of intermarriage in the particular social, cultural, legal and religious contexts of Indonesia and Australia, provide the ‘larger landscapes’ for viewing the empirical data obtained through qualitative research methods.26

Qualitative research begins with experience as lived rather than with set theories.27 Indepth interviews and narrative inquiry were the qualitative methods chosen for this study. Drawing from data gained from indepth interviews, narrative inquiry provided a way to examine how couples met and married, negotiate differences, pass on faith to children, and rethink inherited mission understandings.28 The method of narrative inquiry used in this study will be explained in more detail in Chapter Six.

This missiological study engages in theological reflection from the perspective of lived experience and gives attention to questions that arise from everyday

26 Qualitative methods enable researchers to obtain rich empirical data for understanding people and the social and cultural contexts in which they live. Those conducting qualitative research have developed a range of methods for gathering, processing, and analysis of data such as case studies, discourse analysis, action research, grounded research and narrative inquiry. Inductive approaches are used such as observation, fieldwork, interviews and interpretation of data. Qualitative research has gained increasing prominence and acceptance as a valued research practice overcoming much of the earlier hesitancy that existed in academic circles.
28 V. Minichiello, V. R. Aroni, E. Timewell and L. Alexander, Indepth Interviewing (Melbourne: Longman, 1995), 5. Respondents’ hopes, fears, feelings, intentions and actions are central in qualitative research. The methods of qualitative research used in this study and the processes involved in identifying respondents, conducting interviews and analysing narratives will be further explained in Chapter 6.
life. The different strands in the methodology used in this cross-discipline empirical study will now be explained in more detail.

1.2.3 Narrative inquiry as a valuable tool for missiological research

Narrative research is inherently interdisciplinary and one of the benefits of this method of inquiry is its cross-discipline potential. Sociologists and anthropologists who gathered and studied life stories pioneered narrative research in the social sciences. In recent decades narrative study has become important across many disciplines. The burgeoning literature on narrative inquiry reflects an increased awareness of the value of narrative as a primary way individuals make sense of the world and create a coherent self. The work of a number of scholars in the field of narrative inquiry helped inform this study.

The nature of this research project particularly lent itself to narrative study. The Indonesian context is one in which oral communication and story-telling is highly valued. Participants in the study in both contexts took up the opportunity to share stories of their life experience and narrative inquiry provided a suitable method for obtaining data for this study.

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29 Practical theology explores how religious traditions relate to concrete situations, a perspective this study also shares. Feminist and liberation methods of theological inquiry underline the importance of reflecting upon lived experience from the viewpoint of those whose voices have been ignored. Liberative theologies emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century in response to rapid social change and have become a significant expression of Christianity.


31 The work of the First Chicago School (1892–1932) is seen as a forerunner to later qualitative research involving narrative inquiry.

32 Narrative methods are increasingly being used in education, literary theory, history, philosophy, psychology, sociolinguistics, political science, sociology, psychology, the media, the health sciences and in theology.

33 The work of Polkinghorne (1988); Riessman (1993); Clandinin and Connelly (2000); and Webster and Mertova (2007) have proved particularly useful in this present inquiry.
A narrative approach has also been taken up by theologians and since the 1980s there has been an upsurge in narrative theology. Contemporary feminist scholarship has created space for more subjective approaches to the task of doing theology. Liberation, post-colonial, contextual and practical theologies have emphasised the importance of lived experience as a source for theological reflection and highlighted the way in which the life of individuals and communities is shaped by stories. Practical theologian Don Browning has remarked on “a remarkable convergence” that has occurred with narrative approaches being taken up seriously within theology, philosophy and the social sciences. This research wishes to highlight the value of applying narrative approaches to missiological and cross-discipline study.

1.2.4 Contextual approaches in fiqh and Christian theology

Various theological resources are available to religious communities as they engage in theological reflection. Indonesian scholar Dermawan has described two approaches within Islam which affect da‘wah understandings. A more deductive method of reasoning known as burhān begins with the realities of life and the social context. From this perspective da‘wah is considered to be dynamic and changing and the Qur’an is interpreted in relation to contemporary issues. In contrast bayāni begins with texts which are applied to situations. Classical understandings of the faith are viewed as normative, unchanging and absolute. These two approaches lead to different ways of interpreting Islam and da‘wah.

34 The last two decades have seen a renewed understanding of the narrative aspect of the texts of the Bible, the history of the Church and of Christian mission. Niebuhr (1941), Crites (1971), Frei (1974) and Goldberg (1981) are accredited with being pioneers in early moves in highlight the narrative aspect of the Biblical texts and the narrative quality of human experience.
37 Dermawan, “Landasan Epistemologis Ilmu dakwah”, 70.
In Islam there is consensus that the Qur’an and the Sunnah have supreme authority in the life of the Muslim community and these central sources reveal the pattern of life to be emulated. For those who have eyes to see there are also many signs of God’s providence and mercy visible in creation. In pondering human experience people are able to see the unfolding story of God’s mercy and kindness. Indonesian scholars Munzier Suparta and Harjani Hefni in *Metode Dakwah* [Da’wah Method] outline four sources for da’wah methodology: the Qur’an; the Sunnah and life stories of the Companions of the Prophet; the work of the early jurists (fuqaha); and life experience.

This discussion is particularly relevant in relation to fiqh, or Islamic jurisprudence, and the codification of principles of conduct drawn up by religious scholars interpreting the Qur’an and Hadith. According to Abdullah Saeed, Muslims adopt a range of different approaches in interpreting the sources of their faith. ‘Legalist traditionalists’ argue for the application of *syari’ah* as formulated by the classical schools of legal interpretation. ‘Modernists’ and progressive scholars advocate for more flexible interpretations that are responsive to social change. A key question facing Muslims today according to Paul Rajashekar (and one that could be equally applied to Christians), is “What aspects of the faith are immutable and what areas are open to reconstructions and reinterpretation?”

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39 The theme of reflecting on ‘the signs’ of God in creation is a recurring theme in the Qur’an, for example QS 16: 10-12; 22:63; 21: 37; 41: 39; 22: 63; 25: 47.
42 *Syari’ah* or *Shari’ah* can be defined literally as ‘the path to a watering hole’. *Syari’ah* is the eternal and moral code based on the Qur'an and Sunnah and the basis of *fiqh* Islamic jurisprudence.
44 Modernists and progressive approaches argue that rightly guided Muslims in each generation have a duty to engage in *ijtihad* (the interpretive task). In Indonesia a person who has the authority to interpret sacred texts is usually a scholar of Islamic law (*mujtahid* or *alim*), equivalent to a doctorate in divinity.
In recent decades the emergence of contextual and practical theological approaches has highlighted the importance of reflecting on lived experience. Human experience has become a ‘conversation partner’ alongside Scripture and tradition (laws, teachings doctrines, rituals and spiritual disciplines). The contextual missiological task involves discerning the presence of God in particular social, political, economic and religious settings, looking for signs of the Spirit’s work in the lives of people, and listening for how God’s prophetic word addresses people and communities in each particular time and place. “God has not left himself without a witness” (Acts 14:17).

Catholic missiologist Stephen Bevans has outlined a number of models for doing contextual theology. His schema was originally developed for Christian theology but has been adapted by Marsha Haney for application in settings where Muslims and Christians are involved in interfaith dialogue. A high concern to maintain and preserve religious identity and uphold ‘classical’ theological understandings tends to express missional goals and strategies in terms of theological tenets which have historically been handed down. Contextual theologies, in contrast, begin with the questions people bring to the human-divine relationship. Haney suggests that Muslims and Christians who adopt contextual theological models of engagement are better equipped to respond to the presence of religious diversity. Contextual approaches enable

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49 Haney thinks that the traditional method of theology, which Bevans refers to as the ‘translational’ model, tends to be dominant in interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Christians.
50 Ibid, 360-370. The *anthropological* model views revelation as something which is within human experience rather than ‘out there’. Genuine religious expression is judged in terms of its contribution to wholeness, healing, and life-affirming relationships. The *praxis* model is committed to action drawing on liberative theologies. God is understood to be present in the fabric of culture acting in history on behalf of those who are marginalised. Haney suggests that Muslims and Christians who value the praxis model offer a corrective to theological hermeneutics which has been Arab or Euro-centric. The *synthetic* model rethinks theology in context without compromising core religious belief (Islamic or Christian). Islamic da’wah and
people to rethink and revision life in community, and in the process allow some presuppositions to undergo change. According to Haney contextual approaches are increasingly relevant in a world where “crossing boundaries of religious differences grows more crucial every day”.\(^{51}\)

In contemporary contexts Muslims and Christians grapple with how to relate sacred texts to the different questions that arise out of human experience. This inquiry advocates for contextual models for missiological inquiry, which start from the questions people ask and which draw on intuitive and deductive methods of reasoning. An assumption underlying this inquiry is that religious teachings are constantly being reconsidered and re-appropriated in the light of lived experience and, likewise, missiological understandings within Islam and Christianity undergo change and continuous development.

1.2.5 Praxis approaches to theology

Liberation theologians have advocated for theology to engage in critical analysis of social contexts and take seriously the realities of oppressed groups.\(^{52}\) ‘Hermeneutical suspicion’ towards prevailing theologies and ideologies has been a stance of liberation theology, recognising that Scripture and religious traditions have been used as tools of oppression.\(^{53}\) Christian liberation and feminist theologies have sought to reinterpret Scriptures in the light of the experience of marginalisation which in turn has led to new hermeneutics and new ways of interpreting and living out the Christian faith.

\(^{51}\) Ibid, 370.

\(^{52}\) Latin American Juan Luis Segundo, for example, sees the purpose of theology as the promotion of social liberation. See Juan Luis Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1976), 8-9.

\(^{53}\) A ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ is also proposed by Elizabeth Shüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: the challenge of feminist biblical interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1984). Fiorenza seeks to uncover within Scriptures and tradition the oppressive and liberating stories of women and allow voices that have been suppressed to be heard.
Muslim scholars who have been developing a Qur’anic theology of liberation highlight God’s concern for the oppressed or mustad’afun fi’l-ard.\(^{54}\) Restoring humanity to what God intends so that human relations can express friendship based on mercy, justice, and love, has been viewed as the liberative aim of da’wah.\(^{55}\) Sillaturrahim, or ties of friendship based on mercy and love, reflect characteristics of a compassionate God.\(^{56}\) A vision of liberation is related to the Muslim understanding of the vocation of human beings as khalifah dil ardh, representing God on earth and spreading the blessing of God.\(^{57}\)

This inquiry seeks to engage in critical analysis of social contexts and is concerned with the liberative message of Islam and Christianity. Researching the experience of Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages involves engagement in theological reflection with those who have often been regarded, or have regarded themselves, as marginal members of their religious communities.

### 1.2.6 Feminist insights on ‘Friendship’: a fruitful concept for missiological inquiry

A number of feminist theologians in recent years have identified ‘friendship’ as a neglected area in Christian theological literature. McFague’s ‘theology of friendship’ offers a vision of people becoming friends and co-workers for the well-being of the world.\(^{58}\) McFague believes that human beings are called to

\(^{54}\) See Farid Esack, Qurān, Liberation and Pluralism (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997), 82-110. See also Dawam Rahardjo, Perspektif Deklarasi Mekka: Menuju Ekonomi Islam [The Perspective of the Mecca Declaration: Towards an Islamic Economy] (Bandung: Mizan, 1987). Rahardjo is an Indonesian Muslim economist and activist who has actively promoted an Islamic theology of liberation.

\(^{55}\) See for example the Qu’ranic texts QS 2: 30 and QS 3: 159.

\(^{56}\) Ibid, 12. Rahim or compassion is a key attribute of God in the Qu’ran.

\(^{57}\) H. Sukriyanto, “Filsafat Dakwah” in Metodologi Ilmu Dakwah [The Methodology of Dawah], ed., Andy Dermawan (Yogyakarta: LESFI, 2002), 1-41. Sukriyanto points out that the early mission of Islam transformed warring tribes; stopped slavery; and lifted up the status of women, orphans, the poor and the downtrodden (dhu’afa). Through da’wah God raises up humanity and enables people to act responsibly in fulfilling their role as khalifah dil ardh.

be companions not only with those who are like-minded but with the ‘different others’. Adopting an image of God as ‘Friend of the world’ makes the ministry of companionship a central aspect of mission. For Christians, being ‘friends of the Friend of the world’ means extending to outsiders God’s hospitality embodied in the shared meal. It is also a calling to ‘solidarity friendships’ which counter xenophobia and fear of the stranger.

Deep, loving and respectful friendships are characterised by reciprocal relations, mutuality, freedom to express difference and individual uniqueness. Just as Abraham was a ‘friend of God’ all human beings are invited into a relationship with God and one another that reflects friendship. This includes making room for the ‘religious stranger’. It also means allowing those who have been considered ‘outsiders’ to shape and challenge our thinking. For Elizabeth Johnson friendship connects people to the divine mystery and through friendship human beings experience affection, joy, trust and delight. Johnson widens the concept of the ‘community of saints’ to refer to the grand company of ‘friends of God and the prophets’ stretching back in time and stretching towards the future encircling the globe. Through friendship, “Holy Wisdom marks the world as her own”.

Johnson points to the way in which narrative helps human beings make sense of the “fathomless mystery of their lives”. Stories reflect, in a dynamic and interactive way, the prophetic God who is ‘Divine Friend’ and Johnson thinks that memory has an intrinsically narrative structure. In telling and listening to stories people locate themselves in cultural, historical and religious traditions which shape their identity as human subjects.

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59 McFague, Models of God, 176.
60 Ibid, 179.
62 Ibid, 79.
63 Ibid, 40-41.
65 Johnson, Friends of God and Prophets, 170.
Marjorie Hewitt Suchochi suggests that the category of ‘friendship’ is central for contemporary mission in a pluralistic world. Friends discover common interests and share their deepest selves. They discover points of irreducible disagreement as well as points of agreement. Friendship does not mean sameness but “a commitment to respect the other in difference, and to work with the other in areas of common agreement”.

Through friendship horizons are enlarged. In Suchochi’s view friendship across religious and cultural lines opens up the possibility of mutual transformation. As she explains: “Friendship does not require that each become the other, only that each offer oneself to the other and be willing to receive from the other…” Suchochi has the conviction that God is leading religious communities to become “a community of communities” moving beyond isolation and fear. She believes that God is calling human beings today to “a new and more intense form of mission activity in the world today – not to convert the world to our religion, but to convert the world towards friendship.”

Mary Hunt suggests that ‘friendship’ has great potential as an interdisciplinary concept. She also thinks that it is a rich but neglected concept in theological study. Feminist theologians who have highlighted the importance of ‘friendship’ as a theological concept such as McFague, Carmichael, Hunt, Johnson and Suchochi have encouraged the development of relational and narrative approaches to theology, aspects which are at the heart of this missiological inquiry.

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67 Ibid, 115.
68 Ibid, 83. As friends Christians can work with others in creating community and alleviating the ills in the world.
69 Ibid, 21,109. Suchochi refers to the ‘minor strand’ in Christian theology which has affirmed God as working universally.
71 See Jean Clandinin and Michael D Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000), 189. Relationships are central to narrative inquiry. Women researchers often point to the intersecting of the domestic and the public, and the way in which the personal has wider social and political implications.
1.2.7 Epistemological underpinnings of this study

Human beings respond to ‘ultimate meaning’ in a variety of ways. This inquiry, which explores how Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages come to understand God’s purposes in their lives and the life of the world, begins by recognising the subjective nature of human experience and the fact that all knowledge is partial, limited and contextual. Although this is the case, it is also possible to discern meaning inherent in the experience and stories of human beings. John D’Arcy May has highlighted the importance of empathy and imaginative vision as we reflect on the meaning of human experience and engage in the ‘hermeneutics of dialogue’.72 This approach is shared by this inquiry.

Some theory of human and social action necessarily informs any piece of social research. In *Fundamental Practical Theology* Don Browning combines methods drawn from the social sciences with theology. He engages with the ‘hermeneutical turn’ within philosophy represented by Gadamer, Hauerwas, Heidegger, Haberman and Ricoeur.73 Browning also draws on the work of John Dewey to demonstrate the value of inductive learning methods for theology.74 The epistemological assumptions underpinning Browning’s approach are dialogical and practical rather than theoretical and abstract. Browning’s practical theology is set in a confessional and narrative bound context where ‘theory’ is not distinct from ‘practice’. He suggests that theology can benefit from cross-discipline engagement with such fields as cultural studies, anthropology, psychology, ecology and sociology. The epistemological understandings reflected in Browning’s approach are shared by this inquiry.

This study builds on the work of those who have developed a positive dialogue between theology and the social sciences.

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73 Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, 87, 111.
1.2.8 ‘Hermeneutical conversations’: dialogical approaches

Practical theologians have pointed out that the language of God’s engagement with the world is dialogical and so theology too, in seeking to do justice to people’s experience, should be done in a way that is dialogical. Laurie Green outlines a method of doing theology that makes lived experience the heart of the theological enterprise.\(^{75}\) For Green, theology should be immersed in local contexts, be rooted in experience and reflect the spiritual hunger of people for transformation. In Green’s understanding God is located not in formalised religion alone but can be encountered in all places by all people, and is particularly found amongst those who suffer oppression. Green’s ‘pastoral cycle’ draws attention to the Spirit’s presence within lived experience and how God is encountered in the midst of life’s situations. Scripture and religious tradition need to be brought into conversation with the world where people wrestle with problems that affect their lives and the lives of those around them. Discerning liberating options becomes the mission task, pinpointing the “signs of God that exist within the culture.”\(^{76}\)

Don Browning’s ‘Fundamental Theology’ and Groome’s ‘Shared Praxis Approach’ provide other examples of practical theological engagement that are responsive to the realities of human experience, and cultural and social change. For Browning theology is not only systematic reflection on the historical self-understanding of a particular religious tradition but also the study of ‘the human document’.\(^{77}\) Browning’s model proposes a dynamic and historically situated ‘hermeneutical conversation’.\(^{78}\) Attention needs to be given to practical wisdom as much as to theoretical reason, and the language of faith invariably uses symbol, myth and metaphor, and is shaped by narrative.\(^{79}\)

\(^{76}\) Ibid, 143.
\(^{77}\) Don S, Browning, A Fundamental Practical Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 5, 11.
\(^{78}\) Ibid, 2, 79.
\(^{79}\) In the view of the researcher, Browning tends to reflect the synthetic model in Bevan’s models of contextual theological engagement. Attention is given to Scripture, tradition and core religious beliefs with responsiveness to social change and the realities of human experience.
Browning has drawn attention to the way in which experiences of disruption and dislocation may lead to a questioning of inherited traditions and ‘taken-for-granted’ assumptions. A reconstruction of religious understandings may emerge out of disrupting and dislocating experiences.\textsuperscript{80} This is reflected in the Fig. 1.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig1.png}
\caption{Based on Don Browning, \textit{A Fundamental Theology} (1991)}
\end{figure}

Entering an interfaith marriage requires many adjustments. Couples need to negotiate their relationship and negotiate their relationship with their extended families. They may face various legal, religious and societal pressures. For some the experience can be one of ‘dislocation’ and of the discovery of surprising connections in the context of their intimate partnership.

Groome’s model of theological inquiry begins with concrete situations and practical concerns. Like Green and Browning, Groome envisages the emergence of new understandings and new praxis as people critically reflect on lived experience, the Scriptures, and religious traditions in conversation with the social and cultural milieu in which they live.\textsuperscript{81} Groome’s \textit{Shared Praxis Approach} names five ‘movements’ in theological reflection. The ‘first movement’ involves naming a particular situation. Participants are then invited to share their stories in a biographical way using critical memory and

\textsuperscript{80} Browning’s original question is expanded in this inquiry in order to explore how both Christians and Muslims go about re-examining inherited religious traditions and mission understandings.

\textsuperscript{81} Thomas H. Groome, \textit{Christian Religious Education}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Melbourne: Dove Communications, 1980/1984). The pluriform character of every religious tradition means that invigorating debate takes place within every religious community.
reconstruction of events. The ‘third movement’ involves encountering the
Christian community’s story and vision and seeing ways in which the Christian
Story helps participants make sense of their own story. The ‘fourth movement’
entails a ‘dialectical hermeneutic’ between the Christian Story and participants’
stories. The ‘fifth movement’ takes the form of a conversation that involves
mutual critique. The ‘Christian Story and Vision’ addresses, challenges, affirms
and critiques the actions and understandings of participants; and the story and
vision of participants throws light on and brings out further nuances of meaning
of the Christian story.\footnote{82}

Groome’s Shared Praxis Approach was originally framed for theological
reflection within the Christian community. It is a rather more complex exercise
when people from two religious traditions grapple not only with their own
religious tradition but also the religious tradition of their partner. The approach
of practical theologians Green, Browning and Groome have helped shape the
process of missiological inquiry adopted in this study.

\subsection{1.2.9 Locating the researcher}

\textit{“The construction of any work always bears the mark of the person who
created it”}.\footnote{83}

Cross-cultural experience has had an important role in shaping the researcher
and this research has its roots partly in my own experience. The Australian
context in which I grew up has itself experienced dramatic cultural and
religious transformation in recent decades. I have been working with culturally
diverse congregations in the Uniting Church over many years. The changing
cultural mosaic of Australia is reflected in Australian churches and in the
presence of other religious communities.

\footnotetext[82]{Thomas H. Groome, \textit{Christian Religious Education}, 217. Some participants more readily
engage in this reflective process than others and the role of the Christian educator may involve
helping people access the Christian Story, its Scriptures and tradition.}

\footnotetext[83]{Catherine Riessman, \textit{Narrative Analysis} (London: Sage, 1993), v.}
My interest in Islam deepened from my first friendships with Muslims and a formative experience was travelling to Indonesia in the 1970s. Subsequently I have had an ongoing connection with Indonesia over the last three decades. Marrying someone with an Indonesian Muslim heritage prompted me to embark on missiological reflection and reconstruction in my own life.\footnote{Though my partner later decided to adopt the Christian faith my extended family in Indonesia represents a snapshot of many Indonesian families in which there are Muslims and Christians.}

A third ‘context’ which was very important in contributing to my own missiological reflection was as living and working as a tutor in mission studies at Selly Oak Colleges, in the religiously diverse city of Birmingham. This provided a vibrant setting for cross-cultural and interreligious encounter.\footnote{I first went to Selly Oak Colleges in order to meet Lesslie Newbigin as part of my Masters missiological research project in the early 1990s. Later I returned to work as a Tutor in Mission Studies at the United College of the Ascension (1995–2000). During that time there was the opportunity to engage with people from many parts of the world. Interfaith scholars such as Kenneth Cragg, John Hick and John Hull were amongst guests who visited Selly Oak Colleges.} A recurring missiological question for students related to how Christians are to interpret the presence of other faiths and what new understandings might be formulated to respond to the reality of religious diversity. My current role as a theology teacher and cross-cultural educator at Nungalinya College, a site for the training of Indigenous people in Darwin, provides another context to reflect on intercultural encounter and God’s presence in the midst of religious diversity.

The presence of cultural and religious plurality has challenged and deepened faith and given me an appreciation of the richness that is found in the diversity of religious and cultural expressions. From this perspective, the \textit{Imago Dei} cannot be contained in only one idea of what it means to be human, but ‘we together’, the whole human community with its variety and difference, multitude of skin colours and occupations, different talents, abilities, ages, geographic locations and religious identities.\footnote{These comments are drawn from the Theological Consultation which the researcher attended on the theme “Re-visioning Justice from the Margins of the New World of the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century” held in Rio de Janeiro, August 19–22, 2008.}
From an early age I have been shaped by an understanding of the power of religious narratives. The Christian story provided a framework for meaning and context for understanding the world and God’s presence in it and has significantly shaped my identity. My theological appreciation of narrative has been enlivened by feminist theology and interfaith dialogue. Cross-cultural and interfaith learning takes place most effectively in the context of sharing stories and story-telling is part of the fabric of women’s gatherings. Narrative and dialogical approaches to faith open up ways to understand God in terms of plurality, diversity, and connectivity. These things are present in the research design of this inquiry and help shape this inquiry.

1.3 MUSLIM–CHRISTIAN INTERMARRIAGE: A LARGELY UNTAPPED SOURCE FOR REFLECTING ON CHRISTIAN MISSION AND DA’WAH

This inquiry starts from the assumption that Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages have a dialogue of life that is worth taking seriously. Their married life represents a context in which spontaneous interaction is part of everyday life. It has been noted that interfaith dialogue is most vital when participants encounter one another at the deepest levels of human life, and in the midst of ordinary life. This ‘dialogue of life’ enables partners to share spiritual insights towards mutual understanding and joint action.⁸⁷ Jan Slomp, a former Dutch missionary in Pakistan and past head of the bureau of Christian–Muslim encounter for the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, has suggested that interreligious marriages could be viewed as a microcosm of the

wider society in which they live. He thought that such couples might provide a bridge between the two religious traditions and their experience could contribute to the urgently needed dialogue between Islam and Christianity.  

Indian theologian Israel Selvanayagam noted that churches tend to be more focused on denouncing mixed-faith couples than actively offering pastoral support. Arlene Swindler expressed this idea more strongly by stating that Christian theology has had the effect of tearing interfaith couples apart rather than blessing their marriages.

Wesley Ariarajah a leading voice in ecumenical and interfaith theology has highlighted the need for religious communities to develop mechanisms to welcome interfaith couples. He conducted a limited study of couples in Colombo and found that whilst some were happily married many faced significant hurdles. There was a pronounced lack of adequate pastoral response from their religious communities and whilst Ariarajah does not seek to promote or idealise such marriages he urged the churches to develop “a theology that makes us hospitable”. If couples face constant disapproval leading them to withdraw from active involvement, religious communities will be deprived of the benefit of their experience.

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89 Israel Selvanayagam, Relating to People of Other Faiths: Insights from the Bible (Tiruvalla: CSS-BTTBPSA, 2004), 119. Chapter six is on the subject of intermarriage.
90 See Arlene Swindler, “Introduction”, Marriage Among The Religions of The World (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), i. Swindler refers to marriage as a main vehicle of self-maintenance for religious communities. She suggests that a study of intermarriage can serve as a window into the beliefs and social systems of religions.
91 See Wesley Ariarajah, Not Without My Neighbour: Issues in Interfaith Relations (Geneva: WCC, 1999), 89-92. His small study of interfaith couples in Colombo discovered that many experienced a sense of abandonment and isolation. Others faced antagonism from their religious community. As long as religious communities have a fortress mentality and treat other faiths as rivals, regulations governing inter-religious marriages, he suggests, will continue to be punitive.
92 See Gé M. Speelman, “Mixed Marriages”,149. Mixed marriage couples in the Netherlands can not always be a bridge between their communities because of the attitudes of religious leaders. Some ministers adopt a negative approach and some imams refuse to be involved in the solemnisation of interfaith marriages. To reduce potential tension Speelman thinks some couples avoid discussion on religious differences and there may be a higher proportion of nominal Christians and Muslims in interfaith marriages.
To date the experience of Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages has been a largely untapped source for our understanding of interfaith dialogue and for missiological reflection. A small number of scholars and religious leaders have suggested that Muslim–Christian couples might help point the way in future developments in relations between the two faiths though to date this expectation has not been realised. For these reasons it is hoped that a study of Muslim–Christian couples and how they respond to the challenges of religious diversity in the microcosm of their marriage, might yield insights that may be useful and have wider application for missiology and for Muslim–Christian relations in a world where religious differences often lead to conflict.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

1.4.1 Two important studies on Muslim–Christian intermarriage

Gé M. Speelman conducted research on Muslim–Christian intermarriage in the Netherlands in a study of ten Egyptian–Dutch couples. Speelman’s study is one that in style and approach most closely relates to the present inquiry. Speelman began her research on the hunch that couples who live in interreligious marriages could be considered the real experts on interreligious dialogue by virtue of their experience. She was interested in the praxis of faith and her study shares with this inquiry the view that theology needs to grapple with questions that arise from real life. Speelman combined qualitative empirical research with a theoretical component, as is the intention of this study. She conducted indepth interviews but used Webster’s ‘grounded theory’

95 Speelman focuses on communication between Muslims and Christians whereas for this study missiological questions are central.
as the tool for analysis whereas this study uses narrative inquiry. Speelman’s research focused on communication and how interfaith couples might contribute to our understanding of effective ways to communicate across religious differences. Speelman notes that a number of theological questions are likely to faced by couples such as contrasting views on salvation and she thinks that extended exposure to the faith of one’s partner is likely to influence the way people interpret their own faith.97 Speelman discusses some theological insights of respondents but tends to place these within a framework of Christian discussions relating to the theology of religions. Though interested in how her respondents interacted with their Christian and Muslim religious traditions, Speelman made the decision to limit her lines of inquiry recognising the complexities of the ‘intra-Islamic debate’.98

This inquiry decided on a rather different course of action. Indepth interviews enabled the faith and mission understandings of Christian and Muslim respondents to be accessible to narrative inquiry and the researcher felt that it was important to incorporate these within the scope of this inquiry. Developing an awareness of misional understandings within Islam was made possible through a study of literature on da’wah and Muslim mission understandings in the Indonesian language which is far more comprehensive that what is available in English.99 Some Christian scholars have sympathetically discussed da’wah and the history of the spread of Islam.100 There have also been a number of Muslim scholars who have ventured to write about Christian mission understandings.101 It is clearly a challenge for a non-Muslim researcher to

97 Ibid, 22, 143.
98 Ibid, 277. Speelman thought that the intra-dialogue within Islam lay beyond the scope her own competencies.
99 The researcher is fluent in Indonesian and has lived and studied theology in Indonesia.
engage with the mission understandings of another faith community but omitting the narratives of missiological reflections of Muslim respondents from this inquiry, in the view of the researcher, would have significantly lessened the impact of this study.

A second major volume on interfaith marriage has been produced by Abdullahi A. An-Na’im who edited *Interreligious Marriages Among Muslims: Negotiating Religious and Social Identity in Family and Community*. His volume brings together three studies on interreligious marriages between Muslims and non-Muslims in India, Senegal and Turkey. The method of inquiry used was ethnographic study, placing intermarriage in the context of national laws, socio-cultural practices and historical and political inter-communal relations.

Contrary to the view that Muslims invariably marry within their religious group An-Na’im’s volume offers country studies that reveal how Muslims in various contexts have married, and continue to marry, across religious boundaries though this violates generally accepted *syari’ah* prescriptions. An-Na’im points to the diversity within Islam and competing interpretations of how Muslims are to interpret, and practise their faith in multireligious and multiethnic societies. An-Na’im’s volume represents an important resource on Muslim intermarriage. He advocates for reform so that Muslim communities promote gender equality, give recognition of interfaith couples and accommodate people of other faiths on an equal footing. In An-Na’im’s view, a radical reformulation of Muslim law is required to make it contextually relevant to multicultural and multifaith settings.

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have examined relations between the two faith communities and respective mission understandings. These will be outlined in Chapter 2.


103 Ibid, 24-25.

104 Ibid, 9.
1.4.2 The ‘Missiological Inquiry Approach’

In summary then, the methodology adopted in this inquiry draws on traditional methods of research such as historical inquiry and literature surveys, qualitative methods of research (in-depth interviewing and narrative inquiry), and the work of practical theologians.

As highlighted by Groome there is a dynamic ‘dialectical conversation’ between people’s lived experience and their religious tradition. People’s understanding of the world and of God’s presence within it undergoes change. The ‘Missiological Inquiry Approach’ developed for this study seeks to address some of the challenges involved in conducting a cross-discipline, comparative missiological study. An outline of the various steps or ‘movements’ in the missiological inquiry approach are outlined in Figure 2.

The six steps in the ‘Missiological Inquiry Approach’ are:

i. naming the question
ii. setting the scenes
iii. gathering information
iv. listening to the stories and visions of participants
v. revisiting inherited understandings
vi. and ‘reconstructing mission’
Fig. 2. The ‘Missiological Inquiry Approach’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missiological Inquiry Approach</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Adapted from Groome’s ‘Shared Praxis Approach’)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Naming the question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Living in religiously diverse settings requires further missiological reflection. What can be learnt from the experience of Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages in Indonesia and Australia for this task? (CHAPTERS 1-2)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Setting the scenes</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. A historical survey of marriage and intermarriage in Islam and Christianity and an investigation into Muslim-Christian intermarriage in Indonesia and Australia ‘sets the scene’ for this study. (CHAPTERS 3, 4, 5)</td>
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<th>Gathering information</th>
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<tr>
<td>3. The method of indepth interviewing and narrative inquiry are explained. These tools enable the stories of Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages to be heard and analysed. (CHAPTER 6)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Participants share stories and visions</th>
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<tr>
<td>4. Participants share stories of meeting and marrying, negotiating differences and developing interfaith families. Implicit missional understandings are explored. (CHAPTERS 7-8)</td>
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<th>Inherited understandings revisited</th>
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<tr>
<td>5. In a dialectical relationship between experience, tradition and religious teachings, inherited understandings may undergo change. A ‘typology of missional types’ is developed from the mission approaches of participants. (CHAPTER 9)</td>
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<th>Reconstructing Mission</th>
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<tr>
<td>6. The responses of Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages becomes the lens for envisioning new missional understanding and praxis in religiously diverse settings. (CHAPTERS 10-11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4.3 Outline of Thesis Structure

Chapter One has provided an overview of the scope of this missiological inquiry, its methodology and theological and epistemological underpinnings. The next task is to locate couples within “storied landscapes”. Chapter Two positions this inquiry in the context of missiology and contemporary thinking about mission and da’wah, and the contexts of Christian mission and da’wah in Indonesia and Australia. Chapter Three explores various ways marriage and intermarriage has been viewed within Islam and Christianity. The complex landscape of interreligious marriage in Indonesia, where there has been strained relationships between Muslims and Christians, and contested views within the Muslim community in relation to intermarriage, is surveyed in Chapter Four. Intermarriage in the Australian setting is the subject of Chapter Five.

Chapter Six explains the benefits and challenges of using narrative inquiry as a method of research and explains how indepth interviewing and narrative inquiry are utilised in the gathering and analysis of data. Chapters Seven and Eight present selected narratives drawn from empirical data to explore narratives of meeting and marrying; negotiating differences; passing on faith to children and the building of interfaith families. Key themes and missiological implications of narratives are explored and analysed. Chapter Nine provides a description of the various missiological approaches of respondents and a ‘Typology of Missiological Approaches’ is developed. A comparative overview of the two contexts of Indonesia and Australia, and an overview of the main missiological findings of this inquiry, are provided in Chapter Ten. The Conclusion highlights the relevance of this study for the field of missiology and identifies areas for further research.

105 See Riessman, Narrative Analysis, 210. The ‘storied landscapes’ in this study include: contemporary missiological reflection on religious plurality; Muslim and Christian understandings of marriage and intermarriage; and the cultural, religious, political, legal and social contexts of intermarriage in Australia and Indonesia.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

This inquiry is a response to the “inescapable necessity of setting our theology and missiology in the context of contemporary religious plurality”. The aim of this inquiry is to explore implications for missiology that can be drawn from the experience of Muslims and Christians in interreligious marriages in the multicultural and diverse contexts of Indonesia and Australia. In Indonesia it has long been the case that people of different faiths have lived alongside one another. In Australia it is only in recent decades that religious diversity has become an integral part of daily life. In both settings cultural and religious diversity creates many challenges and there is a new urgency for Muslims and Christians to explore what faithful witness entails and learn to live together in mutually enriching ways.

Catherine Riessman has extensively used narrative inquiry methods in her social research. She describes the social researcher as an “interpreter of the lives of others who crosses borders and enters the lives of others as historically situated, vulnerable observers and witnesses”. Reissman’s description comes close to my own understanding of the role of the researcher in this inquiry. In this study the Muslim and Christian participants are the real ‘border crossers’. Their life together represents a ‘living dialogue’ between two religious traditions and their missional understandings. It is expected that their stories will offer insights which contribute to the search for fresh ways to conceive of mission and da’wah in religiously plural settings.

CHAPTER 2
POSITIONING THIS INQUIRY IN THE FIELD OF MISSIOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter positions this inquiry in the field of missiology and explores some of the key themes that have been emerging in recent years as Muslims and Christians rethink mission and da‘wah and take seriously the reality of religious plurality. Some important missiological issues that arise in the contexts of Indonesia and Australia are also examined. We begin this discussion with two examples which illustrate efforts to reformulate mission and da‘wah understandings.

When the General Secretary of the Uniting Churches in the Netherlands visited Indonesia in the year 2000 he issued a formal confession.¹ At a gathering of Indonesian church leaders Dr B. Plaisier stated that the Dutch churches and missionary sending agencies had left behind a legacy that had contributed to the gulf that now exists between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia.² In Plaisier’s view Christians need to embrace new ways of relating to Muslims based on cooperation and discard theologies that had been imbued with a sense of superiority.

The second example comes from Indonesian Muslim scholar Muhammad Ali who has proposed a ‘new mission paradigm’. Ali believes that new understandings of mission should begin with the question, “What should be the relationship between self and others in the midst of religious and cultural diversity if we want humanity as far as is possible, to live in peace and well-

¹ Subsequently the three Uniting Churches formed The Protestant Church in the Netherlands in 2004.
² See Jan S. Aritonang, Sejarah Perjumpaan Kristen dan Islam di Indonesia [History of the Encounter between Christianity and Islam in Indonesia] (Jakarta: Gunung Mulia, 2005), 608. A copy of the confession made to the Assembly of the Fellowship of Indonesian Churches (PGI) meeting at Palangkaraya is included.
being?"³ Pointing to the pluralistic vision of the Qur’an Ali challenged his fellow Muslims to lay aside the notion that Islam alone is the authentic and perfect way of knowing God and build relationships with others based on respect for difference, and recognition of our common humanity as those who are created by God.⁴

These two examples set the scenes for this chapter in terms of hearing Muslim and Christian voices calling for a reformulation of mission understandings. Before looking to the future it is important to recognise that there is a painful legacy that is not easy to overcome and relations between the two faiths “bears the scars that Christians and Muslims have inflicted on each other in previous times and places.”⁵

2.2 OVERCOMING A PAINFUL LEGACY

The rapid spread of Islam and its conquest of the eastern part of the Roman Empire challenged the political power and religious ascendancy of Christendom.⁶ Despite common theological roots and some early positive interactions the relationship between Muslims and Christians has tended to be one of hostility and rivalry.⁷ Well-known scholar of Islam, Thomas Arnold thought that the roots of the conflict between Muslims and Christians stemmed from sibling rivalry with each claiming to be the most authentic children of

³ Muhammad Ali, Teologi Pluralis-Multikultural [Theology of Pluralism-Multiculturalism], x.
⁴ Ibid, viii-ix.
⁵ Taken from an unpublished paper by David Gill, former General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia entitled “Enlarging the Circle of Trust”, presented at a meeting of the Liaison Committee of Muslims and Christians in Sydney in 2001.
⁶ See John L. Esposito, What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam, 57, 82-83. The rate at which Islam spread in its first few centuries was awe-inspiring. Islam offered an alternative religious and political vision and Christianity lost its stronghold in the Middle East, Syria, Persia, Egypt and in North Africa.
⁷ See Stephen Neill, A History of Christian Missions, 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin, 1986), esp. Chapter 4. Mission as conquest became the underlying mission paradigm after Constantine converted and Christianity became the religion of the Empire. In the post-colonial period, the rise of America as the new imperial power, its dominance in the global capitalist market, the onslaught of modernism, the unresolved Palestinian problem and the war in Iraq have all aggravated a sense of bitterness and deep suspicion towards Christians and the West.

32
Abraham. Karen Armstrong makes the point that Islamic distrust of the West can be directly related to experiences of colonialism. Overcoming the mistakes of the past represents a major challenge.

Catholic theologian Robert Schreiter suggests that the relationship between Muslims and Christians has become an urgent mission priority. The United Church of Canada reflects this in a statement of the National Assembly in 2006 where it stated that reconciliation between Muslims and Christians was, “at the heart of what the Church needs to be about as we seek to be faithful participants in God’s mission today.” Church documents and statements of Muslim and Christian leaders have highlighted the importance of a renewed commitment to move beyond stereotypes towards mutual understanding and respect.

Islam and Muslim–Christian relations have emerged as major areas of concern and academic interest in recent years. Muslim immigration in the West, and debates about integration and multiculturalism have brought a heightened awareness of the presence and relevance of Islam. Anglican Archbishop Rowan Williams has stated that enhancing understanding between Christians and Muslims is a matter of utmost importance.

There have also been efforts to better understand the underlying grievances that have led to international conflicts and global terrorism. It has been recognised

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9 See Karen Armstrong, Islam: A Short History (London: Phoenix Press, 2001), 127. Islamic hostility to the West in Armstrong’s view originates in the many negative historical experiences of European colonisation of Islamic countries (Algeria: 1830; Aden: 1839; Tunisia: 1881; Egypt: 1882; the Sudan: 1889; and Libya and Morocco: 1912). After the war Britain and France set up protectorates in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq and Transjordan breaking promises of independence that had been made to Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire.
11 The document That We May Know Each Other (Toronto: UCC, 2006) was formally received by the United Church national Assembly. Congregations were encouraged to develop “new ways of theologically understanding Islam and its relationship to Christianity”.
12 Esposito, What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam, 169-170. ‘Muslim invisibility’ in the West of only a few decades ago has been replaced by increased interest as well as increased concern.
13 See for example the lecture by the Archbishop of Canterbury in Egypt, Rowan Williams, “Christians and Muslims before the One God”, (a paper given at Al-Azhar al-Sharif, Cairo, 11 September 2004).
that there exist many critical issues that Muslims and Christians need to address if relations between the two faith communities are to be placed on a better footing. Douglas Pratt names a number of problematic areas for the two faiths, one of which is mission and da’wah and the need to develop dialogical approaches.\textsuperscript{14} This concern has been highlighted at a number of Muslim–Christian dialogue meetings.\textsuperscript{15} The Chambésy gathering in 1976 affirmed that mission was an obligation in both religious traditions and should be conducted in respectful ways whereby people are free to form their own religious convictions.\textsuperscript{16}

Other dialogue gatherings have called for respectful approaches in the conduct of Christian mission and da’wah.\textsuperscript{17} At a Muslim–Christian gathering in Amersfoort in the Netherlands in November 2000, delegates took stock of the various initiatives since 1991 and outlined areas requiring further work. These included: law and society, human rights, religious freedom, communal tensions, and the nature of mission and da’wah. The document “Striving Together in Dialogue: A Muslim–Christian Call to Reflection and Action” condemned unethical mission approaches and reaffirmed the liberty of all people to “convince and be convinced and, at the same time, respect each other’s


\textsuperscript{15} See Stuart E. Brown, ed., \textit{Meeting in Faith: Twenty Years of Christian–Muslim Conversations} (Geneva: WCC, 1989). The WCC sponsored dialogue at Chambésy in 1976 was perhaps the first occasion in the history of Christian–Muslim relations where members of the two faiths met to discuss mission and da’wah. The two conveners were David Kerr, then Director of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at Selly Oak and Khurshid Ahmad, Director of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, formally of Karachi. Of the 16 participants two were from Indonesia, Protestant Professor Ihromi from the Jakarta Theological College and Dr Muhammad Rasjidi, former Minister of Religious Affairs then Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Indonesia. The co-chair Khurshid Ahmad described it as an experience of entering “uncharted waters”. Discussions at times were heated.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. Emilo Castro’s comments are cited in “Consultation of Christian and Muslims concerning Christian Mission and Islamic Da’wah” Chambésy, Switzerland, \textit{International Review of Mission} LXV, no. 260 (1976), 130.

\textsuperscript{17} “Issues in Christian–Muslim Relations: Ecumenical Considerations” (1992) was received by the WCC Central Committee. The document reported on key themes from a number of dialogue gatherings highlighting seven ‘critical issues’ for relations between Muslims and Christians, one being interfaith marriage and another mission/da’wah.
religious integrity, faithfulness to one’s tradition and loyalty to one’s community.” An extract of the document stated:

Many missionary activities, and the methods they use, arouse legitimate suspicions. There are situations where humanitarian service is undertaken for ulterior motives and takes advantage of the vulnerability of people. Thus the clear distinction between witness and proselytism becomes crucial.

Three decades after Chambésy there have been renewed calls for ethical guidelines on conversion and respectful mission practices. On the Muslim side there have been continuing suspicions that Christians reflect a crusader mentality and colonising spirit in their mission approaches. On the Christian side there have been concerns about continuing discrimination of Christian minorities in Muslim countries, and the difficulties Christians encounter when trying to obtain church building licenses.

For Muslim scholar Ataullah Siddiqui it is a matter of priority that Muslims and Christians discover ways to relate more positively to one another. The experience of Muslims living as minority communities, and minority communities that live in the midst of Muslim majorities, issue a challenge to their respective communities to review their theology of other faiths, and embark on a search for a new language to express communal belonging.

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19 Ibid, Section 11.
20 See Hans Ucko, “Towards an Ethical Code of Conduct for Religious Conversions”, Voices from the Third World 30, no. 1 June (2007), 92-116. There have been a number of important studies on conversion including Ali Köse (1996); Hefner (1987; 1993); Wingate (1997); Lamb and Bryant (1999); and Zebiri, (2008).
21 See Elizabeth Scantlebury, “Islamic Da’wā and Christian Mission”, Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations 7, no.3 (1996), 260. Scantlebury suggests this accusation in some cases can be substantiated but missionary work at times has also opposed governments and powerful commercial interests. See also Attaullah Siddiqui, Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Twentieth Century, 26. The experience of colonialism and “allegedly conspiratorial missionary activities” lead Muslims to believe that Christians invariably adopt a crusading mentality.
2.3 THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF CHRISTIAN MISSION AND DA‘WAH

2.3.1 Old and new mission paradigms

The World Missionary Conference meeting in Edinburgh in 1910, reflecting the achievements of the nineteenth century Protestant missionary movement, exhibited a spirit of confidence that the Great Commission could be fulfilled in their life time. World-wide evangelism was the stated mission goal expressed in the catch cry, ‘the evangelisation of the world in this generation’. Christian missionaries and representatives of mission agencies gathered to discuss strategies rather than to debate this goal.23

The next forty years saw massive social upheaval.24 Unprecedented changes in the twentieth century led to a major rethinking of Christian mission. Words such as ‘crisis’ and ‘confusion’ were used to describe the state of Christian missions.

The association of Christian mission with colonialism led to a deep questioning of the very legitimacy of mission. This is expressed in the words of Ofelia Ortega who described past missionary methods and theologies as being, “saturated with ideologies of domination and triumphalist notions”.25

A vast volume of literature on Christian mission was produced addressing the need to seriously reconsider mission in a post-colonial and changing world

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23 See W. Paton, “The Jerusalem Meeting – And After”, International Review of Missions 18, July (1929). Paton refers to the Jerusalem meeting in terms of its confidence that the Great Commission could be fulfilled. From three hundred missionaries in 1815, there were twenty one thousand by 1910.
24 In the years which followed there was the Russian revolution and the spread of Marxist ideology, two world wars, the renaissance of indigenous cultures and religions, the emergence of nationalism and the dismantling of the colonial empires. The researcher’s Masters degree focused on trends in twentieth century mission thinking, in particular the writings of Christian missiologist, Lesslie Newbigin. Two world wars discredited the ‘Christian West’ revealing moral corruption and the abusive nature of European powers.
context. The ‘problemisation of mission’ according to educationalist John Hull could be linked to the impact of secularism and globalisation, greater contact people had with other faiths, and the realisation that attempts to convert the world had failed.26

Today many of the assumptions that underpinned understandings of Christian mission a century ago in Edinburgh appear a world away. The ‘Christendom model’ of Christian mission has been severely criticised. The dominant mission paradigm of saving souls has tended to be replaced with mission understandings which encompass a commitment to liberation and transformation, and an emphasis on mission being carried out in culturally sensitive and respectful ways.27 Service and social action, justice and caring for creation are now considered integral aspects of Christian mission.28 The World Conference on Mission and Evangelism meeting in Athens in 2005 highlighted ‘reconciliation’ as a new mission paradigm in mission thinking.29

In the midst of the changing landscape of Christian mission the subject of interreligious dialogue has been brought into central frame. Sharp differences have emerged in discussions about how Christians should respond to the presence of other faiths. Ecumenical and Catholic theology have affirmed dialogue with other faiths as an essential element of mission, originating in the

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dialogical nature of God.\textsuperscript{30} Constructing new missiological understandings needs to take seriously the presence of other faiths as dialogue partners.\textsuperscript{31}

Not only Christianity but Islam too has been confronted with many questions as it engages with the contemporary world context.\textsuperscript{32} The resurgence within Islam has led to an intensification of the internal debate concerning what it means to be Muslim today, and contesting visions about how to relate Islamic principles to the life of societies. In many parts of the world, Muslims are re-examining their faith in the light of the changing realities of their societies, and new approaches to diversity and pluralism.\textsuperscript{33}

One of the major dilemmas confronting Muslims world-wide is choosing between literal approaches that maintain traditional religious understandings unaltered, and support for the wider use and application of \textit{ijtihad}.\textsuperscript{34} Some reviverist Muslim movements have conceived of mission as turning back the tide recalling the glorious achievements of Islam’s past.\textsuperscript{35} Others push for contextual ways to reformulate Muslim identity reinterpreting Islam for new situations.\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item See Bevans and Schroeder, \textit{Constants in Context}, 378-385.
  \item Haney, “The Practice of Theological Engagement in Interreligious Dialogue, 357-371. Haney speaks of the continuous development of an Islamic missiology, especially as related to the institutionalisation of Islam in the Western context post September 11, 2001 and the need for both internal and external dialogues to focus on understanding the specific purposes and consequences of interreligious dialogue.
  \item \textit{Ijtihad} is the task of making a legal decision using the legal sources using independent judgment.
  \item Contextual approaches were represented early on in Islam by such voices as Umar b. Khattab, the second caliph who made efforts towards developing a methodology of Islamic interpretation of religious texts (\textit{tafsir}) and who showed a significant degree of interreligious understanding. Sufism has also represented a rich stream within Islam and has shown openness to other faiths, emphasising the limited nature of human beings’ knowledge of God.
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Traditionally educated scholars and jurists or ‘ulama are custodians of the classical traditions. In some contexts ‘ulama are instrumental in reformulating jurisprudence relevant for contemporary contexts, and in other settings have been resistant to change. In most Muslim societies however tradition and syari’ah are constantly being reimagined, reconstructed, argued over, defended, and modified.37

For both Christianity and Islam the landscape of faith over recent decades has been one of dramatic change and flux. In responding to the challenges posed by contemporary contexts that are increasingly diverse and multicultural Muslims and Christians have recognised they need to take serious account of the ‘other’.

2.3.2 Responses to the ‘other’

Pluralism has been described as the key challenge confronting the contemporary world. In one sense religious diversity is not something new. It has been part of the history of humanity but today life is increasingly lived in the context of religious diversity and this requires us to take serious account of the ‘other’.38 The mobility of people has transformed ‘dialogue with strangers’ into a ‘dialogue between neighbours’ provoking questions about how God works in the lives of people of other faiths.

Being confronted with the reality of other religious traditions has always provoked questions. At the 25th General Dutch Missionary Conference in 1911 the question was asked in reference to Islam, “Why has God allowed such an intimidating opponent?”39

Interpreting the meaning of religious diversity within God’s overall creation design has become one of the most important issues for theological and missiological inquiry. Muslim scholar Syed Abedin suggests that the key question facing Muslims is whether they can concede that Christianity has religious legitimacy and accept Christians on a level of co-equality in belief. Abedin does not call for a suspension of da ‘wah and Christian mission which he considers are salient characteristics that define the identity of Muslims and Christians. Instead he urges that both faiths re-conceive of their relationship as one of co-equal partnership. Abedin thinks that there are wide areas of belief which enable Muslims and Christians to work together as they contribute to creating an environment which is conducive to peace and the survival of humankind.

The presence of the ‘other’ invariably gives rise to important theological questions. If other religions have theological validity Muslims and Christians may wonder about what is the place of witness and proclamation and what happens to the historic mission of the Christian church and of the Muslim umma?

The presence of the religious ‘other’ raises missiological questions such as why difference exists, why it matters, why it is constitutive of our humanity and how it represents the will of God. A related question posed by Christian theologian Ann Case-Winters is, “What does the living of the faith require of us today?” Case-Winters suggests that the answer lies in taking up the invitation to mutuality and conversation amongst equals. This involves deepening our encounters across religious and cultural differences. She suggests that it is

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42 Ann Case-Winters, “Multicultural Theological Education: On Doing Difference Differently”, in Shaping Beloved Community (Louisville/ London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 47. These questions are ones she notes that Rabbi Jonathan Sacks considers important for developing a ‘theology of difference’.
43 Ibid, 42-55.
therefore important to be willing to listen, admit ignorance, bracket preconceived notions and resist reductionism and premature conclusions.44

Understanding and interpreting the presence of the ‘other’ is crucial for interfaith relations, and for the present and future shape of da‘wah according to Muslim scholar Farid Esack.45 Esack provides an overview of six Muslim approaches to the ‘Religious Other’. These include: ‘the Other as Enemy’;46 ‘the Other as Potential Self’;47 ‘the Other as Unavoidable Neighbour’;48 ‘the Other as Self and Intellectual/Theological Sparring Partner’;49 ‘the Other as Self and Spiritual Partner’;50 and ‘the Other as Self and Comrade’ in the struggle for liberation. Esack’s own position draws on a Qur’anic theology of liberation and his South African experience led him to believe that da‘wah is integrally related to a liberative praxis. Esack believes that the urgent mission question begins from a recognition that the survival of the self depends on the survival of the ‘other’ as well as the survival of the eco-system. He draws on a rich tradition within Islam which recognises the theological legitimacy of other faiths.51

The writings of Farid Esack provide an example of the continuous development of Islamic missiology and current internal dialogue within the Muslim

44 Ibid, 50.
46 Ibid. Esack thinks this has been dominant in public Muslim discourse and represents a defensive posturing that reduces the problem to ‘Islam versus the West’ or ‘Muslims versus Christians and Jews’.
47 This approach sees Muslim adopting active da‘wah with the stated intention of saving souls and increasing ‘the believers’.
48 This approach has some recognition of the other and acknowledgement that we need to learn from them and develop tolerance but interfaith initiatives are usually not initiated by Muslims and are rarely supported by mainstream Muslim institutions, with some exceptions notably in Nigeria, Indonesia and Malaysia.
49 Esack points to a growing number of individual Muslim scholars and intellectuals, such as Mohammed Arkoun and Ebrahim Moosa, who adopt this approach and who are creating spaces for scholarly and academic freedom. Esack refers to Qur’anic texts which underpin the pluralist approach in Islam.
50 This approach is adopted by some Muslim scholars influenced by Sufi ideas who see dialogue as promoting spiritual enrichment. Esack refers to David Chittick, Fritchoff Scoun, Sayyed Hoosein Nasr and Martin Lings as representing this approach.
community about the nature and purpose of Muslim da’wah.\textsuperscript{52} Similarly in Christian mission thinking there have been some significant developments. Douglas Pratt suggests that dialogical engagement with others raises the important question of whether the ‘other’ can be viewed as a “compatible co-partner in life.”\textsuperscript{53}

### 2.3.3 ‘Hospitality’ as a hermeneutical key in ecumenical theology

Theological approaches to religious plurality have been on the agenda of the World Council of Churches for many years but at the 2002 meeting of the WCC Central Committee it was felt that a new approach was needed. A process was embarked upon that facilitated a conversation across the various aspects of the work of the WCC and the result was the discussion document entitled “Religious plurality and Christian self-understanding.”\textsuperscript{54} The document reaffirmed the conviction that God transforms the lives of people through the Christian message of grace and salvation. At the same time the view was expressed that religious plurality manifests the richness and diversity of human responses to God’s gracious gifts. Christians could affirm the plurality of religious traditions as reflecting the manifold ways in which God relates to peoples and nations. Furthermore, Christians share in rather than control the saving purposes of God in the world.\textsuperscript{55}

We do not possess salvation; we participate in it. We do not offer salvation; we witness to it. We do not decide who would be saved; we leave it to the providence of God. For our own salvation is an everlasting ‘hospitality’ that God has extended to us. It is God who is the ‘host’ of salvation.\textsuperscript{56}

These insights built upon earlier ecumenical statements, in particular the statement from the San Antonio Conference on Mission and Evangelism

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\textsuperscript{52} Haney, “The Practice of Theological Engagement in Interreligious Dialogue”, 357-371.

\textsuperscript{53} Pratt, \textit{The Challenge of Islam: Encounters in interfaith dialogue}, 227-228.

\textsuperscript{54} “Religious plurality and Christian self-understanding”, \textit{Current Dialogue} no. 45, July (2005). Twenty scholars from different contexts and denominations who specialised in religious studies, missiology or systematic theology met on a number of occasions to develop the theological paper. The document represents a collaborative effort of the three important areas of the WCC – \textit{Faith and Order, Interreligious Relations, and Mission and Evangelism}.

\textsuperscript{55} “Religious plurality and Christian self-understanding”, Section 32, 34.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, Section 47.
(CWME) in 1989 which stated: “We cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot set limits to the saving power of God.” The 1990 Baar Consultation also made an important assertion when it stated that believing in God as Creator of all makes it inconceivable to suggest that God’s saving activity could be confined to any one continent, cultural type, or group of people. Refusing to take seriously the many and diverse religious testimonies among the nations and peoples of the world amounted to disowning the Biblical testimony.

The document “Religious Plurality and Christian Self-Understanding” built on these affirmations by urging Christians to embrace the other ‘in their otherness’. The appropriate attitude towards others, it stated, was one of hospitality. The ‘hermeneutical key’ for a new understanding of religious plurality was the concept of the hospitality of God.

Ecumenical theologian Hope Antone also draws on the hospitality metaphor when she likens interfaith dialogue to a meal table. Antone thought that the ‘room of our faith’ is enlarged as we receive the lavish gift of hospitality from one another. From this perspective religious diversity was not a problem but a gift and a source of enrichment.

Australian researchers Ata and Morrison relate the concept of hospitality to interfaith marriage. They describe such marriages as being a sacramental space of hospitality where love is nurtured. Such marriages express an “eschatological vocation” in which the word of God is welcomed in the intimate union of two hearts and minds and transformed into hospitality, sacrifice and responsibility, to be passed on through the generations.

59 Ibid, Section 40 and 45.
2.3.4 Missiological responses to religious plurality

Pentecostal scholar Amos Young suggests that the central question for the theology of religions is to reflect on how the action of the Spirit may be mediated to people of other faiths through their own faith traditions. 62 Catholic theologian Jacques Dupuis expressed the centrality of this line of inquiry when he stated, “The overarching question asked in recent theology of religions is whether and in what sense it can be said that the different traditions of the contemporary world have a positive meaning in God’s single but complex plan for humankind?” 63 A similar question is posed by Marjorie Suchochi, “Do we demand that God always act with others exactly as God acts with us? Can God have no other stories, no other loves?” 64 Such questions reflect the earnest search going on amongst Christian theologians to develop missiological understandings that take seriously the contemporary reality of religious and cultural plurality.

It has often been noted that the Prophet Mohammad in the Treaty of Madinah in 622 C.E. provided an early foundation for giving recognition of the validity of the ‘other’. The Treaty of Madinah continues to provide inspiration to many Muslims who are seeking to develop reciprocal relationships with people of other faiths. 65 Principles for cooperation between Muslims and the ‘People of the book’ and between Muslims and Arab tribes who adhered to other religions developed by the Prophet Mohammad granted non-Muslims protection and status. These principles laid the foundation for Islam’s stipulations that faith can be shared but never imposed, and there is a need to be open to consider the way in which God works in the lives of others.

62 Amos Young, Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 98.
64 Suchochi, Divinity and Diversity, 33-34. Suchochi thinks that if people “peek over the other’s religious fence” they will find things that are similar and different, which nevertheless may be manifestations of God.
65 The Treaty of Madinah (or Medina) from 622 C.E. reflects principles for cooperation between Muslims and non-Muslims and provides a basis today for supporting religious plurality.
There are many resources within Islam and Christianity which can assist in efforts to reconceptualise mission and da’wah but there are also a number of major theological hurdles. Both are missionary religions that believe they have received the final revelation. Christianity traditionally saw itself as fulfilling and superseding Judaism and Islam saw itself as encompassing and perfecting the message of Christianity. Christians have doubted that Muslims worship the same God and have often simply dismissed Islam as a heresy or false prophecy. Pratt notes that Christian theology has great difficulty accepting that there was any need for God to send another messenger after sending Christ.

Muslims and Christians have each tended to think of themselves as the community most beloved by God. Islamic theology developed largely within the context of Islam’s political superiority when Islam faced other religions from the position of being a ruling power and this had an impact on the development of Islamic law and traditions. In a similar way following the conversion of Constantine, Christianity became associated with ‘Empire’ and its theology and mindset was influenced by its dominant position in society. This legacy of theological superiority has a tendency to linger on in the life of both communities. On the Muslim side many have associated Christians with arrogance stemming from the Christian sense of having a privileged relationship with God and the colonial legacy. From their own historical perspective members of both faiths tend to perceive the other as aggressive. Elizabeth Scantlebury notes that there has been tendency for Muslims and

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69 See Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 161. In Friedman’s review of hadith literature he suggests that Muslim attitudes towards non-Muslims were shaped the view of Islam’s exaltedness. One hadith quoted is “Islam is exalted and nothing is exalted above it.” Friedman argues that to a great extent this defined Muslim views towards other faiths and impacted the determination of the law. See also B. Ye’or, *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam* (London: Associated University Press, 1985).
Christians to view the missionary efforts of their own community in a positive light while experiencing a sense of alarm at the missionary efforts of others.  

Christian theologian Philip Wickeri has highlighted the need in post-colonial contexts to develop theological frameworks which are dialogical, which encourage a ‘synthesis’ between different traditions rather than ‘over-against’ attitudes. He thinks one way through the impasse is through listening to narratives of crossing of religious boundaries drawn from every day life. Narratives suggest how the boundaries between religious traditions could be redrawn and offer new frameworks for theological vision. This conviction also shapes this present inquiry.

2.3.5 Searching for common ground

Muslim scholar Ataullah Siddiqui has observed that for a variety of reasons Christians have tended to be the initiators of interfaith dialogue. It was therefore significant when a hundred and thirty-eight prominent Muslim scholars and leaders from around the world extended the Muslim hand of friendship to Christian leaders. In a clear desire to build positive relations between the two faith communities the Muslim group, representing both Sunni and Shi’a scholarly traditions, signed a letter entitled, “A Common Word between Us and You” which spoke of love of God and love of neighbour as the

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70 Scantlebury, “Islamic Da’wā and Christian Mission: Positive and Negative Models of Interaction between Muslims and Christians”, 265-266. Some argue that successful relations between Muslims and Christians are expressly dependent on the exclusion of any attempt at converting one another. Others suggest there are valid ways practising Muslims and Christians can engage in mutual witness whilst also recognising and appreciating the genuine spirituality of each other’s religion.


72 See Ataullah Siddiqui, Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Twentieth Century (London: Macmillian, 1997), xv. Siddiqui notes the absence of Muslim organisations that can legitimately represent Muslims in interfaith encounters and the deeper sense of distrust that Muslims have felt concerning Christian missionary motives because of their experience of colonialism.
common ground on which Muslims and Christians could meet. Christian responses welcomed this important initiative. A Catholic–Muslim Forum was established and in November 2008 fifty-eight Catholic and Muslim religious authorities and experts from twenty eight countries were invited to the Vatican to discuss the theme, ‘Love of God, Love of Neighbour: The Dignity of the Human Person and Mutual Respect’.

A vision of loving partnership was articulated in a joint declaration which stated that genuine love of neighbour implies respect for persons and religious minorities, including their religious convictions, practices, and places of worship. The dignity of each human being was considered the starting point for Muslims and Christians to promote a more peaceful world and the foundation of love and respect was reaffirmed as the basis for Christian–Muslim cooperation. The forum endorsed the importance of civil legislation to ensure that in societies there is equal rights and full citizenship to all members, and underlined the importance of free choice in matters of conscience and education in human, civic, religious and moral values. This example along with many other interfaith initiatives that are occurring in different parts of the world, is a reminder of important efforts of Muslims and Christians to build mutual respect and understanding. The words of Max Warren half a century ago carry a renewed sense of urgency: we must begin by first taking off our shoes in recognition that the place we are approaching is holy ground.


74 See the Catholic News website summary of the final report of the Forum. http://www.ucanews.com/2008/11/07/catholic-muslim-forum-issues-final-declaration/ (accessed November 20, 2008). It should be noted that there has been a long history of Vatican-Muslim dialogue. This Forum stated that God’s creation, in its plurality of cultures, civilisations, languages and peoples, is a source of richness. Catholics and Muslims have an imperative to bear witness to the transcendent dimensions of life and a spirituality nourished by prayer. 29 Muslim and Catholic participants gathered including two Indonesians, Father Markus Solo, desk officer for Christian-Muslim dialogue in Asia for the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and Din Syamsuddin, President of Muhamadiyah.


2.4 CHRISTIAN MISSION AND MUSLIM DA‘WAH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDONESIA

2.4.1 The coming of Islam and Christianity to Indonesia

Islam was brought to Indonesia from a number of different lands by merchants and traders who settled along coastal areas. The sea routes to China from Arabia or India passed through the Malacca Straits or the Celebes Sea and colonies of merchants trading in spices were established. From the 8th century onwards Muslim traders settled and intermarried with local inhabitants. According to historian Robert McAmis in this way Islam was able to take root in a gentle and effective way avoiding the obstacle of approaching people from a sense of superiority.

The arrival of Sufi missionaries in the 13th century helped Islam make further inroads. Following the conversion of the Hindu king of Malacca in around 1400, other coastal towns along trade routes followed. Believers were linked to a vital new faith as well as an important trading network. Steenbrink observes that the threads between trade, political power and the spread of religion can never be easily disentangled. Over centuries Islam interacted and gradually became incorporated into local cultures. Occasionally there was antagonism and conflict but often there was a process of dialogue and mutual transformation. Mostly Islam did not uproot pre-existing sacred traditions but built on them, in the main spreading peacefully without destroying local

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77 See Karel Steenbrink, Catholics in Indonesia: A documented history 1808-1900 Vol 1, (KITLC Press, Leiden, 2003). 3. There is one Malay word kafur (or camphor) in the referring to a precious trading product between the Malay peninsula and the Arab countries between the 6th and 8th centuries.
79 Steenbrink, Catholics in Indonesia: A documented history, 5.
80 Saptoni, “Membaca kembali Dakwah Walisanga [Reviewing the Da‘wah of the Nine Saints]”, in Metodologi Ilmu Dakwah [The Methodology of Da‘wah], ed., Andy Dermawan (Yogyakarta: LESFI, 2002), 167-189. Saptoni examines the method of ‘cultural da‘wah’ used by the nine saints credited with bringing Islam to Java. They became advisors to kings and adapted the message of Islam to the Javanese context. This process of da‘wah successfully made Islam part of the Javanese spiritual worldview but, he suggests, it limited Islam’s ability to transform and critique the cultural and social framework.
traditions. One example that is often cited is the missionary methods of the ‘nine great Muslim saints’ or *Wali songo* who are accredited with bringing Islam to Java. Their model of ‘*cultural da‘wah*’ led to a gradual Islamisation.\(^{81}\) Over time a synthesis between Islam and local traditions or *adat* occurred and this contextualised form of *da‘wah* greatly aided the expansion of Islam.\(^{82}\)

Scholar of Indonesian history and political life Gerry Van Klinken notes that early Nestorian communities that existed in Sumatra and other parts of Indonesia disappeared before the arrival of the Portuguese.\(^{83}\) The Portuguese traders brought with them Catholic priests and the first indigenous Catholics were baptised in the Moluccas in 1534.\(^{84}\) When the Dutch took over power they tended to be more interested in commercial interests and economic control than the spread of Christianity and active propagation of Christianity ceased. Their arrival in 1596 led to the banning of Catholic priests and Catholic missions faced a setback. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) was established in 1602 and through brutal military operations and collaboration with local leaders it was able to take monopoly of the lucrative spice trade.\(^{85}\) In the interests of trade and good relations with indigenous Muslim rulers the Company prevented Christian mission in areas that had already adopted


\(^{83}\) Gerry Van Klinken, *Minorities, Modernity and the Emerging Nation: Christians in Indonesia, A Biographical Approach* (Leiden, LITLV Press, 2003), esp. chapter 2. In the second half of the seventh century the Persian traveller Abu Saleh al Armini reported seeing churches on Sumatra's northwestern coast. The Italian traveller Giovanni dei Marignolli also appears to have seen Nestorian Christians in 1348 or 1349 when visiting the Majapahit kingdom in East Java.

\(^{84}\) Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia*, 6. By the end of the 16th century twenty percent of the 150,000 inhabitants had received Catholic baptism. The religious landscape of Moluccas today includes Christian and Muslim villages. Steenbrink states that the process of Islamisation “met a rival” with the coming of the Portuguese.

\(^{85}\) After VOC was dissolved in 1800 VOC territories became the Dutch East Indies. The East Indies came under British control for a short time (1811-1816). Dutch control was later reintroduced until the invasion of the Japanese.
Islam. Later, Article 123 of the colonial constitution of 1854 (Regeeringsreglement) required a special permit from the governor-general to carry out missionary work in a specific region.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the state began to regard missionaries with less suspicion and pressure from Holland led to greater support for Christian missions. Missionary initiatives increased markedly and numerous mission societies commenced work in different regions of the archipelago.

There are conflicting opinions about whether the policies of the Dutch colonial system contained or promoted Islam, and contained or promoted Christianity. Some Christian missionaries accused the colonial system of providing opportunities for Muslims to spread their faith while discouraging Christian missionary work. The colonial state may have helped in the propagation of Islam by promoting Malay which was classified as an Islamic language, and by giving recognition to Muslim religious officials. It was also true that Muslim religious leaders were kept under close scrutiny and some were sent into exile if they were too successful in gaining adherents. The colonial budget included some advantages to Christians in the form of assistance for building churches and Christian schools, and support for army chaplains and later, of missionary work.

There have been a number of studies on the history of Christianity in Indonesia. The spread of Christianity in Indonesia in many areas reflected

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86 Steenbrink, Catholics in Indonesia, 7, 231. For the next two centuries missionary activities were banned from areas which had already adopted Islam, Sumatra, Bali, Sumbawa, urban areas of Java and other regions.
87 Ibid, 11.
88 Ibid, 179. Steenbrink notes that there is little study on conversion to Islam or Christianity in Indonesia.
89 Ibid, 228. European Catholic and Protestant ministers, who worked primarily with Europeans, received a more generous salary (F 600-800 per month) than penghulu (F 100-150).
90 See Akkeren (1970); Cooley (1981); End (1989/1999); Hefner, (1993b), Sumartana (1993); Klinken, (2003); Boelaars, (2005) and Steenbrink, (2003) to name a few. There have also been a number of histories written on specific churches.
contextual practices. Some missionary work preserved indigenous cultures and languages, such as the ministry of Nommensen among the Bataks. Christianity however was viewed as the religion of the colonial rulers and this ‘historical burden’ added an aspect of ambiguity to the identity of Indonesian Christians. The Japanese period of occupation proved a critical time for the indigenous churches and it was a period of suffering for many, including Christians. The church was forced to rely on its own resources and during this period grew significantly in maturity and autonomy. At the end of WWII the Dutch unsuccessfully attempted to resume power and it was significant that the Indonesian churches voiced their opposition to a resumption of Dutch control. The fact that Christians were included in the first government of the newly independent nation reflected the respect held for Christian leaders who had been part of the movement for independence.

### 2.4.2 Relations between Muslims and Christians

Muslims and Christians in Indonesia have lived alongside each other for centuries. Relations between the two faiths have been characterised by respectful co-operation and at times by tension and a sense of rivalry and suspicion. Woly notes that the church in Indonesia grew within the context of Islam. There are a large number of terms of Arabic origin that have entered Indonesian Christianity and Bible translation, drawn from Islam’s influence on the Malay language. Words such as ‘Allah’ for God, ‘wahyu’ for revelation; ‘rasul’ for apostle; ‘rahmat’ for mercy; ‘ibadah’ for worship; ‘iman’ for faith;

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91 It has been noted that Islam in Indonesia was communicated using the idioms and traditions of the people and became rooted in the cultural life of local communities. In the spreading of Christianity ‘enculturation’ also occurred and there were a number of Christian missionary efforts to ‘indigenise’ the Gospel and translate the Bible into local languages. The process of indigenisation made further headway following independence. There is some criticism that the increase in independent churches and contemporary trends in fundamentalist forms of Christianity reflect western influences and imported music and cultural forms, rather than developing deep roots in Indonesia’s cultural traditions.


93 This fact helped the church to partly rid itself of its association with colonialism as Dutch collaborators or ‘black Dutchmen’. Extract from notes from a lecture given 1 February 1983 by Fridolin Ukur who taught Indonesian Church History at the Theological College in Jakarta (STT) where the researcher was a student.
doa’ for prayer and ‘Mariam’ for Mary show Islam’s influence on Indonesian theology. Early Malay catechisms from the 1830s used Muslim terms and adapted a Muslim greeting. It is also the case that Christianity and methods of Christian mission have influenced Islam in Indonesia. Alwi Shihab for example explores the impact of Christian missionaries on the development of the influential Muslim organisation Muhammadiyah.

Boland, Schumann and Steenbrink are non-Indonesian writers who have given significant attention to the subject of Muslim–Christian relations. In recent years Indonesian scholars Ismatu Ropi, Fatimah Husein, Mujiburrahman, and Jan S. Aritonang have explored the challenges Muslims and Christians in Indonesia face in their dealings with one another. Ismatu Ropi’s survey of Muslim attitudes towards Christianity from the seventeenth to the twentieth century discovered that Muslim depictions of Christianity had varied over time and according to particular regions. He also surveyed the views of a number of prominent Indonesian Muslim leaders to understand the reasons behind the

94 Woly, Meeting at the precincts of faith, 427
95 Steenbrink, Catholics in Indonesia, 219.
98 Four important recent studies by Indonesian Muslim and Christian writers include: Ismatu Ropi, Muslim Response to Christianity in Modern Indonesia ( MA at McGill University, Montreal, 1998); Jan S. Aritonang, Sejarah Perjumpaan Kristen dan Islam di Indonesia [History of the Encounter between Christianity and Islam in Indonesia] (Jakarta: Gunung Mulia, 2005); Fatimah Husein, Muslim –Christian Relations in the New Order Indonesia: The Exclusivist and Inclusivist Muslims’ Perspectives (Bandung: Mizan, 2005); and Mujiburrahman, Feeling Threatened: Muslim–Christian Relations in Indonesia's New Order (Amsterdam: ISIM Publications, 2006).
often ‘stereotypical perceptions of Christianity’. Ropi noted that the negative patterns and hostility of early contacts tended to persist. Despite Christian involvement in the nationalist struggle there has been a tendency to view Christianity and Christian mission as an arm of Western colonialism. Polemical writings from other parts of the Muslim world which have been translated into Indonesian have also heightened concerns about Christian missionary motives and methods. Muslims and Christians have competed not only to gain new converts to their religious folds but also for influence in economic and political spheres and this has contributed to interreligious tension. This view is shared by Fatimah Husein who has suggested that Muslims continue to be concerned that Christians are seeking to convert Muslims in various areas of Indonesia.

For over three hundred years the relationship between Islam and Christianity in Indonesia took place within a colonial context. This brought with it particular problems and dynamics. Anthony Johns writing in 1987 described the relationship between Muslims and Christians as ‘a complex dialectic’ and ‘a precarious balance’. Just how precarious a balance was to become clear when, in the mid 1990s, disturbing outbreaks of violence occurred.

2.4.3 Pancasila State and Muslim grievances

At independence Indonesia did not choose to become an Islamic state nor a national secular state but a state founded on Pancasila or Five Principles. These

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100 Ibid, 2. Ropi examined the early writings of Naruddin al-Raniril; Hendrik Kraemer; and in post-independent Indonesia, Hasbullah Bakry, Muhammad Natsir, Ahmad Hasan, O. Hashem, Joesoef Sou’yb, Sidi Gazalba, Djarnawi Hadikusuma and Muhammad Rasjidj; Mukti Ali and Nurcholish Madjid.
101 Ibid, 113.
102 Ibid, 67.
103 Fatimah Husein, Muslim–Christian Relations in the New Order Indonesia: The Exclusivist and Inclusivist Muslims’ Perspectives (Bandung: Mizan, 2005), 29-30. ‘Exclusivists’ adopt a literalist approach to the Qur’an and the Sunna and there is a downgrading of the role of contextual interpretation or ijihad. ‘Exclusivists’ believe that globally Western countries wish to discredit Islam and in Indonesia there is a conspiracy to weaken Islam. ‘Exclusivists’ question the validity of other Scriptures, believe salvation can only achieved through Islam and promote the implementation of syari’ah.
provided the ethical and moral foundations for the social and political life of the nation.\textsuperscript{105} The first principle was ‘Belief in God’ ensuring that religion would have an important place in Indonesian society. Indonesia formally recognises six religions and upholds religious diversity in the Constitution. Citizens are guaranteed equal rights irrespective of religious belief.\textsuperscript{106} Article 28E states that, “Every person shall have the right to the freedom to believe his/her faith and to express his/her views and thoughts, in accordance with his/her conscience.”\textsuperscript{107}

Prior to independence there were competing concepts of statehood proposed. Arriving at consensus was not a straightforward process. The draft constitution had a sentence which has become known as \textit{Piagam Jakarta} which made it an obligation for Muslims to abide by \textit{syari’ah}.\textsuperscript{108} After strong objections were voiced particularly from secular nationalists and Christians these words were abandoned.

Voices opposing the state ideology were present from the founding of the Indonesian independent state. Despite Islam constituting the religious majority in Indonesia and the establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs to ensure Muslim interests, Indonesian Muslim commentator Arskal Salim suggests that many Muslim leaders felt marginalised during the regime of President Sukarno (1945-65) and during a large part of the presidency of

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{105}] The Five Principles of Nationhood are: 1. Belief in God (the Indonesian terminology has a more inclusive connotation) 2. Humanity 3. Unity of the Nation 4. Democracy 5. Social Justice.
\item[\textsuperscript{106}] The five faiths are Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Confucianism. A true religion was defined as one in which there was confession of one God, sacred texts, a prophet and was internationally recognised. \textit{Aliran kepercayaan} or Javanese mystical religious heritage and traditional religions have not been given official status.
\item[\textsuperscript{108}] Article 28J guarantees recognition and respect of the rights and freedoms of others and Article 29 affirms that: “The State shall be based upon the belief in the One and Only God…The State guarantees all persons the freedom of worship, each according to his/her own religion or belief.”
\end{itemize}
President Suharto (1966–1998).\textsuperscript{109} Under the military dictatorship of Suharto Muslim groups critical of the government were kept under tight control and measures were introduced to restrict the role of Islam.\textsuperscript{110} The Suharto government framed its support for \textit{Pancasila} in terms of condemnation of communism, atheism and secularism. Later a law on social organisations required all organisations including religious organisations, to recognise \textit{Pancasila} as the sole basis (\textit{asas tunggal}) for the social and political life of the nation.\textsuperscript{111}

The varying political contexts in post-independent Indonesia have had an impact on the relationship between Muslims and Christians. Muslims were critical that Christians appeared closely aligned with the Suharto government and the army. Whilst some Christian voices were critical of the regime these tended to be more muted. Christians had concerns about whether an alternative government would implement freedom of religion and uphold \textit{Pancasila}. Some feared the potential political power of Islam and believed that if Indonesia was to become an Islamic State this would result in non-Muslims becoming second-class citizens in their own country.

Influential Indonesian Christian leader Simatupang, speaking at a Muslim–Christian dialogue conference sponsored by the WCC in 1979, predicted three possibilities for Indonesia’s future: an ongoing erosion of the principles of \textit{Pancasila} including equal citizenship, and rights, freedoms and obligations; a strengthening of the principles embodied in \textit{Pancasila}; or Indonesia could be

His doctoral thesis from the University of Melbourne in 2006 was on the subject \textit{Islamizing Indonesian Laws? Legal and Political Dissonance in Indonesian Shari'a 1945-2005}.

\textsuperscript{110} Ropi, \textit{Muslim Response to Christianity in Modern Indonesia}, 113. Only in Suharto’s last years in power did he for political reasons take steps to shift the government’s attitude in favour of greater accommodation with Islam.

\textsuperscript{111} See Karel Steenbrink, “Indonesian Politics and A Muslim Theology of Religions 1965-1990”, in \textit{Islam and Christian Muslim Relations} 4, 2 (Dec 1993), 223-246. The banning of the Muslim party, Masyumi, in 1968 was an example of government control. There were also moves to bring the four Islamic parties into one new party in 1973. From 1978 onwards an indoctrination program for the implementation of \textit{Pancasila} called P4 became a required course for public servants, government officials, and students across Indonesian society.
transformed into an Islamic State. Simatupang stated that many Christians were not feeling optimistic. He expressed his own misgivings about the growing Wahabi influence.\textsuperscript{112}

During the Suharto years some Christians worked closely with Muslim intellectuals and activists in developing a common discourse on democracy and human rights. This co-operation continued in the post-Suharto context which has been characterised by a shift to democracy and freedom of expression, but also the emergence of radicalism and Islamic militancy.

2.4.4 Muslim concerns about ‘Kristenisasi’

If Christians had a fear of Islamising influences Muslims have had a fear of ‘Christianisation’. It has been noted that concerns about Christianisation has been a recurring theme in Muslim discourse.\textsuperscript{113} In the newly independent nation a number of Muslim scholars such as Natsir, Bakry, Rifyal Ka’bah and Rasjidi have reflected on the relationship between Muslims and Christians often times critical of Christian missionary influences.\textsuperscript{114} A collection of the influential Mohammad Natsir’s papers dating from the 1930s was published in 1980. Natsir’s wide-ranging concerns often related to Christian missionary efforts, particularly following the 1965 uprisings (30S/PKI), which led to the conversion to Christianity of many poor and imprisoned members of the PKI.\textsuperscript{115}


\textsuperscript{115} Natsir, Islam dan Kristen di Indonesia, 207.
Natsir thought that monetary incentives were a motivating factor behind these conversions. He was critical of Christians building churches and schools in Muslim areas without permission, and giving out free Christian literature. In his view these activities went against Pancasila and contributed to a growing resentment within the Indonesian Muslim community. Christian missionary methods had left Muslims feeling threatened and this according to Natsir was the underlying reason why a number of violent anti-Christian incidents occurred in 1967.\textsuperscript{116} He recommended that Muslims and Christians find a modus vivendi for respectful interreligious living which did not threaten the faith of either community and pointed to Islam’s code of ethics for da ‘wah which was based on ensuring that there was no coercion in matters of faith.

Muslim leaders came away from a government sponsored Interfaith Consultation (Musyawarah Antar Agama) in November 1967 having their fears confirmed that Christians aimed at converting Muslims. At this gathering of religious leaders the government recommended that the different faith communities agree not to make each other the object of mission. Christian delegates explained that they were unable to give assent to this part of the agreement because Christians had a commission to share the Gospel with all people. Muslim leaders were critical of the Christian response.\textsuperscript{117}

On another occasion a government leader at a state-sponsored da ‘wah conference in 1969 talked about the threat to Muslim da ‘wah posed by Christianisation. Lieutenant General H. Sudirman in his keynote address spoke

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid, 212. A church in Meulaboh, Aceh was destroyed in June and another church was attacked in Makasar in October, followed by attacks on a Christian school in Slipi, Jakarta).

\textsuperscript{117} Bakry, Pendekatan Dunia Islam dan Kristen, 10-16, 42. In Bakry’s later writings he stated that respect for other faiths is a first requirement for religious harmony but he noted that different religions have beliefs and understandings which cannot be compromised nor easily reconciled. He accepted that there was a valid role for mutual witness and Muslims and Christians must each be faithful to their revealed tradition and sacred texts. He acknowledged believers of each faith have a responsibility to share their faith and recommended that an environment should be created where there was freedom to express and debate ideas. From a Muslim perspective those who do not choose Islam should not be treated unkindly quoting from the Qur’anic text: “For them their faith and for us our faith.” He thought that this text could provide a basis for living together in harmony.
of factors hindering Muslim da‘wah in Indonesia. Sudirman referred to ‘globally coordinated’ Christianising influences which were providing funds and personnel. These outside influences he believed were a factor hindering Islamic da‘wah. In Sudirman’s view da‘wah should focus on deepening the faith of Muslims and not be directed to others unless they do not hold a recognised religion. The Forum recommended the setting up of an Indonesian Islamic Da‘wah Centre. The Pusat Da‘wah Islam Indonesia (PDII) was later established with support from the Department of Religion and it was given a role of coordinating, networking and promoting da‘wah initiatives and training.

Under Dutch rule certain areas were off limit to missionaries but in an independent Indonesia Muslim scholar Rifyal Ka’bah noted that this “protection no longer exists”. Ka’bah observed the growth in Christian educational institutions, medical care, printing presses, radios and social services and expressed concerns that Christian agencies from abroad appeared to have stepped up activities.

At a dialogue meeting sponsored by the WCC in Broumana in Lebanon in 1973 Mukti Ali, then Minister of Religious Affairs in the Government of Indonesia, addressed this sensitive issue. He explained that aid coming from Western churches to support Christian schools, churches, and well-equipped hospitals could create problems for Muslim–Christian relations. He commended Holland for supporting an Islamic hospital and a laboratory for an Islamic university.

118 Lieutenant General H. Sudirman’s presentation suggested that the main factors hindering da‘wah were: lack of knowledge of Islam; poverty; oppression as a result of hundreds of years of colonial rule; a lack of unity within the Muslim community including some fanaticism; and outside interference from communism and Christianisation. See H. Sudirman, “Problematika Da‘wah Islam di Indonesia [Problems facing Da‘wah in Indonesia]”, in Forum Da‘wah [Da‘wah Forum], ed., PDII (Djakarta: PDII, 1972), 241-246. The seminar was held from 26-28 June 1969 at the Fakultas Ushuluddin IAIN 'Sjarif Hidayatullah'.

119 The Centre was established 8 Sept 1969 for research and documentation, developing methods of communication networking, training of cadres, developing guidelines for carrying out da‘wah, logistics, reflecting on contextualisation and running seminars.


Mukti Ali noted that in pluralistic contexts there was the need for sensitivity in the conduct of missionary activities and he suggested that Christian missionary agencies support joint ways of working which build inter-communal trust.

Tarmizi Taher, former Minister of Religious Affairs (1993–1998), suggested that a number of Government regulations in the 1970s were aimed at allaying Muslim concerns about Christianisation. A detailed study of Muslim–Christian relations in Indonesia by Mujiburrahman confirms this view. Mujiburrahman suggests that the 1974 marriage law and prohibitions relating to interfaith marriages could also be linked to fear of Christianising influences and the impact of Christian missionary activities.

2.4.5 The post-Suharto period: 1998–2009

In the post-Suharto period different voices have been competing on the public stage to define a role for themselves. Whilst the liberalisation of Indonesian society has seen greater democratic freedoms religious fault-lines appear to have widened. The incidence of violent attacks on churches increased significantly with reports of damage and closures of churches since 2000 far

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122 Taher, Tarmizi, *Islam Across Boundaries: Prospects and Problems of Islam in the Future of Indonesia* (Jakarta: Republika, 2003), 66-68. Government decisions included curtailing religious preaching and missionary outreach to those who already had religious adherence and prohibiting unethical missionary activities (such as offering clothes, food or medication to encourage people to convert or conducting door to door missionary visitation).

123 See Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened: Muslim–Christian Relations in Indonesia's New Order* (Amsterdam: ISIM Publications, 2006), 72-77, 163-191. Mujiburrahman suggests that the 1969 Joint Ministerial Decree on building places of worship (revised in 2006), which placed strict requirements for obtaining permission to erect new places of worship, was introduced in response to Muslim anxieties. The 1978 Regulations of Ministry of Religion (Nos. 70, 77) regulated the propagation of religion and foreign assistance to religious institutions. In 1979 Regulation No. 1 required foreign aid for religious purposes to pass through the Ministry of Religion. More recently concern about the Christianising influences of Christian schools saw various measures introduced to more tightly control religious instruction.


125 See John Prior, “The Locus of Mission in Indonesia Today: Birthing Prophetic Communities of Compassion”, in *The Church in Mission: Universal Mandate and Local Concerns*, eds., Thomas Malipurathu and L. Stanislaus (Gujarat: Sahitya Prakash, 2002), 70. See also Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia* Vol 1, 153.
exceeding the previous period of 1945–1999. In some cases Muslim religious leaders spoke out criticising hard liners (Islam garis keras). One example was the response of Hasyim Muzadi a NU leader who said that true da ‘wah has nothing in common with these displays of misguided zealotry.

Muslims should compete (bersaing) not through resorting to intolerance and fear tactics, but in rational and fair ways, through dialogue and “healthy forms of da ‘wah”.

There were complex political, economic, ethnic as well as religious factors that contributed to the inter-communal violence between Muslims and Christians that exploded in Maluku in 1999 and Poso in 2002 which saw thousands losing their lives. The ferocity of attacks shocked many. The 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings brought these concerns into the international spotlight.

Proponents of Islamic law suppressed under Suharto have emerged with renewed vigour. Democratisation and decentralisation have created a space for regional aspirations to resurface and numerous local districts have promulgated laws implementing elements of syari’ah. It is not yet known whether this trend of ‘creeping Syari’aisation’ is still gathering momentum or

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126 See Albertus Patty, “Menyikapi Peber Dua Meter [Responding to the Two Ministers’ Directives (No 9/2006 relating to religious harmony and No 8/2006 relating to building places of worship and formation of interfaith forums)]”, (unpublished paper prepared for the GKI Pondok Indah, Jakarta, July 25, 2006). The paper reports that over 1000 churches have been damaged, closed or destroyed between 2000-2008 compared with 611 incidents between 1945 and 1999. Obtaining church building licenses is given attention noting that unlicensed churches are often targeted by militant groups.

127 NU or Nahdlatul Ulama is the largest Indonesian Muslim organization in Indonesia.

128 “Hasyim: Orang Islam Jangan Hanya Bisa Marah Hadapi Agama Lain [Hasyim: Muslims do not only show anger towards other faiths]”, NU online, 26 August 2005.


has reached its peak.\textsuperscript{132} It is also unclear whether extremist Muslim militancy will prove to be a temporary phase in Indonesia or will have a more lasting influence.\textsuperscript{133}

2.4.6 Religious revitalisation and Muslim da‘wah

In recent years there has been increased prominence given to the influence and significance of Islam in Indonesian life within Indonesian studies. Thirty years ago it was commonly thought that religious belief was declining under the impact of an irreversible process of secularisation. Instead Islamic resurgence throughout the Muslim world including Indonesia has become pronounced. When political activity was closed down under the Suharto government the local mosque often became a centre for activities and Islamic study groups flourished.

Islamic religious development in rural Java also accelerated since the 1970s and Islam is now a much more important factor in determining the religious life of rural villagers than in the past.\textsuperscript{134} There has also been a trend amongst middle and upper classes to more intentionally express Muslim identity and search for a Muslim spirituality that is relevant to their lives in the modern world.\textsuperscript{135} These trends led Mark Woodward to comment that the social researcher who


\textsuperscript{133} Nathan and Kamali, \textit{Islam in South East Asia}, 347-355.

\textsuperscript{134} See Anthony H. John, “Indonesia: Islam and Cultural Pluralism”, 224. Also Hyung-Jun Kim, \textit{Reformist Muslims in a Yogyakarta Village} (Canberra: ANU Press, 2007). His anthropological study of a Javanese hamlet revealed that Islam was far from a veneer. Increasing numbers of Javanese were showing a strong commitment to Islam through their participation in Friday prayers, in fasting and in an increasing number who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

examines the contemporary context of Indonesia cannot ignore the theologian.  

Another expression of Islamic revitalisation has been the springing up of various *da‘wah* movements. Some were government sponsored initiatives as noted in an earlier section. Others brought together Muslim intellectuals and academics to discuss the need for social transformation and give consideration to how Islam could more deeply influence Indonesia’s cultural and spiritual life. Some movements were popular expressions of religious sentiment. There were also some *da‘wah* groups that have been associated with conservative streams within Islam which aspired to establish a Muslim state. While most mainstream *da‘wah* groups in Indonesia wish to peacefully spread the message of Islam some groups have adopted an extremist ideology.

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138 See also Elizabeth Fuller Collins, “Islam is the Solution: Dakwah and Democracy in Indonesia”, (a paper presented at the *Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah*, Jakarta, June 20, 2004). Collins identifies four *da‘wah* streams that aspire to the establishment of a Muslim state in Indonesia though their strategies may differ. She suggests that these movements can be traced back to the sense of betrayal Muslim nationalists felt with the republican constitution of 1945 which omitted the obligation for Muslims to abide by the *syari‘ah*. In 1967 the Muslim party Masyumi was banned, fueling further frustration. Under the leadership of Mohammad Natsir the DDII (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia) or ‘Indonesian Council for Islamic *Da‘wah*’ saw the linking of *da‘wah* to Muslim aspirations for the introduction of *syari‘ah*. Some students who studied in the Middle East in the 1970s returned inspired by Islamist thinkers and set up *da‘wah* organisations in the 1980s. These operated underground during most of Suharto’s New Order government but emerged as a stronger political force in the 1990s.

139 See Ken Ward, “Indonesian Terrorism: From Jihad to *Dakwah*?” in *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, ed., Greg Fealy and Sally White (Singapore: ISEAS, 2008). Ward suggests that drawing a clear boundary between legitimate *da‘wah* groups and Islamist groups in Indonesia can be difficult. In the face of state policy committed to combating terrorism he thinks Islamist organisations with a violent *jihad* ideology such as *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI) may choose the path of *da‘wah*.
The study of da’wah movements in Indonesia has become a recognised area of research in recent years. Da’wah movements are diverse in terms of their official status, organisational structure, social background, understanding of Islam, and type of activities. Related subjects include the Islamisation of the Indonesian state and how the state has sought to absorb Islam to support its interests (pronounced during the Suharto period). It is now widely acknowledged that Muslims in Indonesia are more religiously practising than in the past. Islam and Christianity in Indonesia have both experienced renewal and revival and Tarmizi Taher has pointed to the full and overflowing mosques and churches as evidence of a more pronounced religious orientation as people increasingly look to their faith for guidance in their life. Commentators have observed that Indonesia today appears more overtly and self-consciously Islamic than in the past. The same might also be said in relation to the growth of Christianity and Christian engagement in a diverse range of missional activities.

This section has suggested that the process of ‘Islamisasi’ and ‘Kristenisasi’ has made significant inroads in Indonesia in recent decades. In the face of

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141 See for example G. Fealy and V. Hooker eds. *Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia: A Contemporary Sourcebook* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; 2006). They suggest that the number of self ascribed abangan (less observant) Muslims is greatly reduced in comparison to the 1970s and Muslims now pray and fast regularly and seek to live their lives intentionally according to their faith. Also R. Hefner, “Of Faith and Commitment: Christian Conversion in Muslim Java”, in *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 99-125.


144 See Mark Woodward, “Modernity and the Disenchantment of Life: A Muslim–Christian Contrast”, in *Islam in the Era of Globalisation: Muslim Attitudes towards Modernity and
religious revitalisation and religious fundamentalism as well as interreligious conflict differing missional perspectives within both faiths have been brought more clearly into focus.  

2.4.7 Indonesian Islam at the cross-roads: differing perspectives concerning the mission and purpose of Islam

A key question for Indonesian Muslims relates to the mission of Islam and how this is to be expressed in the contemporary context of Indonesia. Indonesia has been characterised by religious plurality but the idea of a Muslim state remains attractive to a segment of the Indonesian Muslim population. On the other hand some Indonesian Muslims argue that syari’ah is not an appropriate choice for Indonesia because of its strong tradition of diversity and tolerance.  

Arskal Salim draws attention to what he describes as an increasing tendency since the early 1990s for Muslims to think and act as a ‘majority’. He thinks that attempts to reinforce Islam as the dominant religion have accelerated in the post-New Order context. Prominent Indonesian Muslim intellectual Azyumardi Azra, describes the current debate within Islam as a struggle between tolerance and radicalism. He suggests that there remain many questions about the relationship between syari’ah and the State and whether there should be a formalisation of Islamic law in state institutions.  

Identity, ed., Johan Hendrik Meuleman (London and New York: RoutledgeCourzon, 2002), 112. Woodward observed that some Christian groups particularly since the 1980s and 1990s have seen a marked growth of fundamentalism and a tendency towards literal readings of Scripture.

147 Arskal Salim and Azyumardi Azra eds. Sharia and Politics in Modern Indonesia (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003).
Some Indonesian Muslims believe that working towards a Muslim state is part of the vision and purpose of Islam (mengislamkan Negara). Others wish to see Islamic values contribute to the shaping of society (mengislamkan masyarakat).\textsuperscript{149} Syafi’i Anwar refers to two paradigms in Indonesian Muslim thinking. The legal-exclusif paradigm sees Islam not only as a religion but also as a universal system of law which can be applied to every situation. The substantive-inclusif paradigm on the other hand sees the Prophet’s mission as bringing Islamic values to humanity and providing moral and ethical foundations for justice, freedom, equality and democracy.\textsuperscript{150} Some refer to these two contrasting approaches as scripturalists and substantialists.\textsuperscript{151}

Abdurrahman Wahid, former leader of the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia, NU and former President of Indonesia describes the threat posed by religious extremism as a global struggle for the soul of Islam. Wahhabi/ Salafi forms of Islamic fundamentalism Wahid suggests, seek to annihilate local variants of Islam in the name of authenticity and purity. Such views rely on a simplistic, literal and highly selective reading of the Qur’an and Sunnah.\textsuperscript{152} In Right Islam vs Wrong Islam Wahid is strongly critical of forms of Islam which seek to impose one interpretation of Islamic law on all members of society. In his view the mission of Islam does not require the formation of an Islamic state but instead is a source and inspiration in the shaping of Indonesia’s cultural life and in contributing to the moral and ethical life of the nation.

\textsuperscript{149} At the East Java regional NU Conference meeting at the Pesantren Zainul Hasan in Probolinggo in 2007, the Conference spoke in favour of the gradual rather than a radical introduction of syar’iah. “What is important is Islamising society not creating a Muslim State.” The report of the Conference is contained in the article: “‘Khilafah’ Tidak Tepat Untuk Indonesia [The Caliphate System is not Appropriate for Indonesia]”.NU online, 5 Nov. 2007. See also Hidiayat and Gaus ed., Menjadi Indonesia [Becoming Indonesia], xiii.

\textsuperscript{150} Syafi’i Anwar, Pemikiran dan Aksi Islam Indonesia (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), xvii.

\textsuperscript{151} These terms were developed by Bahtiar Effendy and are cited by William R. Liddle, “Media Dakwah Scripturalism: One Form of Islamic Political Thought and Action in New Order Indonesia”, in Toward A New Paradigm: Recent Developments in Indonesian Islamic Thought ed Mark R. Woodward (Arizona: Arizona State University, 1996), 323-357.

Neo-modernism, a distinctly Indonesian Muslim theology, understands Islamic texts from the dual perceptive of social ethics and personal piety. There is respect for classical learning and receptivity to modern Western influences. Neo-modernists encourage pluralist views in relation to other faiths and highlight areas of commonality. Nurcholish Madjid with other neo-modernist Muslim intellectuals fostered a form of Indonesian Islam that draws inspiration from the Treaty of Madinah and which affirm peaceful co-existence with other faiths. They have developed a Muslim theology of ‘Islam Madani’.

Influential Muhammadiyah leader and leader of the party Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) has spoken of the need to Islamise all aspects of human life. For Rais da’wah consists of activities that touch every dimension of life including the social, economic, religious, cultural and political life of the nation. He thinks that the political system and the legal system impact every other aspect of life and so they are legitimate objects of da’wah towards realising Islam’s vision and social ideals. Some Muslim voices that wish to see the introduction syari’ah recommend that social reconstruction of

\[\text{153} \text{ See Greg Barton, } Abdurrahman Wahid. Muslim Democrat, Indonesian President: A View from the Inside (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2002). Barton examines the writings of neo-modernist Indonesian Muslim thinkers such as Abdurrahman Wahid. Other who adopt a ‘neo-modernist approach include Djoan Effendi, Nurcholish Madjid and Dawam Rahardjo See also Virginia Hooker’s overview of the persepctives of ‘liberal Muslims’. Virginia Hooker, “Developing Islamic arguments for change through ‘Liberal Islam’”, in \textit{Islamic Perspectives on the New Millennium}, eds. Virginia. Hooker and Amin Saikal (Singapore: ISEAS, 2004), 231-252.

\text{154} \text{ See Fealy and Hooker, Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia, 416-463.}


\text{156} \text{ See M. Amien Rais, Hubungan antara Politik dan Dakwah [The Relationship between Politics and Da’wah] (Hamburg: Avera Verlag, 1997), 187.}
Indonesian society is a process that needs to evolve from below rather than be enforced from above.\textsuperscript{157}

There is enormous ferment within Islam in Indonesia. Australian academic and Indonesian specialist Virginia Hooker notes that the vigorous discussions taking place within Islam in Indonesia are rarely known or reported in non-Muslim societies.\textsuperscript{158} The struggle going on within the Indonesian Muslim community concerns what Islam stands for, its mission and its role in nation-building.

\subsection*{2.4.8 Christian theologies for living with the ‘other’}

Indonesian historian and scholar of Muslim–Christian relations Jan Aritonang, has provided a detailed study of five hundred years of encounter between Christianity and Islam in Indonesia. He concludes his study by calling on members of both faith communities to engage in introspection and self-critical reflection, and work to address the deep-seated tensions that exist.\textsuperscript{159}

A number of Indonesian Protestant theologians have highlighted the need to develop theological responses to Indonesia’s religious plurality and have given attention to the relations between Muslims and Christians. B. Sidjabat, Jansen Pardede, Victor Tanja, Th. Sumartana, Djaka Doetapa, Bambang Utomo, Eka Darmaputera, Wismoady, Yewangoe among others have made important contributions to this field of study.\textsuperscript{160} Ecumenical leader Yewangoe described

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ghazali Said, “Piagam Jakarta: Ekspresi Perjuangan Untuk Legislasi Hukum Islam di Indonesia” [Piagam Jakarta: The Struggle for the Introduction of Islamic Law in Indonesia] (a paper presented at a national seminar held in East Java by the Forum Studi Pembangunan Daerah), n.d. A copy of the paper was given to the researcher by Imam Ghazali Said.
\item Virginia Hooker, “Islamic Perspectives on the New Millennium”, in \textit{Islamic Perspectives on the New Millennium}, eds., Virginia Hooker and Amin Saikal (Singapore: ISEAS, 2004), 4.
\item Aritonang, \textit{Sejarah Perjumpaan Kristen dan Islam di Indonesia}, 423-424. Aritonang describes the diversity of missiological approaches within both faiths. He also urges Muslims to be recognise the variety of missiological understandings within Christianity and not to assume that all Christians adopt a ‘triumphalist stance’.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the sense of shock and disbelief many Indonesian Christians felt after interrelig­
ious violence broke out which has prompted the question: “Is it possible to rebuild a sense of harmony between our different faiths?”161
Yewangoe believes peaceful and respectful relations between Muslims and
Christians are possible but will require a rethinking of attitudes and inherited
theologies. Yewangoe advocates for a ‘theology of kerukunan’ (theology of
religious harmony) and ‘religious reconstruction’ that fosters a sense of
belonging together as people of different faiths in a nation based on
Pancasila.162

The Moderator of the Gereja Kristen Indonesia West Java Regional Synod
(2000-2007) Kuntadi Sumadikarya has spoken of the struggles facing
Indonesian churches as they respond to the resurgence of radical Islam.163 He
affirms the work being done by numerous Muslim organisations and believes
that mainstream Islam in Indonesia that is contextual, moderate, liberal and
pluralist is diametrically different from literalistic, textual, legalistic and
fundamentalist approaches adopted by some Muslims.

The many friendships forged between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia and
numerous positive interfaith initiatives are a reminder that it is not automatic
that the relationship between the two faith communities will be one of conflict
and competition.164

161 A.A Yewangoe, Agama dan Kerukunan [Religion and Harmony] (Jakarta: Gunung Mulia, 2001), xvi.
162 Ibid, esp. chapt.12, 175-221.
163 See Kuntadi Sumadikarya, “The Struggle of Indonesian Christianity amid Resurgence of Radical Islam and Legalization Efforts of Sharia”, (a paper presented at the Indonesian National Conference of the Uniting Church, Yanchep, Western Australia August 3-5, 2006).
164 Theological Colleges in Indonesia expect students to study Islam as part of their formation for ministry and visit pesantren (Muslim colleges and centres for Islamic learning). GKI has been working with Abdurrahman Wahid’s Wahid Institute running workshops and interfaith encounters with the aim of enhancing Muslim–Christian collaboration.
2.5 CHRISTIAN MISSION AND MUSLIM DA‘WAH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AUSTRALIA

2.5.1 Cultural and religious diversity of contemporary Australia

Australia’s Christian heritage had its roots in the early English, Scots, Welsh, Cornish and Irish communities which established Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, Baptist and other churches in the early years of Australia’s colonial settlement.\textsuperscript{165} Australia is a more distinctly secular society than Indonesia but the Christian faith has been an important factor in shaping Australia’s cultural and religious heritage. The frontier nature of early Australian society and circumstances in the eighteenth century soon led Australian churches to develop an independent status and a separation of church and state.\textsuperscript{166} As settlement spread, the impact of the churches and their mission work spread throughout Australia. Missionary work amongst Indigenous people also took place.\textsuperscript{167}

During the past three decades there has been a decline in Church membership and a diminishing of Christianity’s public influence.\textsuperscript{168} Australia’s culture remains deeply influenced by Christianity. As Australia has become a multifaith society other religious communities have taken their place alongside


\textsuperscript{167} For an overview of indigenous mission work see John Harris, \textit{One Blood: 200 Years of Aboriginal Encounter with Christianity} (Sutherland, NSW: Albatross, 1990). Missionary societies sent personnel to work with the newly established congregations and with indigenous people. The evangelical revival in eighteenth century England and the English-speaking world had an impact on the early missionary work in Australia. An example of this was the establishing of Methodism in Australia inspired by John Wesley’s words, “the world is my parish”. The first Methodist classes were formed in Sydney and Windsor in 1812 and the first Methodist minister, the Rev. Samuel Leigh, arrived in 1815.

Christianity in contributing to the religious make-up of the nation.\textsuperscript{169} There have been many changes to the Australian religious landscape and Australia’s religious mosaic has become increasingly rich and diverse. The 2006 census showed the proportion of Australians reporting that they were Christians was sixty-four percent. This had declined from seventy-one percent in the previous census of 2001.\textsuperscript{170} The census reported that Islam was the religion of 1.7\% of the Australian population or 340,000 people.\textsuperscript{171} In an increasingly multifaith context Australia faces the challenge of managing diversity and encouraging the participation and contribution of all groups.\textsuperscript{172} Gary Bouma notes that in Australia people are free to maintain and practise their religious beliefs recognising that others share the same rights. This has meant that all religious communities in Australia must learn to live as one faith among many.\textsuperscript{173} Freedom of religion in the Australian context means that no one group is in a position to dominate or define what is expected or normal.\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{169} Gary D. Bouma, \textit{Many Religions, All Australian: Religious Settlement, Identity and Cultural Diversity} (Melbourne: Christian Research Association 1997), 101. Bouma notes that there is a growing awareness of religion as an important dimension in the settlement process for migrant communities and mosques and Muslim organisations have an important role in facilitating Muslim settlement.

\textsuperscript{170} Australian Bureau of Statistics. \textit{Australia Religious Profile Media Fact Sheet 2006 Census} (Canberra: ABS, 2007). http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/7d12b0f6763c78caca257061001cc588/6ef598989db79931ca25706000d52b4!OpenDocument (accessed June 30, 2007). See also ABS, “Census Birthplace and Religion” on the ABS website: http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/7d12b0f6763c78caca257061001cc588/6ef598989db79931ca25706000d52b4!OpenDocument (accessed March 3, 2008). 12.7 million indicated they were ‘Christian’ or provided a Christian denomination in the 2006 census. Catholicism was the largest religious denomination with twenty six percent of the population and has benefited from immigration trends in recent decades. Anglicans represent nineteen percent of the population and are the second largest religious grouping. Following the Second World War migration from Eastern Europe and the Middle East also led to the establishing of Orthodox churches in Australia. Nineteen percent or 3.7 million people reported ‘No religion’ and another 2.4 million did not state their religion or inadequately described it.

\textsuperscript{171} ABS, \textit{Australia Religious Profile Media Fact Sheet 2006 Census} (Canberra: ABS, 2007).

\textsuperscript{172} Introducing laws against religious vilification has communicated the message that Australia is committed to being a religiously diverse nation and does not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of religion.

\textsuperscript{173} Gary Bouma, \textit{Australian Soul: Religion and Spirituality in the Twenty-first Century} (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 198-199. There may be unhealthy forms of competition which should be avoided but Bouma thinks it is not negative for religious groups to take pride in what they do well, identify their strengths and differentiate themselves from others. A lack of competition may be a sign of organisational laziness or a lack of interest in attending to the needs of members.

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid, 202.
There is also freedom to communicate one’s faith to others and to try and convince and persuade. Religious competition is not necessarily an unhealthy state of affairs, suggests Bouma, within limits. Researchers Cahill, Bouma, Dellal and Leahy, following wide consultation with religious leaders, recommended that all faith communities develop theologies of ‘the other’ and discard theologies which assume a sense of religious superiority over others. The contemporary context of Australia is one in which it has become increasingly important to promote respectful interfaith dialogue and interfaith understanding.

2.5.2 Muslim Communities in Australia

The study of religions other than Christianity in the past was a largely undeveloped area but this situation has dramatically changed in the last fifteen years as is evident by the large number of recent studies conducted on Muslim communities in Australia. This has coincided with a flourishing of Islamic studies in Australian universities.

Islam has had a long history predating European settlement. Makassan fishermen from Sulawesi were the first Muslims to visit Australia. They traded and intermarried with the Yolngu people of the north coast and other indigenous people of the Kimberleys, Groote Eylandt and Cape York. In the

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175 The researchers identify certain exclusivist theologies that may undermine harmony and cohesion, by See D. Cahill, D. G. Bouma, H. Dellal, and M. Leahy, eds., *Religion, Cultural Diversity and Safeguarding Australia*, 93.


177 See Roxanne D. Marcotte, “Conference Report: The University of Queensland’s First Islamic Studies National Conference”, *Australian Religious Studies Review* 18 no.1 (May 2005), 111-112. Marcotte notes that Islam related studies have become a new research strength. During 2007 the Australian government pledged funds to assist the development of expertise in Islamic studies. A number of universities are connected with the government’s initiative to develop a National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies headed up by Professor Abdullah Saeed.

178 See for example, Bilal Cleland, “History of Muslims in Australia”, in *Muslim Communities in Australia* eds., Abdullah Saeed and Shahram Akbarzadeh (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001), 27.

179 See Joyce Morgan, “The Eyes of Marege”, *Sydney Morning Herald* September 26, 2007. Playwright Janson brought together indigenous performers and artists from Sulawesi’s contemporary theatre company, *Teater Kita Makassar* to tell the stories of this first Muslim
1800s Afghan camel drivers were the first semi-permanent Muslims in Australia. Their role in opening up Australia’s inland area was very important. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries small numbers of Muslims from Dutch and British colonies in Southeast Asia were recruited to the pearling industry. Gradually Muslim communities were formed. Australia's first known mosque was built at Marree in northern South Australia in 1861. It was after World War II that Muslims began migrating in significant numbers.\textsuperscript{180}

The diversity of Australian Muslims has led some to suggest that it is more correct to speak of Muslim communities than a single community.\textsuperscript{181} Australian Muslims come from over seventy different countries. In the 2006 Census the two largest communities originated were from Lebanon (30,287) and Turkey (23,126). Other important source countries included Afghanistan (15,965), Pakistan (13,821), Bangladesh (13,361), Iraq (10,039); Indonesia (8,656), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (7,542).\textsuperscript{182} A sixty-nine percent growth in the Muslim population occurred between the 1996 and 2006 census. Figure 3 draws on the 1971, 1981, 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census to show the growth of the Muslim community in Australia.

\textbf{Fig. 3} The Muslim community in Australia (1971-2006 Census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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\textsuperscript{181} Akbarzadeh Shahram, “Unity or Fragmentation”, in \textit{Muslim Communities in Australia} eds., Akbarzadeh Shahram and Abdullah Saeed (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001), 234.

2.5.3 The first mission priority: establishing mosques and networks of support

Thirty-eight percent of Muslims are now Australian-born. Shahram outlines three phases in Muslim settlement in Australia. The first phase is represented by arrival and settlement. Individuals experience a sense of isolation and may wish to shed or conceal their religious identity. Shahram suggests that Muslim men who marry non-Muslim women after arriving in Australia may find their Islamic identity diluted or pushed into the background. Phase two sees the growth of permanent Muslim communities. Muslims realise that their lives in Australia are not transitory and establish mosques and Islamic institutions. In the third phase further development of a Muslim identity in Australia occurs.

The first mission priority has usually been the building of mosques and developing networks of support. Muslim communities expend a great deal of energy and resources in establishing themselves in a new land and finding ways to maintain and express religious identity. Setting up of halal food outlets has been another important aspect of expressing Islamic identity in Australia. Muslim Student Associations catering for Muslim students are active in universities and colleges.

Today there are more than one hundred mosques in Australia and thirty Islamic schools. Islamic societies, some associated with the Australian Federation of Islamic societies (AFIC), have been active in each state and territory providing welfare services and advocating on equity issues. There are an estimated 100 imams serving as religious leaders in mosques and prayer centres and seventy-four Muslim marriage celebrants listed on the website of the Births, Deaths and Marriages register.

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183 Of the 340,000 Muslims, 128, 904 were born in Australia, showing the growth of an Australian Muslim community that is shaped by both the countries of origin of their parents and the Australian context.
185 Shahram, “Unity or Fragmentation”, 228.
186 Ibid, 300.
187 Bouma, Many Religions, All Australian, esp. chapter 10.
188 Chowdhury, “Presenting Islam”, 220.
Marriages. The ‘Australian National Imams Council’ or ANIC was established in November 2006 as an umbrella organisation of Councils of Imams of Australian States and Territories. Over time it is expected that imams will be locally grown rather that being imported from Egypt, Lebanon, Malaysia, Indonesia and Turkey.\(^\text{189}\) Hanifer Deen looks positively towards the new generation of Australian-born Muslims.\(^\text{190}\)

Muslim academic, Akbarzadeh Shahram, points to an emerging Australian Muslim identity and the quest for an Australian umma.\(^\text{191}\) Islam has become an integral part of the Australian landscape.\(^\text{192}\) Islam is also being shaped by the prevailing values, norms and practices of Australian society. There is much evidence of visible and vibrant Muslim communities and a growing presence of Islam as part of Australia’s culture and Australian life.

2.5.4 Snapshot of the Indonesian Mosque at Tempe, NSW

There has been a tendency in Australia for Muslims to identify with ethnically-based groups. Many mosques develop with a particular focus on one or a few communities and one example of this is the Indonesian mosque at Tempe in NSW.\(^\text{193}\) During the mid 1980s Indonesian Muslim families in Sydney began to gather together socially and for Islamic study and prayer on Saturdays.

Groups in different suburbs were formed and later they raised funds to buy a building in Tempe which became their mosque. They also acquired the building

\(^{191}\) Hanifa Deen, Caravanserai: Journey among Australian Muslims (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1995).
\(^{192}\) Shahram”,Unity or Fragmentation”,228.
\(^{193}\) Abdullah Saeed, Islam in Australia, 212.

The following is drawn from an interview with former president (ketua) and one of the founders of the Tempe mosque, Muljadi Sabur, on 14 June 2007. The researcher also made a visit to the Tempe mosque and met with the current president and members of the Indonesian Muslim community in Sydney.
next door and established the ‘Centre for Islamic Da’wah and Education’ (CIDE). Currently there are approximately 400–500 Indonesian Muslims connected to the mosque. They do not have their own imam but different members lead prayers and guest preachers regularly visit. Various activities include religious classes or Tabligh Akbar on Saturday evenings; a women’s group; youth sports activities; and a Saturday Muslim school. Fundraising activities are aimed at establishing an Islamic college in Campsie. The Centre for Islamic Da’wah and Education (CIDE-NSW) seeks to provide a holistic approach to teaching Islam to the next generation with the hope of preparing young Muslims to “become the future role model of Australian Muslim citizen”.194

2.5.5 Reaching out to non-practising members

Some Muslims become more active believers after migrating to Australia while others become less active.195 There are clearly varying degrees of religiosity and religious commitment amongst Muslims as is the case amongst Christians. Australian researcher Riaz Hassan has studied Australian Christian and Muslim piety. He found some significant differences in the level of religiosity with overall Muslims being more orthodox and devoted in their religious beliefs, and more active in religious rituals.196

It is estimated that around thirty or forty percent of the Muslim community are actively practising their faith.197 There is therefore much scope to reach out to members who may be cultural rather than practicing Muslims. Another

194 Aly Zakaria is the current President of CIDE-Tempe mosque and this quote comes from a speech he gave at the University of NSW, Sept.2, 2007.
195 Michael Humphrey, “An Australian Islam? Religion in a Multicultural City”, in Muslim Communities in Australia eds., A. Saeed and S. Akbarzadeh, 33-52. Some Muslims find it very difficult being separated from the support of their homeland context and in the Australian context religious practices are a less integral part of daily life.
197 Abdullah Saeed, Islam in Australia (Sydney: Allen & Unwin), 2003, 72. Assessing religiosity is no easy task. Indicators include: frequency of prayer, the rate of mosque attendance and the number of Muslim women wearing hijab.
challenge is education of second (and third-generation) Muslim–Australians so that they are able to develop an Australian identity which is not at the expense of their Islamic and ethnic heritage. For this to occur it is important for young Muslims to have role models who show that they can succeed in being both Australian and Muslim. Developing a hybrid identity often opens up the possibility of creatively engaging in a dialogue between both identities but there can also be confusion of identity that arises from competing and conflicting expectations. More research needs to be done on the experience of second and third-generation Australian-Muslims.

2.5.6 Welcoming new converts

Some studies of Australian converts to Islam are currently being undertaken. Abdullah Saeed notes that conversion to Islam in Australia may be precipitated by marriage particularly of an Australian man to a Muslim woman. He thinks that in some instances genuine conversion takes place but in other instances it may be more superficial for the purpose of marriage. In some cases spouses return to their original faith after marriage. Those who embrace Islam through their contact and friendship with Muslims and through learning about Islam may join support groups set up to assist new converts (or ‘reverts’). A range of social and educational programs are also provided to new Muslims.

The issues surrounding conversion and outreach to members of other faith communities remains a sensitive one. Freedom of religion in Australia means

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199 Nayeefa Chowdhury from the University of New England is currently doing MA research on Australian converts to Islam and Karen Turner, a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Melbourne, is researching Australian women’s experiences of conversion to Islam exploring how women converts embody an Islamic identity in a post-feminist context and examining some of the reasons for conversion in a socio-political context that is often hostile to Muslims. See Karen Turner, “Becoming Muslim, Becoming Other: Religious Conversion, Gender and Identity”, (a paper presented at the CILS 4th annual Islamic Studies Postgraduate Conference, 17-18 November 2008). CILS website: http://www.cils.unimelb.edu.au/activities/pgrad-conference-2008/index.html
200 Saeed, Islam in Australia, 71-72. Saeed notes that classical Islamic law does not permit a Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim. There are also instances where Australian women also decide to convert to Islam after meeting and marrying Muslim men.
201 Ibid.
that Muslims and Christians (and members of other faith communities) are at liberty to engage in da’wah and mission and to invite others to join their faith. Conversions from and to Christianity and Islam will continue to take place in Australia for a variety of reasons and despite reservations and at times strong opposition from members of their former faith community or their family.

2.5.7 RISEAP and Da’wah bil Hal

The ‘Regional Islamic Da’wah Council of South East Asia and the Pacific’ or RISEAP was formed in 1980 for the advancement of Islam and the betterment of Muslims in the region. Its aim is to promote international Muslim unity and foster cooperation between Muslim organisations in the region. Organisations in twenty-two countries including Australia have been involved in RISEAP. RISEAP supports activities of member organisations especially in the areas of da’wah, education, training and welfare, and promotes research on problems facing Muslims. It also establishes charitable trusts to support Islamic activities in the region. A quarterly magazine, Al-Nahdah, is produced and courses on Da’wah are regularly run. RISEAP provides opportunities for networking and exchanges amongst member organisations and there is an active women’s (muslimah) training, courses for imams, and youth camps.

A conference on Da’wah bil Hal or ‘Da’wah through community service’ was held in March 1997 in Sydney sponsored by RISEAP and hosted by the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), Australian Islamic Cultural centre (AICC) and Muslim Women’s National Network of Australia (MWNNA). The conference encouraged participants to become active in practical da’wah in Australia through providing assistance, building schools, mosques, and welfare services and through education. The conference expressed the hope that through such efforts Islam would have a meaningful

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202 Australian Muslim organisations involved in RISEAP include the Australian Islamic Cultural Centre (AICC); the Muslim Women’s National Network Australia (MWNNA); and the Federation of Islamic Councils Inc (AFIC).

203 Drawn from a RISEAP brochure. See also RISEAP website: www.riseap.org.my
presence in Australia and Islam would be connected with the real life and settlement needs of Muslim Australians.

Australian Muslim researcher Anisa Buckley presented a paper on da‘wah in Australia at a global Islamic conference in Bahrain in 2007. She described some of the many different ways in which da‘wah occurs in multicultural Australia through education, interfaith work and through fostering interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims. Buckley points to the way in which Muslims are increasingly visible in Australian society working in the media, in politics, and academic institutions, and are establishing themselves in various fields. In this way Muslims have increasingly become an accepted part of Australian society. She thinks that da‘wah is best expressed through actions rather than overt proselytising. This enables other communities to see Muslims as active and concerned citizens, rather than as a group that cares only about their own members.

2.5.8 Christian mission in a changing Australia

A conference in 2005 on the theme Reimaging God and Mission set out to ask, “What is happening in Australia and how is God experienced in the Australian context?” The conference noted that the Church is no longer at the centre of public life and it can no longer be assumed that the Christian story is widely known. This clearly has implications for Christian mission. The location of the church has moved – from majority to minority; from privilege to plurality; from

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204 See Anisa Buckley, “Da‘wah activities and events in Australia”, (unpublished paper presented at the ‘First Global Discover Islam Conference’ in Manama, Bahrain), 13-17 March 2007. Buckley mentions dialogue and interfaith events, conferences and community seminars, course and programs run in schools and universities, professional and institutional networks, mosque open days and ‘Islamic Awareness’ programs, public events such as Eid festivals, ‘Cinema Islam’, and ‘Expresso’ organised by the Al Ghazzali Foundation and Zakat distribution supporting Australian and overseas projects.

205 Ibid. Mission/ da‘wah may take the form of community projects for example those organised by Australian Islamic Foundation and other Muslim groups to feed homeless people, raise funds for natural disasters; work with inner city Indigenous youth; support environmental projects; Muslim philanthropy, the work of the Australian Muslim Volunteers Network and programs for underprivileged communities.

control to witness; from maintenance to mission; from being at home in the culture to being alien; and from institution to ‘movement’. The Australian context has become one in which Christians are adjusting to living in a ‘post-Christendom’ and ‘post-modernity’ context.

Although the influence of organised religion has declined it was observed that there has been an increasing interest in spirituality. Participants at the conference were encouraged to listen carefully for how the Gospel resonates with Australian culture. Ross Langmead, the conference co-ordinator, emphasised the importance of expressing mission in ways that give expression to Australia’s cross-cultural and pluralist society. In a multifaith society there is a need for “dialogue with those of other faiths and co-operation with them on issues of justice”. Langmead noted that the post September 11 context in Australia had resulted both in increased fear and increased dialogue.”

2.5.9 Mission and da‘wah in Australia’s plural context: searching for new paths

Mission and da‘wah in Australia’s plural context calls for creative thinking as well as collaboration across faiths. This is illustrated by the views of Ridzuan Wu and Frank Purcell. At a Muslim Women’s Forum in Sydney in December 2003 sponsored by RISEAP there was interest in exploring contextually appropriate approaches to da‘wah. Ridzuan Wu, the deputy chair of RISEAP and president of Darul Arqam (a Muslim converts group based in Singapore), gave a keynote address in which he spoke of the way in which Islam in the past accepted, modified and adapted various cultural traditions. Wu cited as an example the experience of Chinese Muslims in Singapore and Malaysia. He went on to suggest that Islamic legal and theological concepts may need to be reformulated in response to different settings and circumstances in Western

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207 Ibid, xii. Subsequently the Australian Association of Mission Studies has been established, which produces the Australian Journal of Mission Studies and which provides an avenue for missiological reflection on the Australian context.
contexts such as Australia. Wu recommended that such areas as apostasy, segregation of the sexes, and the forbidding of alcohol and usury, needed review.

Ridzuan Wu has been a proponent for respectful dialogue between faiths and in the past has recommended that Muslims avoid an ‘adversarial-polemical approach’ in da’wah. Rather than scrutinising the religious texts of other faiths with the intention of showing they are flawed Wu advocated for an alternative approach to da’wah which is able to suspend personal judgment, and be responsive to context. His words encouraged Muslims in Australia to venture along some new paths.

Christian researcher Frank Purcell has researched the topic of Christian and Muslim responses to secularism. He notes that Christians have had centuries to adjust to liberal democracies and develop responses to the values that underpin them (such as religious tolerance, equality before the law, democracy and human rights). Purcell suggests that it may take Muslim communities some time to assess how the values underpinning Australian’s legal and political system relate to their faith and what form of participation they wish to take in public life.

In a helpful way Purcell has highlighted the scope and potential for Muslims and Christians to develop comparative and collaborative mission approaches.

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209 See Ridzuan Wu, ‘Issues in Cross-Cultural Da’wah’, (a paper presented at the International Da’wah Conference ‘Sharing our faith with others’ organised by Darul Arqam in Singapore, 2000). Other da’wah conferences in the region have been held. See report of a 2006 conference in Common Ground News Service (CGNews), March 14, 2006 where Shifa Mustapha gave a critical appraisal of da’wah in Australia.
211 Purcell suggests that some aspects of Australian society that may be problematic for Muslims in Australian society is the assumption that citizens have the right to accept or reject religious affiliation and may criticise religious groups. Muslims may feel deeply insulted if their faith is treated in a disrespectful way. He suggests Muslims will need to grapple with the question of how to achieve Muhammad’s vision of a just and peaceful society in the Australian context.
Purcell suggests that Muslims and Christians have a “shared vulnerability in a secularised world”, and could engage in common action to address social problems.²¹² He provides a brief comparative view of Christian and Muslim mission approaches. Both have an individual component as well as a social dimension. Purcell suggests that a Christian theology of mission is based on the prayer, “Your will be done on earth as in heaven” and the coming reign of God. In Islam Muslim believers are committed to establishing God’s rule on earth through submission to and implementation of God’s will, and through creating a just and compassionate society.²¹³ Purcell suggests that Muslims and Christians could work together towards these goals and to ensure that Australia becomes a home where the different faiths are able to flourish.

### 2.5.10 Building an inclusive Australia

Many Muslims are developing a strong sense of Muslim–Australian identity and can relate to other Australians on an equal footing. Most are also able to function well as Muslims and as Australians but a hardening of Australian community attitudes against Muslims in recent years and increased levels of community concern about Muslim migration, has had a significant toll on Australian Muslims.²¹⁴ Hostile public discourse and rhetoric has given the impression that Muslims are ‘outsiders’ and their values are alien to Australian society.²¹⁵ In particular, Muslim women wearing distinctive dress have been singled out for harassment and reports of violence and intimidation grew following September 11, 2001.²¹⁶ Disturbingly, some surveys have found that a

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²¹² Ibid, 171,177.
²¹³ Ibid, 169
²¹⁵ Akbarzadeh, “Muslim integration in Australia: it’s not so bad.”
²¹⁶ Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Isma - Listen: National consultations on eliminating prejudice against Arab and Muslim Australians*. The majority of participants in the project reported experiencing various forms of prejudice ranging from offensive remarks about race or religion to physical violence because of their race or religion. These increased following international incidents such as the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the Bali October 2002 bombings.
majority of Australians think Muslims are conservative and fundamentalist.\textsuperscript{217} Australian Muslims have reported feeling an increased alienation which has been exacerbated by particular national and local events and public debates.\textsuperscript{218}

Kevin Dunn’s study of Islam in Sydney notes the prevalence of common community views of Muslims as fanatical, intolerant, militant, fundamentalist, misogynist and alien.\textsuperscript{219} Such views tend to emerge particularly at times of heightened public unease or when there is opposition to the construction of mosques or Muslim schools. Dunn notes that local authorities sometimes refuse development consent on the grounds that proposals are out of character with surrounding developments.

This was the case during 2007 when there was strong community protest in Camden, a suburb in Sydney’s south-west, against the building of a private Islamic school.\textsuperscript{220} Hanifa Deen suggests that most Muslims in Australia throw their energies into adapting to Australian society and enhancing their families’ life chances but there is the danger that a fortress mentality may develop if Muslims are constantly faced with questions and doubts from other Australians...

\textsuperscript{217} Nahid Affrose Kabir, \textit{Muslims in Australia: Immigration, Race Relations and Cultural History} (London: Kegan Paul, 2004), 253-256, 273. Some Muslims change their name because of antagonism they face.

\textsuperscript{218} Debates on asylum seekers, and the trial and sentencing of gang-rapists in Sydney in 2001-2002 were examples of public debates that led to increased sense on alienation on the part of Muslims. See Katharine Betts and Ernest Healy, “Lebanese Muslims in Australia and Social Advantage” \textit{People and Place} 14, no. 1 (April 2006), 24-42. Using data from the 2001 Census Betts and Healy find that Lebanese Muslim households are large and more likely to be disadvantaged than other households and that Lebanese Muslim men have low levels of education and relatively high levels of unemployment.

\textsuperscript{219} Kevin Dunn, “Contemporary Racism and Islamophobia in Australia: Racialising Religion”, Nov. 2006, 22. See also Kevin Dunn, “Islam in Sydney: Contesting the Discourse of Absence”, \textit{Australian Geographer} 35, no. 3 (2004), 333-353.


about their commitment and loyalty to Australia, or are blamed for events overseas.\textsuperscript{221}

There have been a number of initiatives to overcome anti-Arab and anti-Muslim prejudice such as promoting positive public awareness and education to overcome misinformation, and improving legal protections.\textsuperscript{222} Australian academic and comparative religion expert, Eric Sharpe noted that overcoming fear, suspicion, distrust and paranoia between different religious communities is no easy matter.\textsuperscript{223} In recent years there have been numerous interfaith initiatives aimed at overcoming prejudice and building trust and friendship between Muslims and Christians. One example is the work of \textit{Affinity Intercultural Foundation} established by a group of Australian Muslims in early 2001 to “create and sustain enduring affinity and relationships with people through inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue and understanding”.\textsuperscript{224} Their efforts have done much to encourage interaction between the Muslim community and the wider Australian society. The \textit{Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations} established in 1997 has also helped to foster relationships and address misconceptions, lack of understanding and stereotyping which continue to exist in Christian attitudes towards Muslims.\textsuperscript{225}

Another important initiative has been the combined voice of the National Council of Churches and Muslim and Jewish leaders speaking out on various public issues. If members of one faith community are maligned it has been important that members of the other communities speak up and do not stand by

\textsuperscript{221} See Hanifa Deen, \textit{Caravanserai: Journey among Australian Muslims}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1995/2003), 384-387. Deen’s conversations with ordinary Muslims provide the inspiration for this book where she seeks to give Muslims a human face.


\textsuperscript{224} See Affinity website: http://www.affinity.org.au/

\textsuperscript{225} The Centre also produces a quarterly newsletter entitled \textit{Bridges}. http://www.columban.org.au/publications/bridges.html
passively. In September 2007 the General Secretary of the NSW Ecumenical Council prepared a media release that defended Muslim immigration and which was strongly critical of political calls to halt Muslim immigration. Christianity has long had a long and vital role in Australian society. The Australian Muslim identity is still evolving but Muslims now bring a vibrant presence to Australian life. There is cause to be hopeful that Muslims and Christians, working independently and together, can contribute to the vision of an inclusive Australia in which there is respect, friendship and good working relationships across religious differences. The future of Australian society will continue to be shaped by its religious communities as they witness, interact with one another, engage in debates, and play a role in the social, economic, cultural, religious and educational life of the nation.

2.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Responding to the reality of religious diversity represents one of the most significant challenges facing Islam and Christianity. This chapter has explored some contemporary trends in mission and da’wah and insights of a number of key Muslim and Christian scholars. The painful legacy of the past has left both communities feeling threatened by the other and there exists some inherent problems and hurdles that will not be easy to overcome. Muslims and Christians have each presented a flawed witness. The challenge is to move beyond the mistakes of the past to discover new ways of relating with one another. There are signs that both faith communities are searching for ways to re-conceive of their relationship, beyond that of ‘rivals’ and ‘intimidating

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226 This point was strongly made by Dr. Mohamad Abdalla when he was speaking at a public event during ‘Islamic Awareness Week’ in Darwin mosque on 21 June, 2009.
227 Media release from the General Secretary of the NSW Ecumenical Council, “All Immigrants are our neighbours, not bird flu”, 27 Sept.2007. The statement’s release coincided with ‘Refugee Week’. Jonathon Inkpin highlighted the need to see one another as ‘fellow children of God’. He suggested Australia’s immigration policy should not be driven by a misplaced fear of the ‘Other’ and referred to Jesus’ spirit of radical hospitality.
229 Wickert, Plurality, Power and Mission, 35.
opponents’, to one of co-equal, and ‘compatible co-partner in life’. Each religious tradition has resources that can assist in this task.

Reflecting on Christian mission and da’wah in the context of religious pluralism is a theological minefield that challenges the navigational skills of even the most experienced theologian.\textsuperscript{230} The ‘persistent fact of religious pluralism’ challenges Muslims and Christians to reformulate their theology and practice of mission.\textsuperscript{231} In the particular settings of Indonesia and Australia relationships hang between fear and promise, prejudice and communal solidarity, alienation and shared vision. The relationship between Muslims and Christians is crucial for both societies and for the climate of Indonesian and Australian political life. Reformulating mission and da’wah and forging new relationships will be important not only for the future development of both faiths but also for world security and the future flourishing of humanity.\textsuperscript{232}

\textsuperscript{232} Wickeri, “Plurality, Power and Mission”, 24.
CHAPTER 3
MARRIAGE AND INTERMARRIAGE IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets the scenes for this inquiry by offering a historical survey of marriage and intermarriage in Islam and Christianity. ¹ Beginning with some sociological observations on the subject of intermarriage a survey of marriage in Islam and Christianity is provided together with an overview of the variety of perspectives and practices on intermarriage within each faith. Changing attitudes to marriage between Catholics and Protestants, and the phenomenon of Jewish–Christian marriage, provide comparative references. Interfaith marriage between Muslims and Christians continues to raise significant questions for both communities. This is visible in discussions on the subject of intermarriage in various Muslim–Christian conversations sponsored by the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue of the Roman Catholic Church, and in efforts by churches in Europe and North America to develop pastoral guidelines on Muslim–Christian intermarriage. ²

3.2 INTERMARRIAGE: SOME SOCIOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

Marriage choice generally reflects a union of individuals who have a similar origin, education, ethnicity, ability and religion. ³ Intermarriage implies marriages that cross ethnic, cultural, social, linguistic, racial, religious or national boundaries. A definition of interreligious marriage provided by Ruth Cavan is: “marriage of members of two religions whose values are significantly

¹ This is step two in the ‘Missiological Inquiry Approach’ explained in Chapter One.
² The specific experience of Muslim–Christian intermarriage in Indonesia and Australia will be discussed in subsequent chapters.
different that one or both religions perceive its values as threatened”. Relevant literature in the field of intercultural and interreligious marriage approaches the subject from different angles. Areas of interest include the comparative rates of intermarriage of different racial and ethnic groups and societies over time; factors that encourage intermarriage; intermarriage as an indicator of intercultural and race relations; marital stability and comparative rates of divorce; intermarriage and assimilation; intermarriage and conversion; and identity of children of mixed marriages.

‘Endogamy’, or marrying within one’s own group, can be a means by which a religious community seeks to preserve cherished beliefs, values and traditions, and pass these to the next generation. Through endogamy a group fosters a sense of group identity, cohesion and belonging. A religious community may be strongly endogamous and forbid or prohibit marriage with someone who is not a member of the same religious affiliation. Marrying outside one’s community is viewed as a violation of group integrity which disturbs the coherence and continuity of the group and leads to serious consequences such as the severing of ties. A religious community may exercise ‘preferential endogamy’, valuing endogamy but making provisions if members marry out. In these cases the community may give serious consideration to ensuring transference of cultural and religious values in the rearing of children. There are

5 Sociologists who study marriage and intermarriage have used the terminology of ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’. ‘Structuralists’ tend to explain intermarriage in terms of social and demographic structures; ‘Exchange theorists’ are interested in how society values or devalues the attributes of partners; ‘Culturalists’ interpret ‘outmarriage’ as related to ethnic assimilation, group preference and historical change. See Xuanming Fu and Tim B. Heaton, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii 1983-1994* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 61.
7 See. E. L Cerroni-Long, “Marrying Out: Socio-Cultural and Psychological Implications of Intermarriage”, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 15, no. 1 (1984), 25-46. Cerroni-Long explains the rationale of exogamy as the extension of a group’s standing through the creation of links and alliances whilst that of endogamy, as the maintenance of group boundaries through the reinforcement of intra-group ties and by forbidding the introduction of outsiders. Some groups insist that marriages be solely or preferentially contracted within a particular group and there are strict guidelines for mate selection and marital eligibility.
8 Cavan,“Concepts and Terminology”, 213. Variations in attitudes towards intermarriage may range from mild aversion to severe hostility and conflict or even ‘honour killing’.
also groups that exhibit ‘permissive endogamy’ allowing intermarriage with other groups. In some contexts intermarriage may be viewed positively as creating links and cementing alliances, improving job prospects or increasing economic assimilation. Protecting group boundaries may be ‘exchanged’ to gain certain advantages according to Levi-Strauss.

In recent years there has been great deal of attention given to Jewish–Gentile intermarriage due to the increasing incidence of such unions in the American context. There is much literature in the field of Jewish–Christians marriages including numerous self-help guides for couples. Some consider the high rate of intermarriage a reflection of greater tolerance and pluralism. Others argue that being zealously endogamous has helped Jews maintain their identity, prompting some to ask whether Jewish culture could be ‘loved out of existence’ in twenty-first century America. With a high incidence of intermarriage some suggest that the ideology of prevention should be replaced with a more

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14 Sylvia Barack Fishman, *Double or Nothing? Jewish Families and Mixed Marriages* (Lebanon: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 9. Fishman conducted over 254 interviews (and a number of focus groups with teenagers). Families included those who were ‘Jewishly identified’; those who had two faiths; those who were secular and no-religion families, ‘principled nontheists’, and those which were overtly Christian. She notes that Jewish American identity is increasingly secular with a valuing of Jewish descent but not necessarily religiously practicing. Her research suggests that children of mixed marriage households may be more likely themselves to enter into interfaith marriages.
proactive approach of welcoming newcomers.\textsuperscript{15} Jewish identity, suggests Fishman, develops through strong family interactions and regular contact with Jewish culture. Jewish schools can play an important part in the transmission of Jewish history, culture, beliefs and values. She remains hopeful that Jewish heritage will continue to become part of the texture of the lives of the next generation. She notes that in ‘two heritage households’ hybrid religious identities may occur. Once impermeable boundaries between religious communities are being replaced with more porous boundaries in which it is less easy to define who is ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ the community.\textsuperscript{16}

In the American context a high frequency of intermarriage is not a specifically Jewish phenomenon.\textsuperscript{17} The value placed on endogamy is influenced by a variety of factors that are not only religious. Early studies in religious intermarriage were quick to notice that social context significantly impacts the rate of intermarriage and particular social and economic conditions influence marriage choice. Demographic factors, including the distribution and relative size of various religious groups, also have an impact on intermarriage. Where there are many opportunities to interact with people from other faith communities there is likely to be higher rates of intermarriage. Social networks which reflect religious heterogeneity are therefore likely to be an important factor in influencing the rate of intermarriage.\textsuperscript{18} Explaining the discrepancies in Catholic intermarriage in different dioceses in America, Davidson and Widman

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 10. Forty-three to fifty-two percent of Jews marry out of their community. Reform movements within Judaism have initiated some significant changes such as the decision in 1983 to expand the traditional definition of a Jew to include anyone with one Jewish parent (and those who have converted in conformity with Jewish law).

\textsuperscript{16} Sylvia Barack Fishman, \textit{Relatively Speaking: Constructing Identity in Jewish and Mixed Marriage Families} (Michigan: University of Michigan, 2001). Children raised in such households may be raised in one religion or the other, or they may have a combined outlook. Interfaith families, asserts Fishman, can become ‘interfaithless families’ if Jewish parents fail to adequately explain to their children why Jewishness matters.

\textsuperscript{17} See Andrzej Kulczycki and Lob Arun Peter, “Patterns, Determinants, and Implications of Intermarriage Among Arab Americans”, \textit{Journal of Marriage and Family} 64, no. 1 (February 2002). U.S. Census data indicated that over eighty percent of Arab–Americans had non–Arab spouses (though many would have been Christian Arabs marrying non-Arab Christians). A strong English-language ability, being U.S. born, and being highly educated were factors which tended to be correlated with marrying out leading the researchers to describe indicators of acculturation as the strongest predictor for intermarriage, particularly for women.

noted that areas which had fewer Catholics had a higher rate of intermarriage, with the reverse also being true.¹⁹

Literature on the impact of intermarriage on minority communities suggests that prohibitions may be reflective of concerns a group has about its identity and survival.²⁰ Endogamy can be a survival mechanism particularly for minorities. Interreligious marriage are likely to be viewed as more problematic in societies which are strongly communal in nature in which religion is an integral part of the culture than in societies which view religion as a private matter relating to individual choice.²¹ Some studies suggest that marriage outside one’s community leads to an eroding of identity while other studies suggest that intermarriage strengthens an individual’s identity. These issues are also of particular interest in this inquiry.²²

3.3 MARRIAGE WITHIN ISLAM

Another of His signs is that He created spouses from among yourselves for you to live with in tranquility: He ordained love and kindness between you. (Ar-Rum 30:21)²³

In Islam marriage or nikah is understood as the basic unit of society and is commended as a human calling for every Muslim.²⁴ God has ordained marriage for blessing, mutual benefit, protection and companionship, and it is part of

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²² Ibid, 74. This study is interested in finding out how Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriage maintain and pass on faith.
God’s will and purpose for humanity. There are many hadith sayings of the Prophet which view marriage positively.\(^{25}\) Marriage assists in the control of sexual behaviour, provides a stable atmosphere for the bringing up of children and ensures that women have economic support during their child-bearing and child-rearing years. Nikah literally means sexual intercourse and physical experiences of love and sexuality are affirmed within Islam.\(^{26}\) Islam teaches that men and women were created from the same source and essence, and originate from a single spirit (nafs).\(^{27}\) The close bond between husband and wife is expressed in terms of the mutual comfort they offer to one another. Marriage therefore is viewed as providing emotional security and pleasure to men and women.\(^{28}\)

Marriage within Islam has a contractual element and the consent of both parties is required.\(^{29}\) Whilst most contracts are placed in the realm of mu’amalat or transactions between people, marriage is placed in the category of matters of worship or ‘ibadah in Islamic jurisprudence.\(^{30}\) Because the spiritual and legal realms overlap in Islam, marriage is also seen as a means by which husband and wife build up each other’s faith and spiritual life.\(^{31}\) Marriage is subject to God’s laws and this gives marriage a sacred quality. The notion of covenant or mithaq is part of the Muslim understanding of marriage.\(^{32}\)

\(^{25}\) There are hadith sayings which discourage celibacy such as, “Whoever is able to marry, should marry.” An often quoted hadith of Malik b. Anas states: “When the servant of God marries, he perfects half his religion.” A hadith narrated by ‘A’ishah describes women as the split halves of men. See Lois Lamya Ibse al Faruqi, “Marriage in Islam”, in Marriage among the Religions of the World, ed., A. A. Swidler (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 56. See also Al-Bukhari’s collection of hadith with particular reference to the book on marriage (nikah).

\(^{26}\) In the Sufi mystical tradition, human love and longing are an allegory for divine love.

\(^{27}\) Sura 4:1 and 7:189.

\(^{28}\) See Sura 2:187.


\(^{30}\) al-Hibri, “The Nature of Islamic Marriage”, 193. The Qur’an enjoins Muslims to fulfil their contracts and remain true to their promises. See QS 5.1.


\(^{32}\) Mithaq exists between God and the children of Adam (Sura 7:172); between God and the prophets (Sura 3:81); with the Children of Israel (Sura 2:83) and with Christians (Sura 5:14 and 4:20-21). Texts admonishing men against leaving their wives refer to the solemn mithaq that
Islamic understandings of marriage were extensively discussed in classical Muslim literature. A leading Muslim jurist of the Middle Ages, Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) wrote extensively on marriage saying that it should not detract from one’s devotion to God. Five advantages of marriage according to Ghazali include: procreation; satisfaction of sexual desire; companionship (earthly love as a reminder of divine love); for the good ordering of the household; and for the disciplining of human beings. He suggested that marriage requires qualities of character and etiquette, rights and obligations and correct conduct.

A valid Muslim marriage requires that there be a marriage contract made in accordance with the syari’ah between the groom and the bride’s father or wali (guardian). In the Islamic law of marriage the wali is usually the woman's closest adult male relative who has responsibility with respect to her marrying. A Muslim marriage need not take place in a mosque and the home of the bride is often chosen for the wedding ceremony. Any Muslim male of good standing in the community may preside and it is not required that an imam or religious leader be present. The marriage is made public through the presence of two male witnesses. The marriage ritual includes the signing of a marriage contract or ‘aqd nikah which outlines the rights and duties of both parties. The explicit consent from the bride and her wali is given in response to a request made by the groom. A deep sense of contentment (ridha) should accompany exists between a man and woman in marriage. See Richard C. Martin, “Marriage, Love and Sexuality in Islam”, in Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective (Grand Rapids, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 217-219.

33 There were debates about marriage amongst Jurists for example, as to whether marriage was obligatory or simply desirable. See the writings of Ahmad Ibn Hanibal, Abu Daud, Al -Bukhari, Al-Darimi, Ibn Madja, Al-Nasali, Al-Tirmidhi and Al-Tayalisi.


35 Custom in Australia is to engage the services of an imam who is registered as a marriage celebrant to ensure the marriage is valid according to Australian law. The Abu Hanifa school allows Christians to be witnesses but the other schools will only allow two Muslim men or a Muslim man and two Muslim women

36 This may be a verbal or written contract. Some women negotiate wording to go in their marriage contracts.

37 This may be a verbal or written contract. Some women negotiate wording to go in their marriage contracts.

38 Jurists vary in whether a father needs to have the consent of his daughter. Some argue that it is commendable rather than necessary. The Tanyil-ur Rahman Code tells of a woman who demanded and was accorded by the Prophet the right to repudiate her marriage because she had
acceptance.\textsuperscript{39} A \textit{mahr} or dower is given at the signing which may be received in two parts, one at the time of marriage and a delayed portion or \textit{mu'akkhhar} in case of death or divorce.\textsuperscript{40}

There are stipulations and parameters for a valid Muslim marriage including prohibitions relating to marrying close relatives.\textsuperscript{41} Arbitration between the spouses is required if dissolution is threatened.\textsuperscript{42} Divorce (\textit{talaq}) is permissible but there is strong discouragement of the practice.\textsuperscript{43} In certain circumstances the wife has the right to instigate divorce such as a long absence of the husband, desertion, impotence, failure to provide support, physical or mental mistreatment, serious mental illness, apostasy, proved debauchery, or by mutual agreement.\textsuperscript{44} Marrying following divorce is acceptable following the ‘\textit{iddah}’ period.\textsuperscript{45}

In most Muslim countries where polygamy is permitted men must obtain the permission of the court which conducts an inquiry into the reason for the request and whether the husband has the financial ability to support more than one family.\textsuperscript{46} A woman who wishes to prevent her husband taking a future second wife can ask that a stipulation be written into the marriage contract.

\textsuperscript{39} Azizah Y. al-Hibri, “The Nature of Islamic Marriage”, 196.
\textsuperscript{40} The \textit{mahr} or dower (rather than dowry) is the gift given by the husband to the wife.
\textsuperscript{41} Hussain, \textit{Islam: Its law and society}, 168.
\textsuperscript{42} See Sura 4:35.
\textsuperscript{43} Of all the permitted acts, divorce is described as being most disliked by God. See hadith of Abu Dawood cited in S. Ameenul Hasan Rizvi, “Women and Marriage in Islam”, \textit{The Muslim World League Journal} 12, no.1, October (1984), 26. Women may end the matrimonial relationship but they have fewer rights than men to do so without prescribed legitimate reasons. The right of repudiation (\textit{talaq}) by the wife may be agreed upon prior to marriage as a condition of the marriage contract. In cases where the woman initiates the divorce her husband may agree to release her if she returns the dower or marriage gifts as compensation.
\textsuperscript{44} See Hussain, \textit{Islam: Its law and society}, 77-91.
\textsuperscript{45} ‘\textit{Iddah}’ refers to three menstrual cycles. Historically ‘\textit{iddah}’ was required to ensure parentage could be determined.
\textsuperscript{46} See Sura 4: 3, 129. Polygamy was regarded within Islam as being equitable and humane in some situations when there was an imbalance in the male-female population. In some schools of law the consent of the first wife was required. Polygamous marriages were allowed in certain circumstances such as cases when a wife can not bear children or if she is chronically ill.
In many parts of the Muslim world marriage involves the joining together of two families. Islam has proved flexible in incorporating regional differences and social customs though this has also meant that patriarchal cultural influences have seeped into the way Islamic law has been interpreted. Most Muslim countries have more recently introduced marriage reforms including the setting of a minimum age for marriage.

A challenge facing Muslims today is interpreting *syari’ah* principles for contemporary contexts. Those working for reform argue that there are resources within Islam to promote partnership of women and men and to confront patriarchal influences. Contemporary Muslim scholarship is taking a new look at old laws and considering what changes are needed to meet the challenges of living in modern societies. Women’s increased participation in the workforce has raised new questions such as whether it should remain mandatory for the husband to support the wife or whether the model of obligations of the man and rights of women should be replaced with a model of interdependence. These questions ensure that debate and dialogue within Islam on the nature of marriage will be ongoing.

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47 After the wedding it has been quite common practice in some Muslim contexts for the bride to move to the home of her husband.
48 See Azizah Y. al-Hibri, and Raja’ M. El. Habti, “Islam”, in *Marriage and Family in World Religions*, eds. Don S. Browning, M. Christian Green and John Witte Jr. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 152-156. Islam was revealed in a context of patriarchal influence and Islam raised the position of women through protecting them economically, guaranteeing women the right to inherit and allowing women an education. Patriarchal thinking found expression within Islamic jurisprudence in the interpretation of jurists of such texts such as Sura 2:228 and Sura 4: 34 which appear to paint a picture of less than equal gender relations. Divorce by triple repudiation has increasingly being discouraged in contemporary settings.
49 Traditionally there was no age limitation on marriage and in some cases marriage occurred when partners were still young, with consummation occurring at a much later time. Reforms that have been introduced in some countries have acknowledged that child marriage can be misused.
50 al Faruqi, “Marriages in Islam”, 60. Despite the patriarchal influence in Islam a woman maintains her separate identity, keeps her maiden name and has the right to separate ownership of money and property.
3.4 ISLAM AND INTERMARRIAGE

Marrying outside one's tribe, clan or family, in principle, has been encouraged within Islam. In the spread of Islam, cross-cultural marriages assisted Islamisation. The legal principle of kafā‘a meaning compatibility, suitability and equality of marriage partners, has been a consideration. In practice, as is the case elsewhere in the world, Muslim marriage alliances tended to reflect compatibility and similarity of social status, religion, lineage and wealth. In terms of religious intermarriage three verses provide the basis for Muslim jurisprudence. A few early jurists rejected the idea of interreligious marriage basing their argument on the following Qur’anic text:

Do not marry idolatresses, until they believe; a believing slavegirl is better than an idolatress, though you may admire her. And do not marry idolaters, until they believe. A believing slave is better than an idolater, though you may admire him (Al-Baqarah 2: 221).

The majority Muslim opinion does not usually apply this prohibition to Jewish or Christian women because ‘idolaters’ or mushrikāt are distinguished from Ahl al-Kitab (fem. kitabiyya) in Qur’anic texts. The majority Muslim opinion also distinguishes between the term ‘unbelievers’ or kawafir (or kafir) and ‘People of the Book’.

Justification for interreligious marriage between a Muslim man and a kitabiyya woman draws from Qur’anic texts and tradition. The Prophet Muhammad and some important figures in the early period of Islam married Jewish or Christian women. There are also various hadith sayings which state that marriage to a kitabiyya is permissible.

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53 Mai Yamani, “Cross-cultural Marriage within Islam: Ideals and Reality”, in Cross-Cultural Marriage: Identity and Choice, eds., Rosemary Breger and Rosanna Hill (Oxford, New York: Berg, 1998), 153. Yamani applies this to areas that were conquered militarily but also outlying areas not subject to military conquest.
55 The relevant verses are Sura 2:221, Sura 60: 10 and Sura 5:5.
56 Ahl al-Kitab (fem. kitabiyya) literally means ‘People of the Book’ and is usually understood to refer to Jews and Christians. Musyrik or Mushrikāt refers to idolaters.
57 Kafir refers to ‘non-believers’, literally anyone who conceals or hides from the truth.
58 A minority Muslim opinion considers Christians and Jews to be kafir.
59 The Prophet had two Jewish wives, Safiyyah bint Huyay and Maymunah bint al-Harith; and he took as a wife a Coptic slave girl Mariyyah who had been given to him. Some close
Today the good things are permitted you, and the food of those who were given the Book is permitted to you. Likewise believing women in wedlock, and in wedlock women of them who were given the Book before you if you give them their wages (bride-gifts) in wedlock and not in licence, or as taking lovers. (An-Nisā’ 5:5)

This sura text supported the argument that it was permissible within Muslim law for Muslim men to marry Jewish of Christian women. Whilst this view gained predominance the Shafi’i school adopted a far more restrictive definition of kitabiyya (which excluded nearly all Jewish and Christian women), and as a result the family law in Muslim states that have been influenced by the Shafi’i school tend to prohibit the marriage of any Muslim, male or female, to a non-Muslim.

In contrast to permitting Muslim men to marry kitabiyya, early jurists unanimously rejected the possibility of a Muslim woman marrying a non-Muslim. This prohibition was adhered to by all the legal schools. Various reasons are cited in defence of this position, one being the notion that the role of the husband in relation to wife is one of trustee and protector. Traditional understandings established the guardianship of men over women and the view that Muslims were ascendant over non-Muslims.

Companions of the Prophet married kitabiyya including Utsman ibn ‘Affān, Hudzaifah Ibn Al-Yaman, Jabir ibn Abdullah, and Sa’ad ibn Abī Waqqās. Once married, a kitabiyya wife had the same rights and duties as a Muslim wife and was provided with the same living allowance. A less prevalent position in early Islam was held by Abd-Allah ibn Umar, son of the second Caliph Umar ibn Khattab. He had three wives before he embraced Islam. After he converted to Islam, only one of his wives accepted Islam (along with her son Abd-Allah ibn Umar). This led his son to view marriages to kitabiyya unfavourably. Abd-Allah ibn Umar was of the opinion that kitabiyya were polytheists. He thought that Sura 2:221 abrogated the permission that had been given in Sura 5:5.

A non-Muslim wali was also permitted to be part of the marriage ceremony.


This text has provided support for prohibiting Muslim men from marrying an ‘unbeliever’ (but does not apply to a Muslim man marrying a kitabiyya (female ‘People of the Book’). Sura Al-Mumtahanah 60: 10 provides further support for allowing interreligious marriages between Muslim men and kitabiyya. “O believers, when believing women come to you as emigrants, test them. God knows very well their belief. Then, if you know them to be believers, return them not to the unbelievers. They are not permitted to the unbelievers, nor are the unbelievers permitted to them.”

This is the case in Malaysia and in the Compilation of Muslim Law (1991) in Indonesia.

on intermarriage were reinforced by the circumstances of the early centuries of Islamic history when Muslim men travelled widely as traders, missionaries, warriors and pilgrims. Women tended to remain in predominantly Muslim societies whereas Muslim men who travelled and lived in non-Muslim societies encountered the practical situation of there not being Muslim women available for marriage.

Muslim jurisprudence discussed cases in which a woman who was in an existing marriage with a non-Muslim converted to Islam. The Prophet’s daughter Zaynab was in this situation and evidence suggests that her husband converted some years later. There is evidence of a variety of practices in early Islam but the view that came to predominate was that such marriages continued to be valid only if the husband converted to Islam within the wife’s ‘iddah period. The different schools of Islamic law, with some variation, all expressed disapproval and in some cases recommended severe punishment for unions involving a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man. It is generally assumed that a non-Muslim male wishing to marry a Muslim female must convert to Islam otherwise the marriage is considered void. Some Muslim writers have interpreted the prohibition of Muslim woman marrying a non-Muslim as a measure to ensure that the religious freedom of Muslim women and their offspring is maintained.

161. A partial list of early unequivocal statements against female Muslim intermarriages is provided by Friedmann. An unacceptable incongruity would occur if a Muslim woman was made subservient to a non-Muslim husband contradicting the concept of Islam as a religion that must be exalted above all others.

65 Some jurists gave examples where non-Muslims had the right to preserve their marriage after their wife embraced Islam, citing treaties made with the People of the Book. Various hadith can be cited supporting both views. See Friedmann, Tolerance and coercion, 66.

66 The relevant text is Sura 60:10. See also Nielsen, “Islam and mixed marriages”, 10-12. The Hanafis and Malikis say the Muslim husband is not entitled to prevent his wife from attending worship in her own faith, nor impose on her the Muslim rules relating to menstrual purity, consuming pork or wine. In the Hanabali school a husband may prevent his wife from attending church or leaving the house on religious feast days. If a Muslim woman marries a non-Muslim man in good faith and then discovers her mistake, the marriage can be annulled. If such a marriage has been entered into knowingly the man is punishable with 40 lashes. The Maliki school regards this as a serious breach of the Muslim pact with non-Muslim minorities (dhimmi) and the man could face the death penalty.


In the case of a marriage breakdown between a Muslim man and a kitabiyya wife there are some differences in rights that are accorded a Muslim wife/mother and a kitabiyya wife/mother. A kitabiyya mother has the right of custody of children until the age of discernment in religious matters which is usually regarded as between four and six years old. A Muslim mother usually has rights of custody up until the age of puberty. A kitabiyya widow is excluded from the right to inherit from her deceased husband although her husband may make provision for her in the form of gifts which are subject to the normal rules governing gifts.

In modern times Muslim Family Law has been a matter of much debate within Islam. Some jurists have challenged conservative interpretations and called for reform of marriage laws on the basis of gender equity and the principle of free choice in marriage as represented by various UN Conventions. These state that both sexes have the right to choose their partners irrespective of race, religion or creed. International human rights treaties have advocated that free choice in marriage should be available to all men and women. Muslim scholars adoptions this interpretation. See Mehmet Ozalp, 101 Questions you asked about Islam (Blackheath:Brandl & Schlesinger, 2004). 271. He suggests that the stipulation against intermarriage for women relates to Islam’s desire to ensure women have freedom of belief and protection in marriage and because, in Islam, men bear the prime responsibility for the welfare of the family. Ozalp rather unconvincingly however states that a Muslim man will have a ‘natural affinity’ with a Christian or Jewish woman but such an affinity does not naturally exist between a Muslim woman and a man of another faith.

The children are assumed to be Muslim. Custody cannot be passed to members of the mothers’ family, which may occur if the mother is Muslim.

See Jørgen S. Nielsen, “Islam and mixed marriages”, in Christian-Muslim Marriages ed., Jørgen S. Nielsen (Birmingham: Centre for Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, 1983). See al Faruqi, “Marriages in Islam”, 60. The Hanafi school allows a written testament in which the husband may provide for his wife by disposing of up to one third of his estate. Among the Sunnis the Muslim husband has no right to inherit from his deceased dhimmi (non-Muslim) wife. Shi’a only allow Muslim heirs of a deceased dhimmi to inherit

See Article 16 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 5 of the ICCPR and the 1962 International Marriage Convention.

See Wassila Liaief, “Legal Instruments and Gender Indicators: International law, mixed marriage, and the law of succession in North Africa”, UNESCO (2005), 331-350. Family law in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria is discussed. Tunisia alone in the Arab-Muslim world recognises mixed marriages since a ground breaking ruling of the District Court in June 1999. Liaief described the Tunisian decision as ‘still reverberating’ in the Tunisian Family Code after a Tunisian woman’s divorce from a Belgium man was recognised (on the grounds that Tunisian authorities were obligated to uphold international laws). Liaief is critical of the marriage law in a number of Muslim countries which provides a distinct advantage to the Muslim community.
advocating a thorough going revision of syari’ah warn of the danger of Islam being locked into a rigid set of behaviour, social structures, and legal practices which perpetuate unjust treatment of women. They argue that Islamic law needs to continually be reinterpreted in response to changing circumstances and different contexts.73

3.5 MARRIAGE WITHIN CHRISTIANITY

Christian understandings of marriage and intermarriage were developed over time drawing on texts from the Old and New Testament and Jewish practices. The early church took root in an environment that was influenced by Greco-Roman culture, and this influenced the subsequent development of Christian marriage ethics.74 Marriage was the freely-given consent of a man and a woman to live together in a life long union. Early liturgies described the marriage bond as signifying the mystery of Christ and his Church. The purpose of marriage was for companionship, to regulate sexuality, ensure procreation and the bonding of society.75 Marriage provides a place of love and security to raise children and in this way society is built upon firm foundations.

Christianity adopted the understanding of marriage inherited from Christianity’s Jewish heritage. The doctrine of creation affirms the human bond

73 See Mohamed Charfi, Islam and Liberty: the Historical Misunderstanding, trans. from French by Patrick Camiller (London: Zed Books, 2005). Divorce and remarriage, custody of children, and inheritance are identified as areas in need of revision. See also Sardar, “The Post Modern Age”, in Christian-Muslim Relations: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow, 74. The classical Muslim jurists solved problems in the light of available knowledge but their judgments were never intended to be the final word on aspects of Islamic law.

74 David G. Hunter, ed., Marriage in the Early Church (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 9. An older form of Roman marriage, cum manu, resembled a matrimonial process existing throughout the ancient Near East. Greco-Roman moralists and philosophers saw procreation as a civic duty and all citizens of marriageable age were expected to marry. Stoic philosophy emphasised friendship and harmony between spouses. Marriage was understood as a contract and a dowry was transferred. Ceremonies of betrothal and marriage could be performed but were not required. Only children born within legal marriages were recognised (but having a concubine was not uncommon).

75 See Gen. 2: 21; Mal. 2: 14; Deut. 21: 10-14, 22: 28f; Gen. 1: 28; Ps. 127:2-5; Deut. 24:1-4. The covenant between God and the people of Israel is referred to as a marriage (Isa. 54: 4f; 62: 4f; Jer. 2: 2; Ezek. 16: 7f; Hos. 2: 19). At times marriage was used to strengthen family and economic ties, and political alliances (1 Kings 3:1).
between husband and wife as part of the goodness of creation. Marriage reflects God’s covenantal faithfulness and is part of God’s original blessing. Marriage represents God’s will for humanity and Biblical examples of love, faithfulness and companionship were to be emulated in the lives of Christian couples. A number of New Testament texts speak positively of marriage and marriage was confirmed by Christ. At the same time, Christianity was significantly shaped by its founder who did not marry. Christ’s death and resurrection brought to the early church an intense eschatology and expectation of the coming kingdom led some Christians to renounce marriage choosing to imitate the example of Christ. The call to discipleship was at times interpreted as a radical renunciation of family life. Formulating views on divorce and remarriage also proved difficult. The early church struggled to maintain a balance between affirming the blessing of marriage and promoting the option of celibacy.

Christianity has had a rather uneasy relationship with the human body, sexuality and marriage. This has led some to contrast Islam’s uncomplicated commitment to the goodness of sex, marriage and family with the more ambivalent approach to marriage and the family in the Biblical tradition.

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77 Glen Olsen, ed., *Christian marriage: a historical study* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2001), 56. In the New Testament marriage is confirmed by Christ as a blessing of creation (Mk. 10: 6-8; Mt. 19:4-6). The wedding in Cana was the site of one of Jesus first miracles (John 2:1f); family households were the hub of Christian mission and hospitality and Paul suggests that Christian leaders should have an exemplary family life (1Thess. 4:4-5; 1 Tim. 3:2,12).

78 See Mk. 3:20-22; 31-35; Luke 8:19-21; Mt. 25:1-13; Mk. 2:19 f; Luke 12:36 f; Luke 17:26-30; John 2:29 f. The wedding feast was an image to describe the messianic era and the church was a new messianic family based not on natural kinship but adoption by God.


80 Hermas (Mandate 4: 29) thought remarriage after the death or divorce of a spouse was forbidden.

81 See Johnson and Jordan, “Christianity”, 77-149. They note that New Testament teaching reflects an ambivalent approach towards marriage and the family. Paul for example affirms marriage and family yet describes virginity as a calling for those who sincerely wish to offer their lives in dedication and service (Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 7:34).

82 See Paula M Cooeye, *Family, Freedom and Faith: Building Community Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press; 1996), 17-21. At times Jesus was at odds with his own family
The second century saw the emergence of Gnostic groups that sharply defined boundaries between Christianity and the world and favoured sexual renunciation. A number of the Church Fathers offered a vigorous defence of the goodness of marriage and of procreation and rejected the view that celibacy was the preferred model of Christian discipleship.  

For the first centuries of Christianity most Christians married according to local family custom and existing Roman civil law. Over time the Christianisation of marriage ceremonies took place and distinctive Christian ideas about the meaning and practice of marriage were incorporated into Roman Laws. By the 12th century marriage was viewed as a sacrament and considered indissoluble. The Council of Trent (1545–1563) settled on a specific form of marriage ceremony performed in the presence of a priest with two witnesses and the notion of marriage as a contract was further developed. The consensus achieved at the Council of Trent continued until Vatican II reformulated its

(John 7:5 and Mt. 13:53-57). The Old Testament includes a number of stories of dysfunctional families for example, Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau; and Joseph and his brothers.

83 See Hunter, Marriage in the Early Church, 15-21. Leaders such as Clement of Alexandria in the 2nd century related Christian understandings of marriage to Greek philosophy. He highlighted the exemplary moral conduct of Christians and defended the goodness of marriage against Gnostic views. In his view marriage was a superior way of life to celibacy and Clement saw no incompatibility between the practice of marriage and a life of service in the church and argued that sexual relations were not the result or symptom of the sin of Adam and Eve. Augustine wrote The Good of Marriage in the year 401 which was to have an important influence on Catholic marital teachings. Augustine described the bond between husband and wife as the first natural union in human society. Procreation, companionship, and mutual fidelity were three good things marriage brought to human society but his teaching on original sin tended to deny the place of sexual desire as part of God’s good creation. Another important church leader, John Chrysostom in the earlier part of his ministry emphasised monasticism and celibacy. Later he advocated for the goodness of marriage and active engagement in society.

84 See Glenn W. Olsen, ed., Christian marriage: a historical study (New York: Crossroad Publishing, c2001), 112-113, 170. Roman prenuptial law insisted that the spouses be of equal status and lineage. There were three parts of the marital arrangements: negotiation, betrothal, and the wedding. Greeks and Romans wore a golden ring on the fourth finger of the left hand and the joining of the right hands of the couple signified marital concord. Ignatius was the first to mention the marriage ceremony taking place with the presence of the bishop.


86 See Carmody, “Marriage in Roman Catholicism”, 30.
understanding of marriage by giving a greater focus to the covenantal relationship.

Catechisms in the Orthodox tradition also defined marriage as a sacrament and a ‘mystery’. The Orthodox Marriage liturgy had a strongly eucharistic quality with the sharing of the common cup being symbolic of a life lived together with Christ. Marriage represented a joyful spiritual bond, and a partnership that involved reciprocal submission. The mystery of oneness and love has been considered a mystical icon of the Church. Orthodox doctrine confirmed the permanence, uniqueness and indissolubility of marriage. It also permitted divorce in certain circumstances.

With the Reformation there were some changes in the way marriage was viewed. The role of the minister was to bless and confirm the couple’s marriage which was given its legality by the civil authority. The Reformers reaffirmed marriage as a gift from God and a means of grace and Protestant marriage theory emphasised the covenantal nature of marriage which was founded in God’s loving nature. Marriage was viewed as a vocation in which two partners live together in faithfulness, love, tenderness and delight. The Reformers challenged the sacramental status of marriage and rejected some of

88 See A. Peckstadt, “Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Orthodox Church”, (a paper presented at the Catholic University of Leuven, 18-20 April 2005). Peckstadt draws from the writings of John Chrysostom. The marriage ‘crowning’ (stephanoma) points to an understanding of the couple’s home as a ‘church’. http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/articles/liturgics/athanagoras_remarriage.htm
89 See Demetrios J. Constantelos, “In the Greek Orthodox”, Journal of Ecumenical Studies XXII, Winter (1985), 153. Divorce was allowed following the exception Christ gave to his general ruling about the indissolubility of marriage in Mt. 19: 9. Desertion, cruelty, incompatibility, impotence or incurable mental illness may be other grounds for a divorce.
90 Max L. Stackhouse, “Covenantal Marriage: Protestant Views and Contemporary Life”, in Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective, eds., John Witte and Eliza Ellison (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001), 163. The French revolution brought about a greater secularisation of marriage with the state taking over the role of determining the conditions for marriage and instituting divorce. Lutherans tended to make marriage a matter of civil law. The church blessing takes place after the marriage has been registered. The Reformed and Puritan traditions have a church wedding prior to registration. Anglican priests conduct the legal registration as part of the church service.
91 Ibid, 158-159. Christian marriage is viewed as a covenant of love which reflects the love of Christ for his Church.
the previous theological assumptions, such as the view that celibacy was superior to marriage. Where the marriage bond was broken and attempts at reconciliation failed, the Reformers permitted divorce and remarriage. Martin Luther considered marriage one of the ‘orders of creation’ which transcended both church and state. Calvin located marriage within the doctrine of creation. Marriage was a bond of mutual love and spiritual companionship.92

In modern thinking about marriage as an institution there has been a growing awareness that there is no single blueprint for family configurations. For Lisa Sowle Cahill the vocation of Christian families is to “embody discipleship in concrete ways.”93 An inclusive understanding of marriage and family extends a sense of kinship beyond the family to all human beings. A Christian social perspective sees marriage as a vehicle for the transformation of society promoting affection, faithfulness, kinship and justice.94

3.6 CHRISTIANITY AND INTERMARRIAGE

3.6.1 Within the Biblical tradition

In Israel’s long history a wide range of positions on intermarriage were adopted.95 Despite Mosaic law prohibitions against intermarriage (Deut. 7:3-4) some important characters in the Bible married outside their community.96 The Israelites themselves were a mixture of many ethnic groups and they adapted customs and laws from neighbouring peoples. Anne Gardner argues that

94 Ibid, 17.
95 For example compare Joshua 6:21 and Deut. 10:18-19
96 Biblical stories include the relationship between Abraham and Hagar (Gen.16); Isaac and Rebecca (Gen. 24:67); Jacob and Rachel (Gen. 29:18, 20, 30); Joseph and his Egyptian wife (Gen. 41:45); Amnon and his love for Tamar (2 Sam. 13:1, 4); Moses and Zipporah, the daughter of a Midianite priest (Exod. 2:16-22) and Moses’ second wife, a Cushite woman (Num. 12:1); David and Maacah (2 Sam 3:3); Samson and Delilah (Judg. 16: 4,15) and Solomon’s many foreign wives (1 Kings 3:1; 1 Kings 11:1-2).
Exogamous marriages were accepted in early Israelite traditions. Legal rulings against intermarriage later arose in response to fears concerning apostasy and syncretism, and to ensure ritual impurity. The Deuteronomic injunctions offered harsh warning against intermarriage and may have been a reaction to Solomon’s excesses along with his oppressive economic and foreign policy. Rabbinic Judaism moved towards exclusivity and separatism while another strand in the tradition urged Israelites to care for the foreigner and live in peace with their neighbours. The book of Ruth reflects this more lenient approach and may have been intended as a protest against the narrow nationalism reflected in the Ezra stories.

It is interesting that Jesus’ genealogy includes a number of foreign wives: Ruth, Tamar, Rahab, and the ‘wife of Uriah’. Paul’s advice to new Christian converts was not to divorce their non-Christian partners.

> For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. It is to peace that God has called you. Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know you might save your wife. (1 Cor. 7:13-14)

It appears that initially the Church did not consider interreligious unions invalid. Over time objections to marriages between Christians and unbelievers grew. This is reflected in 2 Cor. 6:14 in which believers were instructed not to be ‘yoked to unbelievers’. These two contrasting texts therefore have provided a scriptural rationale to support or oppose interreligious marriage. The latter view tended to hold sway as the Church developed its doctrine of marriage and intermarriage.

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97 See 1 Kings 11:1-10.
99 See Mt. 1:1-16.
3.6.2 Intermarriage in Church History

Early church father, Tertullian (c. 160 – c. 225), wrote specifically opposing marriage with non-Christian spouses.\textsuperscript{100} In \textit{Ad uxorem} his Treatises on Marriage and Remarriage written around 200 AD, Tertullian drew from a number of Biblical texts to support his argument. Tertullian believed that mixed marriages would harm the believer, corrupt morals and bring injury to the body of Christ. He selected texts that discouraged association with sinners and prostitutes and applied these to marriage with pagans.\textsuperscript{101}

The following extract from \textit{Ad uxorem} presents the scenario of a Christian woman married to an unsympathetic pagan husband. Tertullian was clearly concerned that intermarriage would create a conflict of interests for the Christian spouse, particularly for a Christian wife who tried to fulfil her Christian duties and her duties as a wife.

For who would doubt that involvement with an unbeliever diminishes one's faith day by day. How much more will a common life and constant contact do so! Every Christian woman must obey God. But how can she serve two masters, the Lord and the husband, especially when the husband is a pagan?... If she must attend a prayer service, the husband decides that they should go to the baths that day; if a fast must be observed, the husband orders a banquet for that very day; if it is necessary for her to go out, the household business is never more pressing. Who would allow his wife to run around the streets to the houses of strangers and even to the poorest hovels in order to visit the faithful? ... Who then would tolerate without some anxiety her spending the entire night at the paschal solemnities? ...Who would endure her creeping into prison to kiss the chains of martyrs? Or even to greet any of the brothers with a kiss? Or to wash the feet of the saints? To desire this? Even to think about it?\textsuperscript{102}


\textsuperscript{101} Hunter, \textit{Marriage in the Early Church}, 16. Tertullian drew on a number of texts such as 1 Cor. 6:14 “Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said that the two shall become one flesh.” Also 1 Cor. 5:11 and 1 Cor. 15:33.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid, 37.
Tertullian expressed his misgivings that an interreligious marriage would undermine the Christian partner’s capacity to engage in Christian ministry and dilute the missional dimension.

What bond is this: two believers who share one hope, one desire, one discipline, the same service! The two are brother and sister, fellow servants. … Together they pray, together they prostrate themselves, together they fast, teaching each other, exhorting each other, supporting each other. Side by side in the church of God and at the banquet of God, side by side in difficulties, in times of persecution, and in times of consolation. Neither hides anything from the other, neither shuns the other, neither is a burden to the other. They freely visit the sick and sustain the needy. They give alms without anxiety, attend the sacrifice without scruple, perform the daily duties unobstructed. They do not have to hide the sign of the cross, or be afraid of greeting their fellow Christians, or give blessings in silence. They sing psalms and hymns to one another and strive to outdo each other in chanting to their Lord. Seeing and hearing this, Christ rejoices. He gives them his peace.103

Tertullian believed that unions between two Christian believers who share a common vision of service and Christian witness would bring far greater happiness and satisfaction. Tertullian wrote at a time when Christians were a vulnerable minority. Their minority status meant that they faced uncertainty and sporadic persecution. This uncertain environment was a factor that would have influenced Tertullian’s response to intermarriage. The fact that Tertullian and other church fathers gave considerable time to the discussion of such marriages has lead some commentators to suggest that the practice of intermarriage was not uncommon.104 The Canon of Elvira (Can 16) in the year 306 declared that marriages to “pagans, Jews and heretics” were forbidden. In the post-Constantine era although Christianity was now in ascendance, the church adopted a stronger position against intermarriage. The Council of Orleans in 538 AD issued penalties against those who married Jews which included confiscation of property and banishment.105 Influential church leader

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103 Ibid, 38.
104 Hunter, Marriage in the Early Church, 10. The Bishop Dionysius of Corinth and Thascius and Caecillius also wrote discouraging intermarriage.
105 See Jonathan A. Romain, Till Faith Us Do Part: Couples who fall in Love across the Religious Divide (London: Fount, 1996), 22. This pattern continued in the Middle Ages. Romain describes a deacon who was burnt at the stake for marrying a Jewess and converting to
Augustine’s own mother was married to a pagan husband. Augustine’s view was that interreligious marriage should not be considered a sin. However this position did not prevail. There were serious consequences for those who chose to ignore church injunctions against intermarriage. Following the Reformation even marriages between Catholics and Protestants had serious consequences.

In Western Europe, Islam was viewed as a heresy. The memory of the Crusades ensured that deep suspicions between the two faiths continued. Christians and Muslims had little likelihood of meeting and intermarrying. In the Eastern Church canons of ecumenical synods from the 4th century onwards opposed interreligious marriages and outlined disciplinary action. The 14th canon of the Synod of Chalcedon (451) made it a rule that none “shall be allowed to take a wife that is of a different faith” and earlier church statements were affirmed. In the Orthodox tradition despite the restrictions, the practice of interreligious marriages did sometimes occur particularly after the 11th century amongst members of the imperial families and the upper classes. Orthodox Christians who contracted an interreligious marriage did not tend to suffer the consequences as those in the Western Church but there was still disciplinary action taken. They were prohibited from remaining in sacramental union with the Church and could not serve as a sponsor at baptisms and weddings. Parents who allowed their children to enter such marriages could be excluded from Holy Communion for five years.

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106 See Demetrios J. Constantelos, “Marriage in the Greek Orthodox”, in Marriage Among The Religions of The World, ed., A. Arlene Swidler (Lewiston, Lampeter, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 53. Constantelos cites as his source Euchologion. Non-believers wishing to marry an Orthodox believer were expected to be willing to join the church.

107 See Athenagoras Peckstadt, “Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Orthodox Church”, a presentation at the Catholic University of Leuven, 18-20 April 2005. http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/articles/liturgics/athenagoras_remarriage.htm (accessed April 3, 2006). This policy remains in place today although the priest may be permitted to administer Communion in times of emergency. An Orthodox person may marry a non-Orthodox Christian if they agree to be married according to the rites of the Orthodox Church and have children baptised and raised in the Orthodox faith. Bishops may suspend the strict application of church regulations in some circumstances, referred to as economia.
In places where Muslims and Christians shared a common language and cultural understanding, intermarriage did occasionally occur. Where the church retained jurisdiction over the marital affairs of the Christian community, mixed marriages were strongly discouraged. In Bosnia for example this was the case when the region was under Turkish rule. Under communism marriage laws were secularised and the restraining impact exercised by churches was reduced.\textsuperscript{108} Following the civil war there have been reports that interreligious marriage in the region has decreased.\textsuperscript{109} Some Orthodox scholars have advocated for a reconsideration of Orthodox marriage practice.\textsuperscript{110} The high rate of immigration and the increased incidence of interreligious marriage in multicultural contexts and the fact that many Orthodox Christians married non-Orthodox partners in communist-dominated countries have been cited as reasons why there have been calls for a major rethink of Orthodox marriage practice.\textsuperscript{111}

### 3.7 SOME CONTEMPORARY SITUATIONS OF MUSLIM INTERMARRIAGE

Muslim intermarriage takes place in varying social and religious contexts. In some countries it is legally impossible for a Muslim to marry outside Islamic law. In other countries Muslims may marry non-Muslims under civil statutes (within their own countries, or overseas) and have their marriages legally recognised.\textsuperscript{112} Speelman’s study of Dutch-Egyptian couples and An-Na’im’s volume on Muslim–non-Muslim marriage have already been referred to in Chapter One.\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{108} See Tone Bringa, Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village (Princeton: Princeton University, 1995) 119-121, 245. Bringa’s ethnographic study is of a Muslim-Croat village in central Bosnia during the late 1980s before the civil war.


\textsuperscript{110} Constantelos, “Marriage in the Greek Orthodox”, in Marriage Among The Religions of The World, 8.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, 26.

\textsuperscript{112} Such marriages may not be viewed as valid according to Islamic law.

\textsuperscript{113} See Gê M. Speelman, Keeping Faith: Muslim–Christian Couples and Interreligious Dialogue (Meinema, The Netherlands: Uitgeverij Meinema: Zoetermeer, 2001) and Abdullahi
An-Na’im’s volume includes three ethnographic case studies of interreligious marriages between Muslims and non-Muslims in India, Senegal and Turkey which reveal how Muslims continue to marry across religious boundaries although in some cases this has become increasingly difficult. The case study provided by Rohit Chopra and Jyoti Punwani’s Indian study involved analysis of interviews with twenty two Muslim–Hindu couples in Bombay. Despite the long history of contact between different communities in religiously plural Bombay Chopra and Punwani report strong social anxieties about intermarriage. Escalating inter-communal tensions since the 1990s have left interfaith couples vulnerable. In the second study Codou Bop interviewed thirty four couples and six individuals in mostly Muslim–Christian partnerships in Senegal. Senegalese Muslims and Catholics who share ethnicity, customs and traditions until recently have intermarried with few difficulties. An upsurge in religious revivalism within both communities has brought change. Despite the strong influence of customary practices, interreligious couples now find it more difficult to gain social acceptance although interreligious marriages continue to be recognised as legal by the Senegalese state. Vardars’s study of fifty four couples in Istanbul found that interreligious marriages have historically been discouraged. Actions of the state against minorities have created social and psychological distance between the Muslim/Turkish majority and Greek, Armenian and Jewish minorities as well as between Sunni and Alevi Muslims. Social distance between religious communities in Turkey remains vast reflecting social divides and identity politics.

A number of other studies on interreligious marriage have been conducted. An early study was conducted by Usha Bambawale who surveyed one hundred interreligious marriages in the Indian town of Pune, in a setting in which all the religious communities were “fundamentally opposed to the violation of religious endogamy”. Muslim women in Pune had limited opportunities to mix with other groups and their families tended to maintain strict adherence to


114 See An-Na’im, *Interreligious Marriages Among Muslims*, esp. the Introduction.

religious endogamy. As marriage represents the coming together of two families and the securing of property, lineage and honour, tight social control is exercised over partner choice. Those entering interfaith unions are caught between conflicting claims of particularistic traditions on the one hand and universalistic values of freedom and individualism on the other. Bambawale suggests that despite rapid social change, religious traditions are likely to continue to exert strong social control in India.

In the decades since Bambawale’s study many of her observations have been borne out. The forces of globalisation and secularism, higher education, social reforms, the introduction of civil marriages and greater individual liberty and equality have brought increased economic independence of women and less rigid segregation of the sexes. Whilst this has increased the likelihood of interreligious marriage, religious communities in India continue to oppose interreligious marriages. Indian newspapers regularly carry articles describing the strong backlash interfaith couples face. Indian Protestant theologian Selvanayagam has described the strong opposition of the Indian Christian minority community to intermarriage. Most Indian churches retain rules that make it impossible for interfaith couples to celebrate their marriage in a religious ceremony in a church.

The Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations in Birmingham published three papers relating to Muslim–Christian intermarriage following a meeting in Arras, France in 1983. It was reported that there was a small but growing number of interreligious marriages in Europe and that the

116 Ibid, 204.
117 Numerous articles appearing in Indian newspapers recount difficulties including threats of violence faced by interfaith couples for defying tradition.
119 Selvanayagam, Relating to People of Other Faiths, 317.
figures were likely to rise.\textsuperscript{121} Jørgan Nielsen outlined some potential difficulties that may arise in Muslim–Christian partnerships including some complicated legal scenarios concerning the different laws in Islam relating to the custody of children in situations of divorce, and inheritance restrictions for non-Muslim widows.\textsuperscript{122}

The second paper by Dawud Assad presented a number of problems that could arise for Muslim–Christian couples.\textsuperscript{123} Islam permits a male Muslim to marry a \textit{kitabiyya} female but he believes there is wisdom in the traditional view that sees such marriages as undesirable unless there are extenuating circumstances. In Assad’s view each marriage should be judged on its own merits but couples who share the same faith and cultural and social background have a better chance of being happy.

In the third paper Harpigny posed the question of whether interfaith families are likely to follow the pattern of the Christian partner, the Muslim partner, have a life with little reference to God, or develop “a completely new pattern?”\textsuperscript{124} In

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid, Preface, 1. Nielsen mentions in particular marriages between European women and Turkish, Moroccan and North African Muslim men. A possible scenario is for a divorce (or \textit{talaq}) to be recognised in Europe but not necessarily recognised in Turkey or Pakistan. It was also possible for a divorce (\textit{talaq}) to be pronounced in England and recognised in Pakistan, but not be legally recognised in England.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid, 15-16. Nielsen describes various issues relating to the status of \textit{talaq}, polygamous relations, custody of children and inheritance. In the UK, domicile rather than nationality, determines which personal law applies in a given case whereas in mainland Europe nationality is determining, though domicile may be important. Courts in Europe respect decisions taken abroad but may modify decisions, for example, if the child is resident in Europe. This could create a situation where \textit{talaq} pronounced in Morocco by a Moroccan court would have legal effect in Belgium. In contrast, English law would only recognise divorces obtained overseas if they conform to the law of the country of formalisation and at least one party is a national or habitually resides in that country.

\textsuperscript{123} Dawud Assad, “Mixed Marriages”, in \textit{Christian–Muslim Marriages}, ed., J.S Neilsen, (Birmingham: Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, 1983), 6. Assad thought it likely that marital conflict would arise, particularly with the arrival of children though it was possible the couple might work out a ‘modus operandi. Assad thought Muslim fathers living in a European context may neglect the religious education of children particularly if the wife adopts an attitude of condescension or even contempt for their cultural values. Issues such as eating pork, drinking alcohol, social intermixing of the different sexes, and different ideas on modesty, dancing and premarital relations need negotiation. He also suggested that children caught between “two mutually exclusive creeds” might become confused.

Europe interreligious marriages are likely to be cross-cultural marriages. Couples therefore need to be able to negotiate many differences and work through issues that arise out of the experience of migration and integration into European society.

Jonathon Romain has conducted a substantial research project on interreligious marriages in Britain in which he met with several hundred couples. He notes that in the mid 1990s there was a paucity of information on the subject and it was interreligious marriages was a largely unchartered phenomenon. Romain suggests that intermarriage is inevitable in multicultural and multireligious contexts and is likely to become more prevalent in the future.

In recent years greater attention has been given to Muslim–Christian intermarriage in the UK. There are now active Muslim–Christian Marriage Support Groups. Churches have given attention to this issue and there have been a number of studies. Muslim family law and how it relates to family law in the UK (and other European contexts) has emerged as an important topic in more recent public debate.

In 2008 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams gave a keynote address considering the benefits of allowing Islamic and Orthodox Jewish courts to

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126 The Muslim–Christian Marriage Support Group [www.mcmarriage.org.uk] and the Interfaith Marriage Network [www.interfaithmarriage.org.uk] offers a network of support and resources to help interfaith couples. Such support groups are now operating in a number of European countries.
handle certain matters of family law (marriage and divorce). Some welcomed William’s comments as a contribution to the debate on community cohesion, and addressing feelings of alienation among some quarters of the British Muslim community. Others were very critical of the Archbishop’s statements and strongly opposed the idea that Britain should accommodate aspects of Muslim syari’ah.

Salma Sadar offers a perspective on intermarriage from the point of view of the minority Christian community in Pakistan by providing four case studies that highlight problems that arise when Christian women marry Muslims. Sadar suggests that the high rate of Christian women marry Muslims in Pakistan is a threat to the life of the minority Christian community and recommends that churches develop strategies to combat interreligious marriage.

Abe Ata conducted a study of Muslim–Christian families in the West Bank in 1996 in which he surveyed one hundred and twenty individuals. Despite a history of mutual respect and co-operation between the Muslim and Christian Palestinian communities, Ata found that half of those surveyed reported negative reactions from relatives, friends, their community or their religious group. With objections from mainstream society remaining strong, interreligious couples in Ata’s view, are not yet being fully integrated into society. He advocates for a new ‘paradigm of partnership’ and expresses the hope that marriage trends are gradually diversifying.


130 Salma Sardar, “Interreligious marriage: Christian women marrying Muslim men in Pakistan”, Transformation, no. 19 (Jan 2002). Problems include being urged to abandon their Christian faith; being required to bring children as Muslims; and being left in a vulnerable situation if they are divorced or widowed.


132 Abe W. Ata. Intermarriage between Christians and Muslims: A West Bank Study (Ringwood, Victoria: David Lovell and The International Centre of Bethlehem, 2000), 58. One quarter of those surveyed by Ata had converted to the religion of their spouse (usually the female). Fifty percent of those interviewed were Christian prior to marriage but almost ninety percent had Muslim weddings with many making a public declaration of converting to Islam for the purpose of ensuring a legal Muslim marriage. Later it appeared that most continued to practice their Christian faith.

133 Ibid, 101.
Another study examined adaptation strategies employed by cross-cultural and interfaith couples living in the West Bank.\(^{134}\) Roer-Strier and Ezeam used in-depth interviews with sixteen participants, seven Western women and nine Palestinian men, living in Palestinian cities. According to Roer-Strier and Ezeam women experience a sense of marginalisation on the basis of both their gender and their foreignness. Palestinian men faced hurdles as well as they negotiated a double process of cultural adaptation to Western culture, and to their native culture on return.

In Ghada Khouri’s study of the experience of interfaith couples in Lebanon, difficulties in arranging such marriages are highlighted because of the absence of procedures for civil marriages.\(^{135}\) Lebanese law recognises civil marriages performed outside the country and this has led encouraged interfaith couples to travel to neighbouring Cyprus, Greece, Tunisia or Turkey in order to marry. In cases of dispute or divorce, the Lebanese courts apply the law of the country in which the marriage took place. Particularly from women’s groups there have been voices calling for the adoption of a civil marriage law alongside the current system that is governed by the religious tribunals. Currently it appears such changes are unlikely.\(^{136}\)

A snapshot of intermarriage in the South African township of Capetown is offered by Sindre Bangstad, who presents two indepth Muslim marital narratives.\(^{137}\) Her anthropological approach highlights the high incidence of Muslim intermarriage, including those involving Muslim women. She discovered that Muslim females were active agents in organising their own marriages and concluded that it did not appear that Islam was the determinative factor when people made their marital decisions.


A study on interfaith marriage in Malaysia by Noriah Mohamed and Ghazali Basri suggests that interfaith marriages may have some negative consequences (such as family dislocation, elopement and divorce) but have also contributed to making Malaysia a more open, mature, just and progressive society.\textsuperscript{138} Mohamed and Ghazali provide five case studies although in each the non-Muslim partner converted to Islam. The study therefore gives the impression that Muslims should give its support to interfaith marriage because conversion is a possible outcome.

This section has provided an overview of a growing body of literature on the subject of Muslim–Christian intermarriage noting divergent practices in different contexts.\textsuperscript{139}

### 3.8 A COMPARATIVE REFLECTION: CATHOLIC–PROTESTANT INTERMARRIAGE

In the past Catholic–Protestant couples faced significant opposition from their religious communities. Far-reaching changes occurred following the issuing of \textit{Matrimonia Mixta} or Apostolic Letter on Mixed Marriage in 1970.\textsuperscript{140} The Pastoral Letter noted difficulties inherent in mixed marriages but acknowledged that people have “a natural right to marry and beget children”.\textsuperscript{141} Bishops’ Conferences were advised to adapt the Church’s law to the distinct circumstances of the married couple and clergy were instructed not to impede such marriages.

\textsuperscript{138} Mohamed and Basri, “Interruption: An Islamic Perspective”, 69.
\textsuperscript{139} A forthcoming volume on Muslim intermarriage in Southeast Asia will provide country studies on Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, and will make an important contribution to the study of the theory and practice of Muslim intermarriage. The proposed title \textit{Leap of Faith: Muslim–non-Muslim Marriage, Rights and the State in Southeast Asia} (Singapore: Asia Research Institute, forthcoming) is a collection of papers from the ‘Workshop on Muslim–non-Muslim marriage, Rights and the State in Southeast Asia and East Asia’ organised by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, September 23, 2006).
Pastoral care and assistance was to be provided to couples to enhance the marriage and minimise the risks.142

As a consequence of the Pastoral Letter ecclesiastical discipline was relaxed and tensions formally associated with mixed marriages between Catholics and Protestants eased considerably.143 The changes were linked to theological developments associated with the Second Vatican Council, and the renewed concern to promote ecumenism and interfaith dialogue.144 Interchurch couples were now viewed as playing a pioneering role, signifying the unity towards which all Christians were moving.145 The ‘Interchurch Families International Network’ or IFIN was established as an important ecumenical advocacy group for interchurch families.146 IFIN has organised conferences and produced a number of important theological papers.147

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142 The main risk posed by a mixed marriage was considered to be if the Catholic partner abandoned their faith. The church also asked the Catholic partner applying for dispensation to promise to do all in their power to see that the children of the marriage be baptised and educated in the Catholic Church (and inform their partner of this promise).
143 Marriages between a Catholic and another baptised Christian now extended the Catholic sacramental understanding of marriage. Some issues remained such as objections raised by the Anglican Communion to the requirement that non-Catholics promise to allow children to be brought up as Catholics ( wording was later modified to reflect the joint decision of the partners). See The Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on the Theology of Marriage and its Application to Mixed Marriages (US Catholic Conference, 1976).
144 The restoration of unity among all Christians was one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. The impetus for interreligious dialogue from the Second Vatican Council found concrete expression in a series of booklets published by the Secretariat for Non-Christians. Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims was published in 1970 and translated into a number of languages. This was revised by Maurice Borrmans and republished in 2005.
145 Interchurch marriages are defined as marriages between two baptised Christians from different traditions in which each spouse participates actively in his or her particular church and in which each spouse takes an active, conscientious role in the religious upbringing of the children. See George Kilcourse, Double Belonging: Interchurch Families and Christian Unity (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992). See also Peter Butler, Interchurch Marriages: A Path to Christian Unity? (Frankston: Assembly Commission on Ecumenical Affairs, 1994), 22.
146 See also IFIN website: http://ecumenism.net/docu/ifin.htm
'Matrimonia Mixta' not only opened up the possibility of recognising interchurch marriages but also interfaith marriages. Catholic–non-Catholic marriages though not considered sacramental could be validly conducted once dispensation was granted by the Bishop or person appointed by him. In preparing for the marriage some allowances were made to take into account the faith of the non-Catholic partner. The ‘Rite for Celebrating Marriages between a Catholic and an Unbaptised Person’ allows for the ritual to occur in a church or other venue. The canonical form of the Service of the Word could be used or dispensation from canonical form.

There is now genuine appreciation of Catholic–Protestant marriages as ecumenical partnerships, and a sign of Christian unity. An intriguing question is whether Muslim–Christian couples might be viewed as contributing to greater interfaith understanding between the two religious communities. Christopher Lamb raises this question at the conclusion of *Marriages between Christians and Muslims*. Kenneth Cragg thought that Muslim–Christian couples might build a life together drawing on what the two religious traditions shared in common, and suggested that what had been learnt through interchurch ventures might be relevant for marriages between Muslims and Christians.

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148 In 1966 broad areas of agreement on the religious nature of marriage was achieved between Christians and Jews. The Catholic Interfaith Commission on Marriage and Family Life published a statement which highlighted a shared Catholic and Jewish view on the nature of family as a cornerstone of society, and marriage as a life-long union sustained by God.

149 The relevant form is entitled: ‘Dispensation from the Impediment of Disparity of Worship – Can. 1086’. The form requires the Catholic partner presenting a request to the parish priest to respond affirmatively to three questions: Do you reaffirm your faith in Jesus Christ, and with God’s help, intend to live that faith in the Catholic Church? Do you sincerely promise to do all in your power to share your faith with your children by having them baptised and brought up in the Catholic Church? Has your intended partner been informed of your declaration and promise?

150 The Catholic partner signs the Pre-Nuptial Inquiry form Q10 stating that they are prepared to “accept children lovingly from God and bring them up according to the Law of Christ.” The non-baptised partner is asked to agree to bring children up “according to his Law.”

151 This provides allowances for those who do not feel comfortable marrying in a church.


3.9 MUSLIM–CHRISTIAN INTERMARRIAGE AS A SUBJECT IN INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Since the 1970s the World Council of Churches facilitated a number of dialogue meetings between Muslims and Christians. The question of interreligious marriage was not a subject that was easily addressed in these official gatherings. Sperber notes that discussions focused attention on the problems rather than the possibilities of such marriages.154 Particular problems included the question of whether Islam prohibited intermarriage, divorce and custody in Islamic family law, the subject of polygamy, and the almost insoluble issue of the religious upbringing of children. The general attitude expressed at the regional Muslim–Christian gatherings advised against such marriages. At the 1986 regional meeting in Benin, a country which has a high proportion of mixed marriages, it was noted that competition between the two religious communities placed additional pressures on interfaith couples. The meeting also heard concerns about whether the human rights of Christian women in interfaith marriages were being upheld.155 The 1987 regional meeting in New Delhi placed interreligious marriage on the list of ‘particularly sensitive subjects’.156 The Christian–Muslim Colloquium in Maryland in 1988 suggested that interfaith marriages might be more susceptible to divorce than marriages in which partners had the same religious background.157

A document received by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in 1992 and referred to the churches for study and action identified interfaith marriage as one of seven critical areas in relations between the two

155 Ibid, 210. Sperber notes that the 1986 meeting gave attention to the issue of intermarriage. Rev Ellie Miloungou suggested that interreligious families constitute encounter ‘par excellence’ but mutual prejudice in both communities, exacerbated by views that promoted religious absolutes, created tensions for couples.
156 Ibid, 210-215.
faiths.\textsuperscript{158} “Issues in Christian–Muslim Relations: Ecumenical Considerations” noted that intermarriage between Muslims and Christians offered a model of interreligious understanding and respect and provided the opportunity for partners to share their distinctive spiritual gifts to enrich the life of the household. The significant challenges couples face were also outlined. The religious upbringing of children was given particular mention in addition to differing social, legal and gender understandings. The following extract from the 1992 document outlines some of the concerns Christians raised at the dialogue meetings.

Muslims affirm that Qur’anic principles protect women, ensure their freedom and respect them as marital partners. Yet Christians, especially women, are critical of traditional practices as well as what they see as discriminatory regulations in Islamic personal law, such as in the cases of divorce and child custody. There are also Christians who have difficulty in understanding the restrictions imposed by Islamic law on interfaith marriages. It is also pointed out that the rights of Christian spouses to freely practice their religion, guaranteed by Islamic law, are not always respected.\textsuperscript{159}

The document encouraged Christians and Muslims to reaffirm the personal and familial values promoted by their respective religions, develop a common consciousness of the promises and limitations of interfaith marriages, and cooperate in addressing the social and legal complexities experienced in specific situations.

3.10 PASTORAL RESPONSES FROM THE CHURCHES

An increasing incidence of marriages between Christians and Muslims has led some churches to rethink their approach to pastoral care of interfaith couples.

\textsuperscript{158} “Issues in Christian–Muslim Relations: Ecumenical Considerations”, was received by the central committee of the WCC in August 1992. The document provided a useful overview of key concerns from the five regional Muslim–Christian meetings since 1976 which had been sponsored by the WCC. The first WCC/Muslim conference was held in Chambésy on the subject of Mission and \textit{Da’wah} in 1976. Regional conferences followed in Porto Novo, Benin (1986); Bali, Indonesia (1986); Crete (1987); Maryland, USA (1988); and Usa River, Tanzania (1988).

\textsuperscript{159} “Issues in Christian–Muslim Relations: Ecumenical Considerations”. Section III (5) on interfaith marriage.
Substantial work has been undertaken by churches in Europe. Following early efforts to develop pastoral responses in Germany in the early 1970s, the Church of England at its General Synod in 1988 invited the House of Bishops to provide detailed advice to clergy in multi-faith parishes to help them fulfil their legal obligations when asked to conduct a marriage which included an adherent of a faith other than Christian. In the UK context the Church of England is required to make marriage available to all regardless of their faith. In 1992 the bishops produced a booklet ‘Guidelines for celebration of interfaith marriages in Church’ which was revised in 2004. The Guidelines noted that couples could choose to have a civil ceremony followed by a specially devised religious celebration in a church, a Christian church service of blessing and a Muslim marriage ceremony, a marriage conducted according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England (possibly including Muslim elements), or a ceremony conducted according to the rites of Islam (possibly including Christian elements). There were no necessary hindrances to celebrate in church that which God offers to all. Clergy were advised to give pastoral and liturgical consideration to the particular circumstances of each couple. ‘Guidelines for celebration of interfaith marriages in Church’ outlined several legal problems that could occur in cases where one partner is a national of another country. Clergy were advised to include thorough discussion on the subject of baptism and faith identity of children in marriage preparation “even if no commitment to Christian nurture for the children can be promised”.

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160 The Evangelical Church in Germany for example prepared guidelines for the celebration of interfaith marriages as early as 1971 recommending that important Christian elements be maintained such as readings from the Christian Scriptures and the sermon but suggested various ways the service could be sensitively adapted. In Britain the context is one in which legally every person in a parish has the right to be married in the Church of England. Marriages may take place in a church or other venue. The Church of Sweden is in a similar situation and has adopted a similar policy.


162 Couples are encouraged to explore what rights exist in case of divorce or death, in relation to custody of children, inheritance and property in the country of origin of the non-British partner.

163 Mission and Public Affairs Division, Inter-Faith Consultative Group, Guidelines for the celebration of interfaith marriages in church.
The Methodist Church in Britain has also adopted ‘Guidelines for Inter-Faith Marriages’ following a 1998 report which found that thirteen percent of Methodist ministers had conducted an interfaith marriage. The guidelines adopted by the Methodist Conference in 2000 encouraged clergy to consult with the couple in the process of constructing the marriage service. Participation of the religious leader from the other faith community was permitted as long as the fundamental Christian nature of the service was maintained. The Methodist Church of Britain allowed its clergy the option of omitting the Trinitarian formulations and replacing them with the words “in the name of God.” Other words could be added or omitted from the liturgy as long as the declaration and words of contract which were required by the law remained.

A third very significant set of pastoral guidelines were prepared by the Islam in Europe Committee of the Conference of the European Churches and the Council of European Episcopal Conferences. The booklet *Marriages between Christians and Muslims: Pastoral Guidelines for Christians and Churches in Europe* was translated into a number of European languages in 1998. The fact that clergy in Europe are increasingly asked to celebrate interfaith marriages prompted the development of the guidelines. Although reliable statistics are not available it was noted that interfaith marriages between Muslims and Christians were becoming a normal feature of life in Europe.

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164 *Christian Preparation for Marriage*, Methodist Church of Britain and Ireland, 1998. Methodist ministers are not required to officiate at a marriage service if it is against their conscience but in such cases the minister needs to refer the couple to a colleague. The report notes that refusal to marry the interfaith couple could reinforce their sense of isolation and hinder good community relations.

165 Methodist Church Resolution 8/1, ‘Guidelines for Inter-Faith Marriages’ adopted by the Methodist Church of Britain Conference, 2000.

166 In this respect the Guidelines of the Methodist Church offer more flexibility than is available for clergy in the Church of England.


168 See Islam in Europe Committee of the Conference of European Churches, “Marriages between Christians and Muslims: Pastoral Guidelines for Christians and Churches in Europe”, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no. 1 (April 2000). At the time the report was written there were an estimated twenty four million Muslims in Europe but no reliable statistics for Muslim–Christian intermarriage as European countries do not include religious affiliation in their marriage statistics.
growing number of Muslim women were also marrying non-Muslims.\textsuperscript{169} Following a description of the contemporary landscape in Europe, an explanation of Christian and Muslim understandings of marriage was provided with a description of Islamic family law in Turkey, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria. Clergy are encouraged to advise couples to consider carefully the linguistic, cultural, social, ethnic, national, racial and religious implications of an interfaith marriage. The booklet includes suggestions for the planning of wedding ceremonies which draw on elements from both faiths.\textsuperscript{170} \textit{Marriages between Christians and Muslims: Pastoral Guidelines for Christians and Churches in Europe} concludes by asking whether Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriage might provide a model of interfaith encounter from which all can learn.

In recent years there has been a growing body of literature on interreligious marriage in the North American context.\textsuperscript{171} A number of North American Protestant churches have provided specific guidelines and resources to assist pastors, congregations and interfaith couples highlighting the potential growth and enrichment that can result from such unions. The United Church of Canada prepared five studies to assist congregations to understand and support interfaith families. \textit{Stories of Interfaith Families: A Resource for Families and Congregations} notes that every religious community is experiencing an increasing number of interfaith marriages and offers suggestions for discussion, biblical reflections and worship materials. \textit{Stories of Interfaith Families} encourages reflection on the question: “What makes it possible to be enriched by different faith traditions in family and congregational life?”\textsuperscript{172}

\textsuperscript{169} See Lamb, \textit{Marriages between Christians and Muslims}, 10. There is the tentative suggestion that the experience of Muslims in Europe may in time, lead to the adoption of practices which differ from traditional interpretations of Islamic law in relation to intermarriage.
\textsuperscript{170} The option of including readings, poems and music from the Muslim tradition in the marriage service is proposed and various texts from the Bible and Qur’an recommended.
\textsuperscript{171} Most has focused on Jewish–Christian marriage. See for example Susanna S. Macomb, with Andrea Thompson, \textit{Joining Hands and Hearts: Interfaith, Intercultural Wedding Celebrations: A Practical Guide for Couples} (New York: Fireside, 2003). Stories of eight interfaith couples describe the ‘long and miraculous journey’ each made,
\textsuperscript{172} The United Church of Canada, \textit{Stories of Interfaith Families: A Resource for Families and Congregations} (Toronto: UCC, 1994).
The Presbyterian Church USA prepared a resource *Interfaith Marriage* in 1989 that expressed the hope that interfaith couples and their families might be a bridge between two religious communities, “witnessing to the majesty and mystery of God’s ways with humankind.”\(^{173}\) Couples were encouraged to explore their own faith tradition as well as the beliefs and values of the spouse. They were also advised to be alert to various pressures that might threaten to pull them in separate directions. The resource suggested that problems are more likely to arise if partners hold a rigid or exclusive faith than for couples who have a broader sense of God’s revelation to humankind. The document suggests that it is unhelpful to strive to convert their spouse or create a synthesis of faiths which does not respect the historical integrity of either faith. Tolerance for diversity, effective communication, developing family worship, and living in respectful openness towards each other’s faith are attributes that are likely to prove helpful for interfaith families. Pastors and congregations are encouraged to provide pastoral care to interfaith couples and their children and involve them where possible as “equally valuable in the life of the congregation”.\(^{174}\)

The issue of interfaith marriage was identified as a subject for joint study by the Office on Inter-Religious Relations of the World Council of Churches (OIRR) and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) in 1994. *Reflections on Interreligious Marriage: A Joint Study Document* was produced in 1997.\(^{175}\) The first part of the study document drew on responses to questionnaires sent out to churches, communities and a number of interfaith couples.\(^{176}\) A number

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\(^{173}\) Presbyterian Church, USA. *Interfaith Marriage – A Resource by Presbyterian Christians* (Louisville: Division of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, 1989), 23. This 54 page resource includes a sample marriage liturgy for a Christian–Muslim marriage and a sample Muslim marriage contract.

\(^{174}\) Ibid. The reading list notes that an increasing number of books on the issue of interfaith marriages are beginning to emerge though most deal with marriages between Christians and Jews.


\(^{176}\) Ibid, 330-331.
of concerns were identified. In particular the document stated that the religious education of children was a key issue, “if not the central issue” facing couples. Four models of interfaith families are offered. In the first model children are brought up in one particular religion. Parents give children a clear identity by entrusting the religious education of the child/children to one partner (and the partner’s religious community). A disadvantage of this model is that a distance could be created between the child and the parent of the other religion which could be overcome if children are encouraged to develop an appreciation of both faiths.

In the second model of ‘mixed faith households’ parents raise some children in the father’s faith and other children in the faith of the mother. This approach may be considered more equitable although it could have an undesired consequence of reinforcing divisions in the family.

The third model is that of bringing children up in both religions. Children learn about both faiths, relate to both sets of extended families and participate in the religious rituals of both faiths. The Joint Study suggested that children find it difficult to develop a specific identity.

In the fourth model parents expect that their children will later make their own choice about religious identity but give children little religious knowledge or identification in either faith. The disadvantage of this model is that the religious education of children is reduced, postponed or ignored. A lack of spiritual nurture during the formative years of a child’s development is likely to make it difficult to later develop a sense of belonging to either faith.

177 Reflections on Interreligious Marriages noted with concern that there was little evidence of consultation between religious leaders of the two communities in individual cases of intermarriage.
178 Ibid, 331-225.
179 Ibid, 335.
180 Ibid, 335.
181 Ibid, 329.
The final part of the document highlighted principles to assist in developing a positive response to the issue of intermarriage. It was considered important to: recognise religious freedom; make sure religious differences were not used as a weapon; approach religious difference as a source of mutual enrichment; and build relationships between interreligious families and Christian communities. Support groups were recommended whereby those who had recently married could learn from those who had a longer experience in dealing with the issues and challenges of interfaith marriages. The study document also recommended that a sensitive pastoral approach be adopted by clergy noting that local circumstances and church policies will vary.

In May 2006 the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) brought together twenty three bishops in Hong Kong to reflect on the issue of interfaith marriage. The bishops emphasised the importance of articulating a pastoral praxis that both respects canon law and is responsive to concrete challenges posed by interfaith couples. In Asia, interfaith marriage concerns “not merely two individuals, but two families, villages, clans, tribes...” The bishops recognised that intermarriage was part of the pluralistic context of Asia and becoming a common phenomenon around the world. Therefore the Church needs to respond with love and compassion, and have a good understanding of how different faith traditions view marriage. The bishops called on local churches to support couples before, during and after their interfaith marriage, as part of the church’s ministry. They recommended that couples thoroughly discuss the issue of children’s religious upbringing and come to agreement before entering into marriage. Those entering an interfaith marriage were encouraged to avoid syncretism, and fundamentalism, respecting the faith of their partner whilst retaining loyalty to their own convictions.

182 “Inter-Faith Marriages in the Pluralistic Contexts of Asia”, was organised by the Office of Theological Concerns of the FABC (Hong Kong 9-11 May, 2006). Francisco Claver presented a paper “Inter-faith Marriages in Pluralistic Societies” and Soosai Arokiasamy discussed “The Challenges of Inter-Faith Marriages”. Abdul Muhaemin Karim of the Islamic Union of Hong Kong was a Muslim resource person. Subsequently FABC papers 118 and 127 have been made available. The report of the gathering was prepared by Vimal Tirimanna. See FABC Office of Theological Concerns website: http://www.fabc.org/offices/otc/otc.html

183 Ibid. The bishops highlighted the principle of religious freedom.
In 2007 the Vatican document *The Love of Christ Towards Migrants* focuses on the plight of immigrants but in one section raises some serious misgivings about interreligious marriages between Catholics and Muslims. The document stated that the norms of the two religions are in stark contrast and Catholic women in particular are discouraged from embarking on this course of action.

When, for example, a Catholic woman and a Muslim wish to marry… bitter experience teaches us that a particularly careful and in-depth preparation is called for. During it the two fiancés will be helped to know and consciously “assume” the profound cultural and religious differences they will have to face, both between themselves and in relation to their respective families and the Muslim’s original environment, to which they may possibly return after a period spent abroad. If the marriage is registered with a consulate of the Islamic country of origin, the Catholic party must beware of reciting or signing documents containing the *shahada* (profession of the Muslim belief). In any case, the marriage between a Catholic and a Muslim, if celebrated in spite of all this, requires not only canonical dispensation but also the support of the Catholic community both before and after the marriage. One of the most important tasks of Catholic associations, volunteer workers and counselling services will be to help these families educate their children and, if need be, to support the least protected member of the Muslim family, that is, the woman, to know and insist on her rights.

In the light of various efforts by churches in the last two decades to develop positive pastoral responses to interfaith marriage *The Love of Christ Towards Migrants* reflects a far more cautionary tone on the part of the Catholic Church in relation to Muslim–Catholic intermarriage.

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185 Ibid., paragraphs 65-68.
186 Muslim discourse on interreligious marriage has expressed similar concerns but as an official Vatican document it is surprising that the document offers an overall assessment of Islam that is less than positive and highlights so strongly profound cultural and religious differences between Christianity and Islam.
3.11 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In Islam and Christianity marriage is a vital and valuable institution which provides the foundation for society. Both faiths see marriage as creating a new marital household in which partners have conjugal rights, obligations and responsibilities.\(^\text{187}\) Marriage, a chief sign of God’s good and loving purposes for humanity, represents a covenantal commitment based on love and faithfulness. It is intended for companionship and support as well as for procreation and the nurture of children. Marriage is a binding contract based on the mutual consent of the man and the woman. It is celebrated through religious rituals and recognised publicly.

There are differences between and within the two religious traditions in terms of how interfaith marriage is viewed ranging from condemnation and prohibition to acceptance and support. Islam and Christianity both contain literalist and contextual approaches in the way sacred texts, traditions and laws are interpreted. In recent decades international migration and mobility have led to greater interaction between Muslims and Christians in the West and consequently an increase in the incidence of intermarriage. There is a growing body of research on the experience of Muslim–Christian couples in different settings.

The experience of interchurch and Jewish–Christian marriage throws light on the challenges faced by those who cross different faith communities. Religious communities wanting to preserve and pass on faith fear that intermarriage leads to a loss of faith or infringement of the rights to religious freedom. Traditional attitudes of the churches in opposing intermarriage have been replaced with greater acceptance and serious efforts to respond to the pastoral issues that arise for interfaith couples. In multicultural contexts those who enter interreligious marriages may be considered bridge builders between their two

communities. The challenges involved have led some religious communities to adopt a cautious approach, warning prospective couples to give careful consideration before launching into an interfaith marriage.

Muslims and Christians have lived in close proximity with each other for centuries but the question of intermarriage remains hotly debated in Muslim contexts. Islam has generally taught that Muslim men may marry *Ahl al-Kitab* women but a Muslim woman may not marry a non-Muslim man. There is not consensus on the issue and some Muslims strongly oppose any interreligious marriage while others express the view that *syari’ah* exhortations are situational and open to contextual reinterpretation.

This chapter has provided examples of different contexts in which Muslims and Christians interact which have given rise to different attitudes and policies in relation to intermarriage. Where a religious community is a minority it is likely that interreligious marriages will be viewed with more concern. Intermarriage is less likely to occur where clear boundaries are drawn between communities, or where religious resurgence is combined with high levels of distrust towards other communities. Positive interactions between Muslims and Christians, a shared cultural heritage, and minimal legal impediments create an environment that is more accommodating for interfaith couples and their families.

This examination of marriage and intermarriage in Islam and Christianity has provided a framework for this inquiry. We now turn our attention to factors which have shaped marriage policy, and current patterns and trends in intermarriage between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia and Australia.
CHAPTER 4
INTERRELIGIOUS MARRIAGES BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND
CHRISTIANS IN INDONESIA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia interaction between people of different cultural and religious backgrounds is part of everyday life and interreligious marriage is not unknown or uncommon.1 This chapter sets the scenes for the empirical part of this inquiry by investigating the historical, legal and political issues surrounding the subject of Muslim–Christian intermarriage in Indonesia. Intermarriage in the pre-colonial and colonial periods, the heated debate surrounding the Indonesian Marriage Law 1974, the 1980 and 2005 edicts on mixed marriage of the Council of Indonesian Ulama, church responses, and subsequent debates within the Indonesian Muslim community are discussed. The work of progressive Muslim theologians such as Zainul Zamal and Siti Musdah Mulia, and Indonesian Roman Catholic and Protestant perspectives on interfaith marriage are considered. Interreligious marriage remains a topic that is hotly debated in Indonesia though it is commonly thought that such marriages are now prohibited.2 The contemporary discourse on the subject of interreligious marriage provides a snapshot into the complexity of issues facing contemporary Indonesian society as it manages diversity and religious plurality, responds to Muslim aspirations and seeks to uphold religious freedom.

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1 It is not easy to determine the rate of intermarriage in Indonesian society because of factors that will emerge in the course of this paper. Indonesia is the fourth most populous nation, with 87% of its population being Muslim.
4.2 MARRIAGE IN THE PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD

In different parts of the archipelago, people organised their cultural, political and economic life guided by customary law or *adat* which encompassed all aspects of life. As the influence of Islam began to penetrate more deeply aspects of Islamic law began to be incorporated into local cultures. This occurred particularly in the area of Islamic family law. As Muslim communities developed the mosque occupied a central place not only for prayer but also for deliberating on matters relating to the life of the community. Arbitration systems or *tahkīm* were established and these traditional justice courts or *adat* tribunals were a precursor to early Islamic courts.

Over time Islam challenged aspects of local cultures, such as the strongly stratified nature of Javanese society, but Islam in Indonesia was also shaped by local religious traditions and understandings. Daniel Lev’s study of Islamic Courts makes the observation that the influence of Muslim law in Indonesia was primarily related to the area of marriage and family law. Hooker’s study of the Malacca law of the 15th century revealed that certain elements were adapted from both Islam and *adat*.

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3 The term *Nusantara* is sometimes used to refer to the Indonesian islands of the archipelago. *Nusantara* originates from the Javanese words, *nuso* (nation) and *antero* (the whole/combined).

4 Adat refers to cultural practices, institutions, and inherited wisdom and traditions including pre-existing spiritual traditions.


6 Daniel S. Lev, *Islamic Courts in Indonesia: A Study of the Political Bases of Legal Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California, 1972), 25. Islamic family law and pre-existing principles and traditions were compatible in a number of areas.

7 In some areas two courts of justice operated side by side the *Jaksa* (or *adat*) courts based on local customs and those based on Islamic law conducted by a Muslim religious leader or *penghulu*.

8 See M. B Hooker, *Adat Law in Modern Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978). Hooker contrasts Islamic law with Javanese practices in such areas as women’s inheritance and child adoption. In Java men and women divided the property evenly, in contrast to Islamic law. Adopted children according to *adat* had rights of inheritance.


10 Hooker, *Islamic Law in Southeast Asia*, 33. The Sultanate of Palembang and Banten for example made the work of Muslim scholars available for use in deliberating on family law and local Muslim religious leaders or *penghulu* were given a place of respect.
The use of Islamic *fiqh*\(^{11}\) was drawn primarily from the *Shafii* school, and was particularly noticeable in the laws relating to marriage.\(^{12}\) From the 16\(^{th}\) century onwards there was a significant degree of exchange between the Malay–Indonesian archipelago and the Middle East. Some went on the *haj* and stayed for further studies before returning home with knowledge to translate religious texts and contribute to the development of a Malay-speaking Muslim identity.\(^{13}\)

The preponderance of Arabic legal terms in the Indonesian language could be viewed as a sign of the innovating influence of Islamic doctrine in cultural life.\(^{14}\) Considerable regional variety nevertheless existed in terms of how Islamic law and *adat* interacted.\(^{15}\) In different parts of the archipelago the two systems, Islamic and traditional religious beliefs, interacted with one another creating a social and cultural synthesis.

### 4.3 DUTCH–MUSLIM RELATIONS: MARRIAGE AND INTERMARRIAGE IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The coming of European powers, first the Portuguese and then the Dutch, was to herald major changes in the region. In his analysis of interreligious relations

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11 *Fiqh* literally means understanding and acquisition knowledge. It is the rulings of Islamic scholars and jurists on jurisprudence and the interpretation of the *syariah*.

12 A Muslim marriage required: two partners both of whom were Muslims /or the man to be a Muslim and the woman a *kitabiyya*; the *akad nikah* or marriage contract consisting of the *ijab* (offer) and *gabul* (acceptance); two witnesses; a *wali* or guardian; and a dowry or *mahar* to be given to the wife. See Siti Musdah Mulia, *Muslimah Reformis* [Muslim Women Reformers] (Bandung: Mizan, 2004), 363. See also K.H. Hasbullah Bakry, *Pendekatan Dunia Islam dan Kristen* [Bringing Together the Muslim and Christian Worlds] (Jakarta: Grafindo Utama, 1985), 37. Bakry notes that in the *Shafi`i* school a Muslim man may marry a Christian woman.

13 Azyumardi Azra, *Islam in Southeast Asia: Tolerance and Radicalism* (Melbourne: CSCI, 2005), 6. Texts from the *Sunni Syafi`i* school (*maddhab* or *mazhab*) were translated. Nuruddin ar-Raniri was one important scholar in Aceh who from 1637–1643 wrote voluminous works.

14 See Lev, *Islamic Courts in Indonesia*, 6. Lev refers to the ‘hybridisation’ of Islamic Law and local custom in which religious influences blended with one another in a more or less harmonious way. Interaction was in the main peaceful but in some places tensions arose when for example pre-existing cultural practices encountered Islam’s different inheritance system.

15 See also Ratno Lukito, *Islamic Law and Adat Encounter: The experience of Indonesia* (Jakarta: Logos, 2000). Lukito uses the term ‘symbiotic legal encounter’ to describe the encounter and exchange that took place. Aspects of *syariah* were more pronounced in some areas such as Aceh, Demak (in Java), Cirebon, Benten, Goa (South Sulawesi), Ternate, Jambi, and South Kalimantan.
during the period of Dutch colonialism, Steenbrink refers to four main patterns of Dutch response to their encounter with Muslims. Dutch traders first showed caution, curiosity and selective admiration. They disapproved of Muslim doctrines but were respectful of Muslim behaviour. In the 17th century this view was replaced by a more negative view of Islam. Muslims were ‘detestable heretics’. The next pattern was one in which the relationship between the Dutch and indigenous Indonesians could be characterised as ‘natural hostility’. This was reflected in the high walls surrounding the Dutch East India Company’s trading stations. Once colonial rule was firmly established fear towards Muslims gave way to paternalism. The Dutch saw themselves as teachers or guardians of a still uneducated people whose religion was backward and superstitious.

Under Dutch colonial rule Muslim political aspirations were strongly discouraged and political forms of Islam that challenged colonial rule were dealt with harshly. The Dutch soon realised that ruling a majority Muslim population required consideration of Muslim sentiments. To avoid upsetting the local population the work of Christian missionaries in Muslim areas was strictly controlled. The Dutch developed a policy of giving recognition to Islamic family law whilst extending the power of authorities and the civil courts.

Efforts to codify law in areas under VOC control saw a number of statutes and codes passed. Dutch recognition of Islamic marriage, divorce and inheritance laws suggests that these elements of syari’ah were well-established in many

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16 See Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam: Contacts and Conflicts 1596-1950*, esp. chap. 3. Steenbrink refers to the legacy of the Middle Ages and the Crusades as well as Luther’s politically biased rejection of Islam in connection with the expansion of the Ottoman empire which, along with other events, combined to create a negative impression of Islam in Europe.
18 Dutch East India Company was known as the VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*).
19 Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam*, esp. chap. 6. In the Philippines the arrival of the Portuguese halted the expansion of Islam whereas in Indonesia some scholars argue that Dutch policy aided its spread particularly with the introduction by the Dutch of Article 177 which placed tight control on missionary work. A flourishing of missionary activity did however later take place coinciding with the extension of the colonial system of education leading to perceptions that education and Christian mission went hand in hand. See also See McAmis, *Malay Muslims*, 25.
The role of local Muslim religious advisers or penghulu in the administration of marriage affairs was recognised in 1820. A royal decree formally established Islamic courts in a number of districts in 1882 for the purpose of addressing marriage, divorce and inheritance.

Giving recognition to Islamic family law was symbolic of Islam’s authority and significance. There were voices of concern in the Dutch government about the wisdom of setting up Islamic courts (the Raad Agama or Pengadilan Agama). Some thought that the setting up of Islamic courts with native judges might fuel Islamic aspirations for a wider application of Islamic law.

A Marriage Ordinance introduced in 1895 required the presence of a designated official at marriage ceremonies but government moves to make marriages monogamous and to formalise divorce in the secular courts were put on hold following strong resistance from Muslim communities. Attempts to transfer jurisdiction over property affairs and inheritance from the Islamic courts to the civil courts in 1931 also met with formidable opposition. Not surprisingly there

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20 See Muhammad Atho Mudzhar, Fatwa-Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia: Sebuah Studi tentang Pemikian Hukum di Indonesia 1975-1988 [Fatwas of the Council of Indonesian Ulama: A Study of Islamic Legal Thought in Indonesia 1975-1988] (Jakarta: INIS, 1993), 228. For example: Statuta Batavia (1642); the Kitab Moharder or Kitāb Muharrar for the area around Semarang (1750); the Kitab von Bone and Goa (1759) in South Sulawesi; the Compendium Freijer (1760) and the Pepakem Cirebon (1768). The colonial government continued this trend of allowing Muslim organisations and councils to be established as long as Muslim scholars and lawyers met for the purpose of discussing religious rather than political concerns.

21 See K. K. Hasbullah Bakry ed., Kumpulan Lengkap Undang-Undang Dan Peraturan Perkawinan Di Indonesia [Collection of Regulations and Laws relating to Marriage in Indonesia] (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1978), 247-268. In 1820 in the Staatblad (state gazette no. 20) Regents or Bupati were instructed to recognise the role of penghulu in matters of family and inheritance (Pasal 13 Regenten Instructie).

22 Lev, Islamic Courts in Indonesia, 28. 1820 signifies the formal beginning of religious courts in Indonesia though the existence of Islamic courts clearly predated the colonial period. Religious courts were set up in Java and Madura (Stbl. 1882/no. 152; Stbl. 1940/no. 3); South and East Kalimantan (Stbl. 1937/no. 638, 639) and for other parts of Indonesia. A three member Supreme Islamic court (Mahkamah Islam Tinggi) was based in Solo. The appointment and dismissal of Islamic religious experts was in the hands of Government officials. The chief penghulu reported to the Resident every 3 months. The Civil or District court known as Pengadilan Negeri (Stbl. no 58 of 1835) considered cases of litigation over marriage and inheritance which had financial implications.

23 Cornelis Snouck Hurgronje, advisor on Muslim affairs in the East Indies advocated for a division between political and religious aspects of Islam. In the 1930s he and some other Dutch scholars suggested that adat rather than Islamic law should be given greater recognition.

24 See Fealy and Hooker eds., Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia: A Contemporary Sourcebook, 43. Fines were later incurred if marriages took place without the presence of an official.
was reluctance on the part of Muslims to allow the few vestiges of Islamic institutions to be eroded. Some of the issues in these debates would later be echoed in the 1973 debate on the draft marriage bill which was widely interpreted as an attempt to extend secularising influences.

The legal system practised under Dutch colonialism differentiated between three different racial groupings: Europeans (including the Japanese), ‘Foreign Orientals’ (Chinese, Indians and Arabs), and Inlanders (natives). Whilst Dutch Criminal law and State Security law applied to all, different marriage laws applied to the different groupings. Europeans came under the marriage law of the Netherlands and other groups had their own customary law.25 G.H.R. (Regeling op de Gemengde Huwelijken S. 1898 No 158) regulated the different marriage codes for each of the three racial groupings.26

Confirmation and blessing of Christian marriages during the VOC period were a church responsibility. Later, with the impact of Enlightenment ideas in Holland, marriages came under the jurisprudence of the government and this led to a number of changes in marriage procedures in the Netherlands Indies. Christian couples were required to notify a government official who issued a notice of intent on the condition that the prospective marriage was announced three times in church services. Local churches kept records of the marriages that were conducted and passed this information to government officials each month. The Government registered marriages and provided a certificate. In line with Dutch Reformed Christian understanding, under Dutch colonial rule the church blessed marriages which had been ratified by the State.27

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25 See Bakry, Kumpulan Lengkap Undang-Undang Dan Peraturan Perkawinan Di Indonesia, 247.
26 Ibid. The Indische Staatsregeling (1925) Article 131 and 163 categorised people into three different racial groups each with their own marriage laws. Burgerlijk Wetboek (BW): Burgeliken Strand voor Europeanen applied to Europeans and marriage registration fell under ordinance was Stbl. 1849/25. Muslim marriages were regulated under Stbl. 1882/152. For Christian Indonesians the Huwelijks Ordonnantie Christen Indonesiers (HOCI) or Stbl. 1933/74 applied and for registration Stbl. 1933/75. Chinese marriages were regulated under Stbl. 1919/81 and Hindus and Buddhist marriages were conducted according to their adat.
27 J.L Ch Abineno, “Peneguhan dan Pemberkatan Nikah [Recognition and Blessing of Marriage]”, in Pelaksanaan Undang-Undang Perkawinan Dalam Perspektif Kristen [The
law and ordinance for Christians were first established in Maluku in 1861 where Christian marriages were registered in the Civil Registry Office or *Kantor Catatan Sipil*. In 1933 a new law replaced the 1861 law regulating marriages of Javanese, Minahasa and Ambonese Christians.28

Dutch regulation also legislated for “Mixed Marriage” which was defined as a marriage between two people in Indonesia who came under different laws.29 A key phrase in the GHR Stbl.1898/158 was Article 7 (2): “Difference of religion, race or place of origin is no hindrance to marriage.”30 Reflecting the patriarchalism of the times, a woman for legal purposes came under the law of her husband as did her children. Conversion to the husband’s faith was not required.

During the long period of Dutch rule different marriage laws applied to Muslims and Christians. Muslims had their own religious courts whilst Christian marriages were registered in the civil courts. This factor would later be of relevance in the conflict which emerged over Indonesia’s draft marriage bill. Originating in Dutch policy Muslims and Christians in Indonesia brought different experiences and assumptions concerning how marriage should be regulated. They had also inherited different understandings of the relationship between religion and state. Reconciling these different perspectives and expectations when attempting to formulate an Indonesian marriage law to be applied universally would prove challenging.

28 See Bakry, *Kumpulan Lengkap Undang-Undang*, 67-88, 91-115. The new law was known as Undang-Undang Perkawinan Kristen Jawa, Minahasa dan Ambon or Huwelijksordonantie Christen Indonesia.
29 Ibid, 61-64. The relevant law relating to mixed marriages was GHR Stbl.1898/158 Peraturan Tentang Perkawinan Campuran and for the registration of mixed marriages Stbl. 1904/279. Indonesian original: Article 1 “Yang dinamakan Perkawinan Campuran, ialah perkawinan antara orang-orang yang di Indonesia tunduk kepada hukum-hukum yang berlainan.”
30 The wording of Article 7 (2) was reproduced in the draft marriage bill of 1973 but after much debate was later withdrawn. The spirit of Article 10 of the GHR which stated that the marriage could be ratified as long as it did not contravene the laws that applied to either partner was retained in the 1974 marriage law.
In 1946 with nationalistic revolutionary fervour still strong, the Indonesian government expressed the intention of unifying administration of marriage and divorce and of developing marriage laws that would apply throughout Indonesia promoting the unity of Indonesia.31 In 1950 a Committee (Panitia Penyelidik Peraturan Hukum Perkawinan, Talak dan Rujuk) was given the task of examining existing laws and proposing new laws in the area of marriage, divorce and inheritance. Initial work was done in recommending the registration of Muslim marriages.32 In 1963 a National Seminar was held to assist in the process of developing a national marriage law. The Minister for Justice gave the task of drafting new legislation to the law body, LPHN (Lembaga Pembinaan Hukum Nasional), in 1966 giving instructions that legislation must reflect the five pillars or Pancasila on which the State was built.

Achieving a unified marriage law proved more complicated that was originally envisaged. The pluralism of the colonial legacy presented a major challenge. There were doubts about the wisdom of trying to develop a unified national marriage law in a country of such diversity of peoples, cultures and religions.33 Women’s groups were lobbying hard for a national marriage law that would strengthen women’s rights and status and a number of submissions were made to the government by these groups.34 Women wanted to see restrictions on arbitrary divorce and polygamy and a minimum age limit set for marriage. They also wanted it to be clearly stated that consent by both parties was required.

32 A statute was passed in 1946 (No. 22) concerning registration of Muslim marriages, reconciliation and divorce. Registration was recommended but not made a requirement for a Muslim marriage to be valid. In 1954 the issue of registration of Muslim marriages was further defined in Law No 32/1954 (*Registration of Marriage, Talak dan Rujuk*; 1952). See Bakry, *Kumpulan Lengkap Undang-Undang*, 117-130.
33 See Direktorat Jenderal Hukum dan Perundang-Undangan Departemen Kehakiman [Department of Justice], *Sekitar Pembentukan Undang-Undang Perkawinan* [The Formation of the Marriage Laws], (Jakarta: Departemen Kehakiman, 1974), 78. Ischak Moro’s speech in the House of Representatives (DPR), for example, highlighted the difficulties involved in developing a unified law.
Seven years after LPHN had been given the task and the recall of two earlier drafts, the President announced the marriage bill (RUUP) on 31 July 1973. Even before it was released there were concerns being expressed. Kasman Singodimedjo, Chair of the large Muslim organisation, *Muhammadiyah*, and its Secretary, Ir. H.M. Sanusi, wrote to the Government on 30 July stating that, “most of what is in the RUUP …is diametrically opposed to the teachings of Islam” and outlined areas where the bill departed from Islamic Law.\(^{35}\) Materials and submissions prepared by Muslim groups expressed similar concerns.\(^{36}\)

Discussion of the marriage bill took place in a context where a segment of the Muslim population was experiencing considerable disappointment. Islam had been at the forefront of the struggle for independence but since then the hopes that Indonesia would give greater recognition to Islam and *syari’ah* had not been realised. There were some gains for Muslims but overall aspirations had been frustrated.\(^{37}\) The 1971 election results had not delivered strong support for Muslim parties and restrictions on the use of Islamic symbols created the feeling that Islam was being sidelined, first under the political system of Sukarno and then under Suharto.\(^{38}\) This set up a contest between state power and religious authority in the minds of many Muslims.

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35 The letter and additional documents sent by Muhammadiyah are included in Direktorat Jenderal Hukum dan Perundang-Undangan Departemen Kehakiman, *Sekitar Pembentukan Undang-Undang Perkawinan*, 138-146.

36 See Mudzhar, *Fatwa-Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, 52. Mudzhar outlined a number of Articles of the draft bill considered contradictory to Islamic doctrines such as: requiring divorce and permission for a second marriage to be granted by the courts (with secular civil courts intended); adopted children being given the same status as natural ones; legitimisation of children conceived during betrothal; requiring a divorcee to wait 306 days before being permitted to marry (contradicting the *‘idda* waiting period of three cycles of the monthly period in Islam for a divorcee and 4 months and 10 days for a widow). The proposed marriage bill placed religious law in a position second to the civil law.

37 See Bakry, *Kumpulan Lengkap Undang-Undang*, 276-280. Some gains included the setting up of the Ministry for Religious Affairs (to pay particular attention to the needs of the Muslim community) and government regulations to extend the authority and Jurisdiction of the Religious Courts so that their mandate included matters of inheritance.

38 Ibid, 158-160.
Relationship between Muslims and Christians post-independence had been reasonably peaceful but there was considerable concern being expressed in Muslim circles about the missionary efforts of Christians following reports of large numbers of conversions to Christianity in Java following the 1965 communist coup. This created a fear of Christianisation which was discussed in Chapter Two. The early 1970s was a setting in which there was an undercurrent of intense religious rivalry between the two faiths. When the marriage bill was being debated these factors came into play particularly because the draft bill made provisions for mixed marriages between adherents of different religions.

Some thought the bill provided an example of the majority faith perspective being ignored in favour of minority faith perspectives. Others went further and claimed the bill aimed at undermining Islamic doctrines and could be used by those whose intents were to Christianise Indonesia. There were calls to have the Article relating to mixed interreligious marriages removed. Muslim groups were also infuriated that the draft bill stated that a marriage was only legally valid if it was registered by the appropriate government agencies with no mention of the Islamic courts. Many saw this as evidence that the government wanted to adopt a secularised approach to marriage law and attack their institutions. Sessions of Parliament became heated with strong reservations being expressed particularly by the Muslim faction (PPP) and outside Parliament Muslim opposition to the draft bill was growing.

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40 Article 11 (2) of the July 1973 draft bill stated that “Differences based on nationality, ethnicity, country of origin, place of birth, religion/beliefs and background is not an impediment to marriage.” This was identical wording to the GHR Dutch law relating to Mixed Marriage (*Stbl.* 1898/158).
41 This was the view of H.M. Rasjidi, “Kristenisasi dalam Selubung [Hidden Christianisation]”, in an article published in *Nusantara* on the 18 August, 1973. Rasjidi described the marriage bill as promoting ‘Kristenisasi’ and reference was made to the tragic recent marriage of a princess of the Palace of the Pakubuwono XII (Sri Sunan B.R.A. Kus Supiah) to a Christian. The article along with other press clippings which reveal the heated public debates that were occurring are cited in Direktorat Jenderal Hukum dan Perundangan Departemen Kehakiman *Sekitar Pembentukan Undang-Undang Perkawinan*, 154-157.
42 See Direktorat Jenderal Hukum dan Perundangan Departemen Kehakiman, *Sekitar Pembentukan Undang-Undang Perkawinan*, 53-153. On 30 August 1973, after an explanation of the draft bill was provided by Oemar Seno Adji, the Minister of Justice, speeches from members of Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP) expressed strong opposition to the bill.
Newspaper articles critical of the bill were influencing public opinion, fiery sermons were being preached, and popular support was becoming mobilised. On 27 September 1973 the Government prepared a response to the concerns raised which was presented by the Minister for Justice, Oemar Seno Adji and the Minister for Religious Affairs, H.A. Mukti Ali. As Mukti Ali spoke in Parliament the session had to be adjourned when around 500 student protestors caused a disturbance. Under pressure the government realised that it needed to negotiate with Muslim groups. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiya leaders offered to assist the government to rework the bill and a small committee of seven, including members from the different factions and the armed forces tried to arrive at consensus.

The government gave assurances that aspects of the draft legislation that went against Islamic doctrine would be adapted or omitted and affirmed that the status of the Religious Courts would be unchanged. Women’s groups were also lobbying to retain Articles that supported their concerns. The Indonesian Council of Churches (DGI) and the Council of Catholic Bishops (Majelis Agung Waligereja Indonesia) wrote to the government outlining a number of matters of concern. The memorandum asked for assurance that freedom to worship according to each person’s beliefs would be guaranteed. It requested clarification on the legal status of civil marriages and explained that if it were decided that marriages must be conducted according to religious laws, the churches faced the predicament of not having their own developed marriage laws. On humanitarian grounds and for good order, it requested the State ensure all people be able to marry legally according to the law of the land. On the issue of mixed marriages the question was asked, “For prospective couples who have

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different religions, something that often occurs, under which religious law do they marry?”

A revised bill which accommodated Muslim concerns came before Parliament on 22 December 1973 symbolically coinciding with Women’s Day and was passed, formally becoming law on 2 January 1974. The head of the Ministry of Justice, Soegondo Soemodiredjo, described the new law as a significant achievement for those who had been seeking greater recognition of women’s rights. The new legislation made clear the purpose of marriage (to form happy and lasting families); set a minimum age for marriage (nineteen for men and sixteen for women); stated that wife and husband have equal rights on matters relating to the family; normalised monogamy; and made it a requirement that a legal marriage be registered by recognised marriage registry officers.

The 1974 Marriage Act differed significantly from what had been proposed in the draft bill particularly in relation to how it defined the requirements for a valid marriage. The statute stated that the purpose of marriage was the formation of families founded on God (Article 1) and a valid marriage was dependent on compliance with religious requirements. It must be performed according to the law and beliefs of each religion and registered according to existing laws (Article 2).

Christians responded to the passing of the Marriage Law with some reservation. The concerns raised by the churches in their letter to the Government had not been adequately addressed and they had felt marginalised in the debate. Most Indonesian churches did not support mixed marriage but they believed that aspects of the law appeared antithetical to religious freedom. The law promoted the place of religion in Indonesian society but there was now no clear way that

46 Ibid, 248. Indonesian original: “Kalau calon-calon suami-isteri manganut agama-agama yang berlainan suatu hal yang sering terjadi- menurut agama manakah mereka kawin?”
47 See Direktorat Jenderal Hukum dan Perundang-Undangan Departemen Kehakiman, Sekitar Pembentukan Undang-Undang Perkawinan, 8.
48 UUP Article 2 (i) in Indonesian: “Perkawinan adalah sah, apabila dilakukan menurut hukum masing-masing agamanya dan kepercayaannya itu. ii). Tiap-tiap perkawinan dicatat menurut peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku.”
couples could choose to have a civil marriage. They predicted that mixed faith couples would encounter significant difficulties as a result of the passing of the law. Christians were also left wondering if Islam would now play a more influential role in law-making and public policy debates in Indonesia with fears about whether non-Muslims would continue to be treated as equal citizens.\textsuperscript{49}

Considering the colonial legacy, arriving at a national marriage law was an enormous task. The goal of promoting gender justice, whilst in a more diluted form than the original draft bill, was given significant impetus with the passing of the law and represented a major achievement. Writing thirty years after the passing of the 1974 Marriage Law respected Muslim intellectual Azyumardi Azra judged that the law had successfully accomplished a number of goals.\textsuperscript{50} He also thought that the law represented a trend towards the institutionalisation of syari’ah.\textsuperscript{51}

\section*{4.5 Effects of the New Law on Interreligious Marriage}

In the 1974 Marriage Law Article 57 refers to ‘Mixed Marriage’ as a marriage between an Indonesian citizen and someone of another nationality. Interreligious marriage between two Indonesians is not explicitly mentioned. The Marriage Law’s silence on the matter led to conflicting interpretations about whether such marriages were prohibited. Article 2 stated that no valid marriage may occur outside the laws of the respective religions and beliefs. Although Article 8 did not name interreligious marriages in its list of prohibited marriages, clause 8(f) stated that a marriage was prohibited between two people


\textsuperscript{50} See Azyumardi Azra, “The Indonesian Marriage Law of 1974: An Institutionalization of the Shari’ah for Social Change”, in Shari’ah and Politics in Modern Indonesia, eds., Arskal Salim and Azyumardi Azra (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), 88. Azra contends that the marriage law contributed to creating stable families, reducing divorce and polygamy, helping bring population growth under greater control, promoting the rights and equal status of women, and helping to unify the nation.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid, 94.
if they have a relationship that “according to their religion is not permitted”.\textsuperscript{52} It was argued that implicitly this meant Indonesians could no longer lawfully become married to someone of another faith unless one of them converted. During the 1980s, Article 2 and 8(f) provided the rationale for District Religious Affairs Offices (KUA) and Civil Registry Offices (KCS) to refuse requests of interfaith couples to have their interfaith marriage registered.

This confusion was compounded by the existence of different views amongst Muslims as to whether Islamic Law permits interreligious marriage for Muslims. In March 1976 a letter originating in the Department of Religious Affairs was sent to the mayor of Malang with copies sent to the Department of Justice and Home Affairs. In the letter Wasit Aulawi, who had responsibility over Islamic Courts, expressed the view that Islamic law allowed Muslim men to marry \textit{Ahl al-Kitab} women but the reverse was not permissible.\textsuperscript{53} The letter which intended to offer clarity to the Muslim community revealed the extent of confusion surrounding the issue.

Protestant leaders and Roman Catholic bishops were of the view that the State had a responsibility to assist its citizens who chose to enter into interreligious marriages and argued that the KCS should continue to assist such couples.\textsuperscript{54} Legal experts took a similar position. Ali Said of the Supreme Court drew attention to a ‘legal vacuum’ that existed in relation to interreligious marriage. Invoking the repeal provision in the Marriage Law, Article 66, it was argued that the relevant Dutch law relating to mixed marriages could be regarded as

\textsuperscript{52} UUP Article 8 in Indonesian: “Perkawinan dilarang antara dua orang yang: (f) mempunyai hubungan yang oleh agamanya atau peraturan lain yang berlaku, dilarang kawin.”


\textsuperscript{54} From the 12-14 March 1987 representatives of the Indonesian Fellowship of Churches (Protestant churches) and KAWI (Catholic Bishops) discussed interfaith marriage and agreed that couples be encouraged to marry in the Civil Registry Office with both continuing to maintain their own faith. The meeting also recommended that churches provide couples with special pastoral care noting that not all churches have felt able to bless inter-religious marriages. See Sairin and Pattiasina, \textit{Pelaksanaan Undang-Undang Perkawinan Dalam Perspektif Kristen} [The Practice of the Marriage Law: A Protestant Perspective], 53.
continuing to be applicable.\textsuperscript{55} The Department of Justice communicated this view on 6 July 1976 writing to the Department of Religious Affairs and copying the letter to governors and regional courts.\textsuperscript{56} In April 1981 the Attorney General of the Supreme Court, Mudjono, wrote to the Minister for the Department of Religious Affairs and the Minister for Internal Affairs and again offered this legal opinion. The letter pointed to the importance of providing legal security for couples so as to avoid negative and undesirable effects that could flow from unregistered marriages.\textsuperscript{57} The Attorney General called on the Minister of Religion to assist in the smooth administration of mixed marriages and requested that the Minister for Internal Affairs write to all Governors and officials working in Registry Offices to inform them that interreligious marriages could be legally performed.

Efforts to uphold the right of interfaith couples to have their marriages legalised lacked political support. In December 1983 a Presidential letter of Instruction (12/1983) stated that the role and responsibility of Civil Registry Offices (KCS) in the registration of births, marriages, divorces and deaths applied only to those who were not Muslims.\textsuperscript{58} Advice from the Ministry of Religion to marriage registry officials in 1984 further curtailed KCS from registering marriages of Muslims.

Indonesian researchers, Rusli and Tama, writing in 1984 noted that “from all appearances, many interfaith marriages are still being conducted in local offices

\textsuperscript{55} The new Marriage Law (article 66) revoked the old \textit{Burgerlijk Wetboek} laws (\textit{Ordonansi Perkawinan Indonesia Kristen} (Huwelijks Ordonantie Christen Indonesiers S.1933 No. 74), \textit{Peraturan Perkawinan Campuran} (Regeling op de gemengde Huwelijken S. 1898 No. 158) and any other laws relating to marriage) \textit{only insofar as they were in covered by the new law} (emphasis of the researcher).

\textsuperscript{56} A copy of the advice written by Hadipoernomo is included in Departemen Agama R.I, \textit{Himpunan Peraturan Perundang-Undangan Perkawinan} [Collection of Laws relating to Marriage], 537.

\textsuperscript{57} See Sairin and Pattiasina, \textit{Pelaksanaan Undang-Undang Perkawinan Dalam Perspektif Kristen} [The Practice of the Marriage Law: a Protestant Perspective], 339-340. Sairin and Pattiasina include a copy of the letter concerning “Jurisprudence from the Head of the Supreme Court No. KMA/72/IV/1981 20 April 1981.” Local and regional courts had been requesting advice and clarification on this matter and there were urgent calls for the problem to be resolved.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid. The relevant document included in Sairin and Pattiasina is entitled “Penetapan dan Peningkatan Pembinaan Penyelenggaraan Catatan Sipil Presiden Republik Indonesia.”
of the KCS”. Statistics from the Civil Registry office in Jakarta (April 1985-1986) showed that interreligious marriages continued to be registered but from this time interfaith couples began encountering significant difficulties. Previously the Civil Registry Office (KCS) had been willing to perform civil marriages but there were now moves to discontinue this practice. Some couples received rejection notices (surat tolakan) and those who pursued their case through the courts encountered a lengthy and costly process. A complicating factor was that in the Indonesian courts past decisions were not necessarily binding and there is no clear system of precedent. Where couples were able to obtain a civil marriage, some encountered problems when their marriage was considered invalid by their religious community. Those who planned to have two marriage ceremonies faced additional difficulties.

The legal vacuum in the new law was clearly creating considerable confusion. There were voices calling for a solution so that interreligious marriages could be recognised by the State and by the religious law of each faith. Other voices declared that interfaith marriages were now prohibited.

59 S.H. Rusli and R. Tama, Perkawinan Antar Agama dan Masalahnya [Interreligious Marriage and its Problems] (Bandung: Shantika Dhama, 1984), 37. Rusli and Tama expressed concern that if mixed couples were not able to marry they may be forced to live together without having their union formally recognised denying them rights under the law. 60 See Tutik Hamidah, “Peraturan Perkawinan Antaragama di Indonesia: Perspektif Muslim [The Regulation of Interfaith marriages in Indonesia: A Muslim Perspective]”, (Masters thesis, Yogyakarta: IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2000). Hamidah accesses statistics from the Civil Registry office in Jakarta (1985-1986) showing that 112 Muslim men and 127 Muslim women registered inter-religious marriages. 61 See Simon Butt, “Polygamy and Mixed Marriage in Indonesia: The Application of the Marriage Law in the Courts”, in Indonesia: Law and Society ed., Timothy Lindsey (Leichhardt: The Federation Press, 1997), 122-140. Butt examines the case of Andi Vonny Gani (Muslim) and Adrianus Petrus Hendrik Nelwan (Protestant) which went to the Supreme Court after the KUA and Civil Registry Office in Jakarta refused to recognise their interreligious marriage. Their marriage was ultimately legalised but aspects of the Supreme Court’s 1989 decision added to confusion. The Supreme Court noted the legal vacuum in the Marriage Law and restated that every citizen has the right to marry another citizen according to Article 27 of the Indonesian Constitution. At the same time, the Court interpreted the couple’s decision to marry according to the Christian faith as a choice by the Muslim partner to depart from the teachings of their faith. 62 Ibid, 136-140. Judges and lawyers use prior decisions of the highest court in the land (Mahkamah Agung) as a guide but past decisions are not binding in Indonesia’s legal system. 63 Rusli and Tama, Perkawinan Antar Agama dan Masalahnya, 39. 64 Ibid. As an example, Rusli and Tama note that Catholicism and Islam both expect their marriage ceremony to be the final one and there is a tendency to suggest their ceremony supersedes what goes before.
4.6 THE ONGOING DEBATE: FATWA AGAINST INTERRELIGIOUS MARRIAGE

There had always been a diversity views in Indonesia on the subject of interreligious marriage. Islamic marriage law in Indonesia up until 1991 had taken the form of normative law rather than formal law so it had been largely uncodified and therefore was implemented according to different cultural norms and traditions. It appears that in the past the view that an interreligious marriage of a Muslim man and kitabiyya woman was valid had wide acceptance. When K. H. Hasbullah Bakry was writing in 1969 for example he assumed that this was the case. He suggested that a Muslim marriage might be one between a Muslim man and a Christian woman and referred to the fact that one of Prophet’s wives was a Christian and another was Jewish, to show that there was no prohibition to this form of intermarriage. It is therefore of interest why the view represented by Bakry subsequently failed to have the support of Indonesia’s ulama. In 1980 the Council of Indonesian Ulama or MUI issued a fatwa (religious decree) against intermarriage for all Muslims. Fatwa issued by the MUI are not legally binding but carry considerable authority and provide moral principals which guide the Indonesian Muslim community.

In July 2005 MUI reissued its opposition to interfaith marriages. In the preamble to Fatwa No 4/2005 MUI stated that it had decided to reissue its 1980 Fatwa because mixed marriages “were occurring frequently” and public debate surrounding mixed marriages (including the views of Muslims who supported interfaith marriages) had contributed to unease within the Muslim community.

65 See Bakry, Pendekatan Dunia Islam dan Kristen [Bringing together the Muslim and Christian Worlds], 21.
66 MUI was formed in May 1975 along with regional ulama councils in 26 provinces at the initiative of President Suharto and represents the highest Islamic authority in Indonesia. MUI enables the views of ulama to be heard on public policy but was not set up as a government body (though it has received government funding). On some matters the government appears to give consideration to the position adopted by MUI when drafting legislation. See Nicholaas Jan Gerrit Kaptein, The Voice of the 'Ulama: Fatwas and Religious Authority in Indonesia (Singapore: ISEAS, 2004).
An overview of seven Qur’anic texts on marriage and intermarriage is provided and reference is made to a hadith text from Abi Hurairah. Fatwa No 4/2005 consists of two sentences:

1) Interfaith marriages are haram and illegal.

2) The marriage of a Muslim man and a Woman of the Book (Ahlul Kitab), according to qaul mu’tamad is haram and prohibited.

Fatwa No 4/2005 is as unequivocal in its opposition to interreligious marriage as the 1980 edict, if not stronger. Both state that it is haram for any Muslim to marry a non-Muslim. The 1980 Fatwa notes that there are differences of opinion on the subject of whether a Muslim man may marry an Ahlu Kitab woman but stated that because the ill-effects (mafsadah) are greater than the benefits (maslahat). This reference to the ‘Qa’idah Fiqh’ principle calls Muslims to choose the path that is less likely to threaten faith or lead to ill-effects.

Some scholars have expressed the view that the 1980 Fatwa reflected political concerns rather than classical Islamic fiqh. Although Muslims constitute an overwhelming majority of the population Mudzhar points to the ongoing struggle of the Muslim community for political recognition since independence and Muslim concerns about Christianisation.

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68 Seven Qur’anic texts referred to include: QS. an-Nisa 4:3, al-Rum 3:21, al-Tahrim 66:6, al-Maidah 5:5, al-Baqarah 2:221, al-Mumtahanah 60:10 and al-Nisa 4:25. Three are injunctions to marry and to protect one’s family and three specifically relate to interfaith marriage (5:5, 2:221 and 60:10). Different interpretations of these texts were discussed in Chapter Three and will be discussed further in a later section in this chapter.

69 Haram refers to anything that is prohibited and the opposite is halal.

70 Qaul mu’tamad refers to the most approved juristic view.

71 In this principal, also known as Mafsadah, the terms kemadsadatan and kemaslahatan are used. Mafsadah refers to ill-effects that might flow from an action which may threaten one’s faith, one’s life, one’s thinking, one’s future generations or one’s possessions. The term maslahah refers to securing these things. It is not uncommon for Indonesian ulama to use this method of interpretation also known as al-dzari’ah whereby for any particular action, if the negative implications outweigh the positive, the particular course of action may be pronounced haram. This may occur even if originally such actions were mubah (neither forbidden nor recommended).

72 See Mudzhar, Fatwa-Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 88-89. Mudzhar thinks that despite the Qur’anic injunctions that a Muslim man may marry a ‘Woman of the Book’, MUI wished to close off this option.
Suhadi is also of the opinion that the formulation of the 1980 Fatwa opposing interreligious marriage was influenced by the relationship between Islam and Christianity and Muslim concerns about Christianisation and overseas funding for Christian missionary work.\textsuperscript{73} Some Muslim scholars have suggested that making interfaith marriage illegal in Indonesia was an attempt to protect the Muslim community from further Christian penetration and this led Indonesia’s ulama to take a harsher line on the matter than is generally the case in Muslim fiqh.\textsuperscript{74}

The 1980 Fatwa on intermarriage was made against a backdrop of concern about Christianisation. The 2005 Fatwa appears to have been motivated by concern at liberal trends within the Muslim community and the internal debates and competing visions within the Muslim community concerning the role of Islam and the process of Islamisation.\textsuperscript{75} The fact that MUI felt the need to reissue their fatwa against interreligious marriage suggests that their original 1980 fatwa was either not widely known or not being followed.

Fatwa No 4/2005 coincided with the issuing of a number of fatwas directed at Muslims who held liberal and progressive views. Fatwa No 3/2005 placed limitations on the way Muslims might join in prayer with people of other faiths.\textsuperscript{76} Fatwa No 5/2005 stated that according to Muslim law it was not

\textsuperscript{73} See Suhadi, “Inter-religious marriage in Indonesia: legal and religious political perspective”, (a paper presented at a Workshop on Muslim–non-Muslim Marriages, Rights and the State in Southeast Asia organised by the Asia Research Institute, Singapore, Sept.23, 2006). Suhadi notes that Muhammadiyah, the second largest Muslim organisation issued a fatwa prohibiting interreligious marriage in 1989.

\textsuperscript{74} See Mujiburrahman, Feeling Threatened: Muslim-Christian Relations in Indonesia’s New Order (Amsterdam: ISIM Publications, 2006). Also Ismatu Ropi, Fragile Relations - Muslims and Christians in Modern Indonesia (Jakarta: Jakarta, 2000). This also appears to be the case in MUI’s 1981 fatwa which stated that it was haram for Muslims to join in Christmas celebrations. See MUI, Fatwa Tentang Perayaan Natal Bersama [Fatwa Concerning Celebration of Christmas]. Jakarta: MUI, 1981.


\textsuperscript{76} Majelis Ulama Indonesia, Fatwa Do’a Bersama [Fatwa Concerning Joint Prayer] 3/2005 (Jakarta: MUI, 2005). This fatwa stated that whilst prayer between Muslims and non-Muslims in principle is something that is known and accepted (bid’ah) within Islam, certain kinds of joint prayer were deemed haram such as a Muslim saying ‘Amen’ to the prayer of a non-Muslim. The fatwa stated that it was not forbidden but also not recommended for a Muslim to participate in joint prayer when the prayer leader is a non-Muslim. A form of prayer which
acceptable for a Muslim to leave their inheritance to someone who is a non-Muslim (though it was permitted for Muslims to give non-Muslims presents or gifts in their will). Fatwa No 7/2005 saw MUI speaking against three trends in Indonesian society: pluralism, liberalism and secularism. The plurality of Indonesian society is acknowledged and accepted but ‘religious pluralism’, defined as “an understanding that all religions are the same”, was rejected. The fatwa opposed pluralist and liberal theological trends and rationalistic ways of interpreting the Qur’an and Sunnah. MUI pronounced it haram for members of the Indonesian umma to follow these trends.

A range of Muslim voices were strongly critical of the 2005 MUI decrees. They considered the edicts to be reactionary with a likely outcome that religious intolerance would increase. The 2005 MUI Fatwa on interfaith marriage and responses to it highlight deep divisions within the Indonesian Muslim community. Progressive Muslims subsequently have continued to offer an alternative voice on issues such as interfaith marriage and interreligious relations.

invites people to ‘each pray in their own way’ was acceptable but not prayer which required Muslims and non-Muslims to read a prayer text together.

The fatwa expressed concern that Muslims tended to be of the view that followers of all religions would “live alongside one another in heaven”. MUI considered that this undermined the distinctiveness of Islam and relativises the truth. Muslims were urged to adopt an inclusive attitude in social interactions with non-Muslims, but an exclusivist approach in matters of faith. Muslims were also advised not to mix their religious beliefs with the beliefs and worship life of other faiths. MUI wanted to promote tolerance of religious diversity whilst affirming the unique revelation that Islam represents.


Progressive Muslim voices include Muslims who are human rights activists, law academics, women activists, and organisations such as the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace (ICRP), The Society for Inter-religious Dialogue or MADIA, the Wahid Institute, the Islamic Liberal Network (JIL), Paramadina Foundation, NU youth corp (Angkatan Muda Nahdlatul Ulama), The International Centre for Islam and Pluralism (ICIP), graduates from Islamic State Universities, and Muslims involved in interreligious dialogue such as the Indonesian Conference of Religious and Peace (ICIP) and Institut DIAN/Interfedei.
4.7 THE 1991 COMPILATION OF ISLAMIC LAW (KHI)

The Compilation of Islamic Law (Kompilasi Hukum Islam) or KHI was established by the President’s Instruction following approval given by a conference of influential ulama. The 229 Articles would become the authoritative guide for Islamic religious courts and Muslim judges. An aim of the KHI was to overcome the problem of inconsistency in the judgements of religious courts and enable greater legal certainty.  

The Compilation of Islamic Law has become the accepted code used in religious courts throughout the country. The development of the KHI was considered a milestone for those wanting to see greater recognition of syari’ah in Indonesia. Government sponsorship of KHI established the State as the ultimate authority andarbiter of law, and gave the government a larger role in interpreting Islamic tradition. KHI promotes an interpretation of syari’ah that limits polygamy and encourages the registering of Muslim marriages. Siti Musdah Mulia notes that some have labelled KHI as “the State’s own ‘School’ of Islamic teaching’ (fikih madzhab Negara)”. Through the KHI the government was able to cast itself as the promulgator of Islamic legal doctrine.

80 See “Sejarah Penyusunan Kompilasi Hukum Islam di Indonesia [History of the Formulation of KHI]”, in Intraksi Presiden R.I No.1/1991 Kompilasi Hukum Indonesia [President’s Instruction No.1/1991] (2001), 135-152. The Government initiated the project in 1985 to compile and codify Syari’ah Islamic family law covering marriage, inheritance and wakaf or charitable foundations which fell under the jurisprudence of Islamic religious courts. Muslim academics from Islamic universities (IAIN) studied the classical texts and questionnaires and interviews were conducted with more that 187 ulama in ten locations where religious courts were operating. The marriage law reforms of Morocco, Turkey and Egypt were also studied.


82 See Cammack, Young and Heaton, “Legislating Social Change in Indonesian Society”, 66-67. See also Butt, "Polygamy and Mixed Marriage in Indonesia”, 125,129. Butt argues that Islamic law suffered at the hands of the State. Muslim interests were recognised in the 1974 Marriage law but subsequently the State has sought to monopolise Islamic law. He points to the way religious courts have been brought under stringent state control with requirements that judges hold academic degrees, be appointed after an examination, and pledge allegiance to Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.
The *Compilation of Islamic Law* or KHI makes it clear that for interreligious marriages for Muslims are prohibited under the Muslim law that now operates in Indonesia’s religious courts. KHI does not have the status of law but it represents the majority Muslim position in Indonesia. Article 40(c) and 44 state that neither a Muslim woman nor a Muslim man are permitted to marry a non-Muslim.\(^{83}\) This view supported the position adopted by MUI in its 1980 *Fatwa* rather than the classical Islamic position which had allowed Muslim men to marry ‘Women of the Book’.\(^{84}\)

### 4.8 EFFORTS TO REVISE THE UUP (1/1974) AND KHI (1991)

#### 4.8.1 Efforts to revise the Indonesian Marriage Law

In 1992 it was reported that Munawir Syadzali, then Minister of Religion, thought clarification was needed on the matter of interfaith marriage. In a speech he gave in the Supreme Court building he suggested an additional Article needed to be included in the Indonesian Marriage Law to clear up confusion relating to interreligious marriage. *Ulama* and key Muslim organisations opposed this view and argued that formulating a law that specifically applied to mixed faith couples was not necessary.\(^{85}\)

A range of different groups over the years have campaigned for revisions to Indonesia’s Marriage Law in order to address the legal vacuum relating to

\(^{83}\) See Departemen Agama RI, *Kompilasi Hukum Islam Di Indonesia* [The Compilation of Islamic Law in Indonesia]. (Jakarta: Departemen Agama R.I., 2001). Article 40 (Indonesian original): “Dilarang melangsungkan perkawinan antara seorang pria dengan seorang wanita karena keadaan tertentu; (c) seorang wanita yang tidak beragama Islam. Article 44 states: Seorang wanita dilarang melangsungkan perkawinan dengan seorang pria yang tidak beragama Islam.”

\(^{84}\) The KHI, with the 1974 Marriage Law, has provided the grounds for Indonesia’s Islamic courts and KUA officers to reject requests made by Muslims wishing to marry a non-Muslim.

\(^{85}\) See Sairin and Pattiasina, eds., *Pelaksanaan Undang-Undang Perkawinan Dalam Perspektif Kristen*, 90. The Head of MUI at the time, K.H. Hasan Basri thought Article 1/1974 made the situation regarding mixed marriages clear, and there was no need for further amendments. NU also expressed the view that interfaith marriages were now prohibited under Indonesian law.
interreligious marriage. In 1995 a draft ‘Civil Registration Bill’ based on Supreme Court Jurisprudence relating to intermarriage and a consortium for the formation of the Civil Registration Bill called for the Civil Registry Office to be given the power to register interreligious marriages as a basic human right. During 2003 and 2004 there were further efforts to revise the 1974 marriage law and consideration was given to accommodating a number of proposed amendments. These also proved unsuccessful. Initial work to draft a proposed law on Religious Harmony which would address the issue of mixed marriages was also sidelined. Of interest is the fact that the ‘Population Administration Law’ passed in December 2006 specifically makes mention of those whose interfaith marriages have been upheld through the Civil Courts (Pengadilan Negeri). Whilst this avenue has always been available to couples, the fact that the presence of interreligious couples is explicitly acknowledged within the make-up of Indonesia’s population means that it cannot be categorically stated that interreligious marriages are prohibited in Indonesia.

86 For example the thesis of Tutik Hamidah, Peraturan Perkawinan Antaragama di Indonesia: Perspektif Muslim [The Regulation of Interfaith marriages in Indonesia: A Muslim Perspective] (Yogyakarta: IAIN Sunana Kalijaga, 2000). Hamidah recommends that an additional clause be added to Article 2 of the 1974 Law: “…that a valid marriage be performed according to the law and beliefs of each religion or according to the religious preference of the two people wishing to get married” (emphasis added by the researcher).
88 A background document of draft amendments to the UUP (Rancangan Perubahan Undang-undang No 1/1974) was cited by the researcher. A group of people were invited by the Sekretariat Jenderal DPR (Bidang Perundang-undangan) to discuss the draft amendments on 9 June 2003 at the House of Representatives office but nothing came from this initiative.
89 The Draft Law on Religious Harmony (Rancangan Undang-Undang Kerukunan Agama) proposed Article 15 (2): “If a marriage takes place between two people of a different religion, the marriage is registered according to the religious law as agreed to by the couple. (Indonesian original): “Jika terjadi perkawinan antar pemeluk beda agama, maka dicatatkan sesuai dengan hukum agama yang disepakati kedua belah pihak.”
90 See Article 34 of the Population Administration (Administrasi Penduduk) Law No.23/2006.
91 This point is made in a recently published booklet produced by PERCIK, an interreligious dialogue organisation based in Salatiga. See PERCIK, Pergumulan Persiapan Perkawinan Beda Agama: Perbincangan Seputar Persiapan Perkawinan Beda Agama di Lingkungan Gereja [Struggles in Interreligious Marriage Preparation: Discussion concerning Interreligious Marriage Preparation in the Church Context] (Salatiga: Pustaka Percik, 2008), 4.
4.8.2 Efforts to revise the Compilation of Islamic Law: The Counter Legal Draft (CLD) 2004

The Ministry of Religious Affairs established a team led by Siti Musdah Mulia, a Muslim gender expert, to examine the Compilation of Islamic Law from the point of view of Indonesia’s commitment to gender equality, democracy and religious diversity. The result was the ‘Counter Legal Draft to the KHI’ launched on 10 September 2004 by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The CLD noted the important place the Compilation of Islamic Law occupies in Indonesia, particularly in the current political environment characterised by frequent debates concerning the need to implement syari’ah and discussion concerning what contextual forms syari’ah might take in the contemporary context.

On the subject of intermarriage the CLD offers a very different perspective from that contained in the Compilation of Islamic Law. The Counter Legal Draft’s proposed Article 50 stated:

1) A marriage of a Muslim to a non-Muslim is permitted.
2) The marriage of a Muslim with a non-Muslim is based on the principle of respect, valuing the right to freedom for each to follow the teachings of their religion and their own beliefs.
3) Before the marriage proceeds, the government is responsible to provide couples with an explanation concerning marriages between a non-Muslim and a Muslim so that both are aware of issues that may arise in such marriages.

92 Other members of the team were Marzuki Wahid, Abdul Moqsith, K.H. Achmad Mubarak, Abdurrahman Abdullah, Anik Farida, Marzani Anwar, Achmad Suaedy, Saleh Partaonan and Amirsyah.
93 See Departemen Agama RI, Tim Pengarusutamaan Gender, Counter Legal Draft Kompilasi Hukum Islam [Counter Legal Draft to the Compilation of Islamic Law] (unpublished) (Jakarta: 2004), 2. The relevant section in Indonesian: “Program ini bercita-cita menawarkan rumusan (baru) Syari’at Islam yang sesuai dengan kehidupan demokrasi dan mencerminkan karakter genuine kebudayaan Indonesia...”
94 The researcher’s translation is of CLD Article 50: “(1) Perkawinan orang Islam dengan bukan Islam dibolehkan. (2) Perkawinan orang Islam dengan bukan Islam dilakukan berdasarkan prinsip saling menghargai dan menjunjung tinggi hak kebebasan menjalankan ajaran agama dan
Proposed Article 51 stated:

1) In a marriage between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, children have the right to freely choose a religion.

2) Until such time as the child is able to make that decision, the child’s religion will be decided by agreement between the parents.\(^95\)

The Counter Legal Draft was released to a storm of controversy.\(^96\) Following its release Siti Musdah Mulia, one of the team who had produced it, expressed disappointment that the government despite its stated commitment to gender justice, showed little political will to adopt their recommendations. If adopted the Counter Legal Draft would have led to a major shift in Indonesia’s marriage policy but clearly the strength of opposition was formidable.\(^97\)

The Counter Legal Draft has succeeded in making available for public consideration and debate an alternative Muslim perspective. Of particular interest in terms of this study is the contextual methodology of fiqh that is utilised, which scrutinises the classical legal texts rather than adopting a literalistic or prescriptive approach. Whilst the prospects for revision to the Marriage Law and the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) appear remote, those who helped frame and support the sentiments expressed in the CLD remain hopeful that Islam in Indonesian will further develop along inclusive lines.\(^98\)

\(^95\) Article 51 CLD: 1) “Dalam perkawinan orang Islam dan bukan Islam, anak berhak untuk memilih dan memeluk suatu agama secara bebas.” 2) “Dalam hal anak belum bisa menentukan pilihan agamanya, maka agama anak untuk sementara ditentukan oleh kesepakatan kedua orang tuanya.”

\(^96\) There were numerous newspaper articles on the issue. See Muninggar Sri Saraswati, “Revolution in Islamic law?” The Jakarta Post, October 5, 2004. The article quoted the spokesperson for the CLD team, Abdul Moqsith Ghazali who stated that there was no verse which banned Muslim women from marrying non-Muslims and citing Ghazali who referred to the Prophet Muhammad’s son-in-law who was not a Muslim at the time of his marriage (although he embraced Islam eight years later).

\(^97\) A change of leadership in the Ministry of Religious Affairs meant that the nineteen CLD suggested revisions were effectively put on hold.

4.8.3 Lack of consensus on the subject of intermarriage

The Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI) received support for its 2005 fatwa from some quarters including those who wanted to see a bill drafted to further enhance the ban of interreligious marriage.\textsuperscript{99} Other critical voices highlighted the nature of fatwas as being products of ijtihad.\textsuperscript{100} From this perspective fatwa and fiqh are relative rather than absolute and undergo change over time.\textsuperscript{101} Nashruddin Baidan, Professor of Tafsir at STAIN in Surakarta reflects this view when he says that different interpretations (fiqh) are valid within Islam on many subjects. On the question of intermarriage he notes that the Muslim community does not have consensus on this subject.\textsuperscript{102}

In different parts of the world progressive Muslim scholars have been developing contextual forms of ijtihad, reinterpreting Qur’anic texts in ways which can offer new perspectives on contemporary problems. Kamal and Mulia are two Indonesian Muslim academics and activists who, amongst others, reflect this trend. They have developed the view that there are no Qur’anic texts that clearly and universally make the question of interfaith marriage above debate.\textsuperscript{103}

Zainul Kamal and other colleagues associated with the organisation Paramadina, such as Kausar Azhari Nur, had been conducting Muslim marriages for interfaith couples (without the obligation that the non-Muslim convert to Islam). Kamal developed the rationale for his approach from a number of writings.\textsuperscript{104} In particular Kamal examined the Qur’anic texts that had

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{99} The Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI), the Indonesian Islamic Dakwah Council (DDII), and the Institute for Islamic Research and Study (LPP) have sought this
\item \textsuperscript{100} Ijtihad is interpretation of Islamic Law as a product of independent reasoning.
\item \textsuperscript{101} Fiqh refers to Islamic law and jurisprudence. Some view these classical formulations as requiring imitation rather than interpretation. Others argue that fiqh is the duty of each generation of Muslims and ijtihad is the task of rightly guided Muslims in each context.
\item \textsuperscript{102} Baidan, Nashruddin, “Tinjauan Kritis Terhadap Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia [A Critical Approach to MUI Fatwa]”, (a paper given to a group of Christian Ministers, Jogyakarta, August 2003).
\item \textsuperscript{103} Mulia, Muslimah Reformis, 358-378.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Zainul Kamal, “Kawin Beda Agama” in Fiqih Lintas Agama: Membangun Masyarakat Inklusif-Pluralis [Islamic Jurisprudence relating to Interfaith Relations: Developing an Inclusive
\end{itemize}
traditionally been used to oppose Muslim interreligious marriage such as Al-Baqarah 2:221 and Al-Mumtahanah 60:10. The contextual approach offered by Kamal argued that the instruction not to marry musyrik in QS 2:221 was a reference to the Arab musyrik who had no holy book and Quraisy musyrik who opposed the Prophet, rather than to Ahl al-Kitab.105

Although the Qur’an has critical comments concerning ‘People of the Book’ Kamal notes that they are not referred to as musyrik. Moreover there are verses that explicitly mention the faithfulness of certain Jews, Christians and Sabaeans.106 On this basis Kamal argues that the two key texts used to oppose Muslim intermarriage do not pronounce it haram for Muslims to marry Ahl al-Kitab. The example of the Prophet and some of his Companions who married Jewish or Christian women can be cited to support the case of interfaith marriages.107 The foundation for this view was texts such as QS An-Nahl 16:36. “Indeed we sent forth among every nation a Messenger, saying: ‘Serve you God, and eschew idols’.” 108

Kamal agrees with Muslim scholars who have permitted intermarriage and argued that the category Ahl al-Kitab could be broadened beyond Jewish and Christian women. More controversially Kamal questions the view that the Qur’an explicitly forbids Muslim women from marrying a non-Muslim. For Kamal this issue falls into the category of ijtihad, meaning that it is valid to

105 Kamal uses a similar method of exegesis described in Chapter 3 that distinguishes musyrik (idolaters) from Ahl al-Kitab.
106 See for example QS Al-Baqarah 2:62. “Surely they that believe, and those of Jewry, and the Christians, and those Sabaeans, whoso believes in God and the Last Day, and works of righteousness their wage awaits them with the Lord, and no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow.”
107 Kamal mentions Rasyid Ridha (who drew on the thinking of Imam Abu Hanifah) and others who did not limit Ahl al-Kitab to Jews and Christians but included Majusi and Sabaean and women who were not idolatrous. He argues that Ahl al-Kitab may be interpreted more broadly today to include Buddhist women, Hindus, followers of Confucianism, Shintoism and those belonging to other religions not included in the Qur’an. He notes that the Prophet’s friends such as Huzaifah, Usman bin Affan and Thalhah bin Ubaidillah also married Christian or Jewish woman.
108 See also QS 10:47 “Every nation has its messenger.”
reinterpret the tradition and its application in a different time, setting and context of *da'wah*. Kamal draws attention to the Qur’anic teaching that everything in creation comes from God, and plurality is part of the intended created order. This is illustrated in the following text: “O mankind, We have created you male and female, and appointed you races and tribes, that you may know one another (Al-Hujurat 49:13).”

If marriage is a primary way to deeply know another, interreligious marriage is a valid way by which the meaning of the text is fulfilled. Kamal also believes that if the mission of Islam is spreading peace, love and kindness amongst people then allowing interreligious marriages is compatible with this mission.

Prominent Indonesian Muslim scholar Siti Musdah Mulia,\(^{109}\) suggests that central to the problem of interfaith marriage is the difficulty many Muslims have in distinguishing between *syari‘ah*, God’s eternal, timeless, universal and unchanging law, and *fiqh* which is influenced by social and cultural factors. *Fiqh* is a product of human ingenuity and intellect and is open to revision.\(^{110}\) The existence of different interpretations on sacred texts within the *umma* is not a problem but can be viewed as a blessing she argues. Mulia thinks that Muslims have a God-given freedom to reinterpret texts, change laws and make adjustments to suit the situation in which they live and it is only in this way that efforts can be made towards consensus.

Mulia’s interpretation of the Qu’ran and Sunnah is guided by what she says is the universal mission of Islam, *rahmatan lil alamin*. Islam’s mission is to promote justice, peace, respect for others, love, integrity and freedom. Judged in this light Mulia believes that an inclusive rather than exclusive approach in interpreting the issue of intermarriage is more faithful to Islam. Mulia notes the widely held view that that a strong and harmonious family is one that is built on

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\(^{109}\) Mulia is the Executive Secretary of the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace (ICRP), an interfaith organisation based in Jakarta. She is active on gender issues and law reform and led the team that produced the *Counter Legal Draft (CLD) of the Kompilasi Hukum Islam* for the Department of Religion in 2004.

shared beliefs and values and argues that there are no signs that interreligious marriage is more likely to end in divorce or family breakdown. She also challenges the prevalent view that children will be brought up with no faith.\(^{111}\) Mulia agrees with other Indonesian scholars surveyed in this study who suggest that an unwarranted and unnecessary fear of Christianisation has contributed to rigid approaches to intermarriage. The tendency to celebrate the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam while rejecting conversion of Muslims to other faiths is another prevalent attitude which she seeks to combat.

The contributions of Zainal Kamal and Siti Musdah Mulia provide examples of the intense *intra-dialogue* that is going on within the Indonesian community in rethinking traditional *fiqh*. Contesting views on intermarriage reflect contrasting theological approaches within Islam.

Progressive Muslims like Kamal and Mulia have argued that interfaith couples in Indonesia are experiencing human rights violation and discrimination. Concerned about reports of problems interfaith couples have been encountering they, along with others, have used their position of influence to advocate for change and to develop some alternative strategies to assist couples that might be a model to others.\(^{112}\) In 2005 the Indonesian Conference of Religion and Peace (ICIP), conducted research with a number of couples and the results, including ten case studies, were published.\(^ {113}\)

\(^{111}\) See unpublished study by Nuryamin, *Penelitian tentang Implementasi UU Perkawinan* [Research into the implementation of the Indonesian Marriage Law (Jakarta: PSW IAIN, 1990)]. Mulia cites this research that suggests that the mother tends to have most influence in the religious education of children. Findings concluded that in mixed marriages when the husband is Muslim, 50% of the children become Muslim whereas when the Muslim partner is the woman around 80% of the children become Muslim.

\(^{112}\) An interview with Muslim scholar Kausar Azhari Nur on Dec 27, 2003 confirmed that he and Kamal had been conducting Muslim marriages during the past year. During 2004 the organisation Paramadina received public criticism after it became known that Nur and Kamal were conducting interfaith marriages.

In recent years the Indonesian Conference of Religion and Peace (ICIP) has been drawn more actively into assisting couples. The Indonesian Conference of Religion and Peace has developed a code of ethics which is explained to couples seeking their assistance. ICIP’s code has three main elements: permission from both sets of parents is required; couples undergo counselling to explore the various challenges interfaith couples may face; and two marriage ceremonies are arranged so that according to both faiths the marriage is recognised. ICIP stresses that respect is the basis for their work with interfaith couples and encourage couples to develop mutual respect as the foundation for their marriage. ICIP also discourages efforts on the part of either partner to convert the other partner. ICIP works with couples throughout the process leading up registration of the marriage. ICIP has also identified the need to establish a support group for couples and a website to provide information. The services provided by the Indonesian Conference of Religion and Peace reflect the emergence of progressive Muslim and Christian voices which challenge exclusive understandings of scriptural texts and advocate for policies that uphold the religious freedom and human rights of all Indonesians.

4.9 CHRISTIAN RESPONSES TO THE 1974 MARRIAGE LAW

Interfaith marriages between Muslims and Christians raise significant questions for both religious communities. The Marriage Law brought more visibly onto the agenda of churches the need to define their position. For churches that had

114 This coincided with Paramadina stepping back from active involvement with couples following critical media attention. During 2006 ICIP assisted 22 couples: offering counselling and helping in arranging the legalisation of their marriage through working with a network of religious leaders and contact people in Civil Registry Offices. From extract from interview with Siti Musdah Mulia on Dec. 29, 2006.

115 Extract from interview with Siti Musdah Mulia, Dec 29, 2006. Parents are able to consult with ICRP staff about the legal, theological, practical or procedural issues in an interfaith marriage. The counselling and preparation process may take up to one year and some couples may decide not to proceed. A team of people assist in the preparation and ICIP is able to call on a number of Muslim clerics, Christian clergy, Hindu priests etc to assist in marriage ceremonies. ICIP’s stated reason for having a double ceremony is so that couples begin their married life showing respect for both faiths.

116 Documentation is standardised for all marriages and each partner must supply a copy of their birth certificate; passport; KTP (identification card); baptism certificate, a letter of support from parents/wali; and a letter of recommendation from their locality/place of residence.
religious prescripts permitting members to marry someone of another faith, such marriages could occur lawfully in the context of a church service and be ratified through the registry office. Civil Registry offices are reluctant to assist couples unless they have the support of a local church. With a letter of recommendation from the church marriages can be registered without undue difficulties.\textsuperscript{117}

Indonesian Protestant churches adopt a range of different positions in relation to intermarriage.\textsuperscript{118} Some churches allow ministers to conduct interreligious marriages such as Gereja Kristen Jawa (GKJ) and Gereja Kristen Indonesia (GKI). Other churches only permit Christian marriages where both are baptised Christians. Gereja Kristen Protestan Indonesia Barat (GPIB), Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan (GKJW) and Gereja Masehi Injili Minahasa (GMIM) hold this position.\textsuperscript{119} There are also churches such as Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali (GKPB) that do not have a clear policy either allowing or banning such marriages.\textsuperscript{120}

In 1975 the GKI Synod agreed to a procedure to follow in relation to interreligious marriages. Where a GKI member and a person of another faith request marriage the non-Christian partner is required to complete a written statement in which they agree to:

(i) have a Christian marriage

(ii) not put obstacles in the way of their husband/wife continuing to express their Christian faith and attend Christian worship

\textsuperscript{117} It is possible that marriages may be declared legal but from the point of view of the Muslim partner’s religious community the marriage may be considered invalid if it has not been conducted according to the religious precepts of their religion.

\textsuperscript{118} The researcher met with a number of Protestant ministers from a range of churches to hear more about how their church’s policy affected their pastoral ministry.

\textsuperscript{119} See for example the following extract from Tata Gereja GMIM 1999 (GMIM Church Regulations), Chapter X Section 28 (iv) “Those who are accepted for marriage need to confess their faith and promise to serve God through the life of their family”. Both partners need to be baptised before GMIM can agree to conduct a Christian marriage.

\textsuperscript{120} A number of independent and Pentecostal churches may also be in this situation so the decision on whether such marriages are allowed depends on the views of individual ministers and local leaders.
(iii) not oppose children being baptised and having a Christian education.\textsuperscript{121}

GKI Minister and Lecturer at Duta Wacana Christian University, Rev Dr Yayah Wijaya suggests churches should adopt a pastoral rather than a disciplinary approach to interreligious marriage. He is of the view that the third condition in the GKI policy on mixed marriages is problematic. “Someone who is equally strong as a Muslim will find it difficult to comply.”\textsuperscript{122} Wijaya would like to see the GKI further develop its theology of religions. Drawing on his former pastoral experience in a congregation in Salatiga Wijaya saw much evidence that mixed families could be places of dialogue, mutual respect, equality, faith and freedom. Wijaya believes that mixed families can be a sign of the kingdom of God and in the context of mixed family life Wijaya suggests that mission is about “implementing the family of God in the family of human beings” rather than being focused on creating a Christian family.\textsuperscript{123}

The \textit{Gereja Kristen Jawa} (GKJ) like the GKI has many of its members who are in interfaith marriages and this has prompted the GKJ to give serious consideration to the issue and formulate a church policy on interfaith marriage. If the couple includes one partner who is not a member of the church he/she is required to agree in writing to a GKJ marriage (and expected to agree to be

\textsuperscript{121} See \textit{Tata Gereja} GKI Regulations Section 30 clause 9b. The researcher was given a copy of the statement used by one GKI congregation in East Java. The Muslim partner agreed: not to have another marriage ceremony that would be in conflict with the Christian faith; permit their partner to practise their faith; and allow children to be baptised and given a Christian education. The Indonesian text which is signed by the non-GKI partner: “Menyatakan persetujuan saya terhadap pelaksanaan Kebaktian Peneguhan dan Pemberkatan Nikah kami di Jemaat GKI (Tempat) pada tanggal (Date) dan menyatakan tidak akan melakukan upacara-upacara lain yang bertentangan dengan iman Kristen. Sehubungan dengan hal tersebut saya menyatakan: 1. Memperkenankan isteri/suami saya untuk tetap hidup dan beribadah menurut iman Kristen. 2. Jika dalam pernikahan ini kami memperoleh anak atau anak-anak, saya memperkenankan anak atau anak-anak kami dibaptis dan dididik secara Kristen. Pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sadar dan tanpa paksaan dari Pihak mana pun. Apabila ternyata saya tidak melaksanakan pernyataan saya ini, saya bersedia ditegur atau dinasihati oleh Majelis Jemaat di mana isteri/suami saya menjadi anggota Jemaat.

\textsuperscript{122} Extract from interview with Rev Dr. Yayah Wijaya, January 12, 2007.

\textsuperscript{123} Extract from interview with Yayah Wijaya. Jan 12, 2007. He recalled how, in moving circumstances an elderly interfaith couple died on the same day. In Salatiga they were able to have both funeral services conducted on the same day though in different sections of the cemetery.
married in the GKJ only). The non-GKJ partner is also required to put in writing that they will permit their wife/husband to continue as a GKJ member, worshipping in the GKJ. In the final part of the clause the non-GKJ member states that they will allow their family to receive a Christian education and that children may attend church if they wish to do so.\textsuperscript{124}

In the course of this inquiry a number of Christian clergy were interviewed. Those who came from churches that do not permit interfaith marriages had examples of cases in which they were disappointed not to be able to assist members of their own congregation (and in some cases members of their own family) who requested an interreligious marriage. Former Chair of the GPIB (2000–2005), Rev Rufus Waney would like to see his church offering a more supportive approach to interfaith couples. His efforts to encourage the GPIB to rethink its policy on intermarriage have to date been unsuccessful. He believes more educational work is needed with lay leaders whose voice carries considerable weight in the denominational structures of Reformed churches.\textsuperscript{125}

In his opinion, many GPIB members still tend to express the view, “How can your family be a good example of Christianity if your spouse goes to the mosque or if you have Muslim children?”\textsuperscript{126} Rufus Waney is of the view that missiologically “interreligious marriages are not a barrier for God in working out his plan of salvation for the world”.\textsuperscript{127} Rufus Waney and his brother Paul Waney who is also a GPIB minister, have given serious consideration to the question of interreligious marriage and continue to be advocates for change.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{124} Tata Gereja GKJ [GKJ Church Regulations] (2005), Section 49, 3, Clause 7. The final section of Clause 7 does not require baptism and in this respect differs from GKI policy.

\textsuperscript{125} Extract of interview with Rev Rufus Waney, March 31, 2008. Waney reported that the Ministers Conference was generally supportive of introducing changes to GPIB policy but these were not successfully carried at the national Synod which was made up of two thirds elders/ lay people.

\textsuperscript{126} From extract of interview with Rufus Waney, March 31, 2008.

\textsuperscript{127} See Rufus Alexander Waney, “Missiological dimensions in interreligious marriages between Christians and Muslims in Indonesia”, (M.Th., School of Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1991). \textsuperscript{128} Rufus Waney completed a Masters degree on the subject and Paul Waney has written on interfaith marriage and missiology. See Paul A.Y. Waney, \textit{Mixed Marriages: A Preliminary Inquiry towards a Biblical, Historical and Pastoral Approach} (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 2005). Rufus and Paul Waney grew up in Riau in a community that was 97% Muslim. They also had the experience of having a close family member marry a Muslim and the disappointment of her church not being able to conduct a Christian ceremony.
Catholic policy on intermarriage explained in Chapter Three largely reflects current Catholic practice in Indonesia. In an interview with Catholic theologian and lecturer Al Purwa Hadiwardoyo he reported the high rate of Catholic–Muslim intermarriage. In Jakarta for example, as many as 50 percent of Catholics married Muslims; in Central Java the figure is thirty five percent and in Eastern Indonesia, where the Catholic community is more strongly represented, the figure drops to ten percent. He noted that in some cases Catholic partners converted to Islam so the marriage could proceed but in many cases they continued to practise their Catholic faith after the marriage. A Catholic member who had pronounced the kalimat syahadat can be formally received back into the Catholic fold by making a confession of faith in church front of a priest and two witnesses. Fifteen to twenty percent of Catholic–Muslim marriages end in divorce. This is the same rate of divorce as for marriages between two Muslims but substantially higher than it is for couples in which both are Catholics. Hadiwardoyo highlights the difficult situation interfaith couples currently face and expresses the hope that in the future Catholics and Muslims might be able to have their marriage celebrated in a jointly conducted ceremony as is the case for Catholic–Protestant marriages.

An important new resource on interreligious marriage was published in December 2008 by an interfaith team based in Salatiga that included GKI and GKI ministers. The booklet sets out to encourage discussion within the

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129 Interviews were conducted with Roman Catholic leaders including Dr. Piet Go, then chief executive of the Bishops Council of Indonesia (KAWI) and co-author of Kawin Campur Beda Agama dan Beda Gereja [Mixed Marriage between Different Religions and Different Churches], (1987); Dr Ismartono, the executive secretary for KAWI’s Commission on Interfaith Relations, and Al. Purwa Hadiwardoyo from the Catholic Theological Seminary in Yogyakarta.
130 Extract from interview with Al Purwa Hadiwardoyo, Yogyakarta, December 13, 2006. The Catholic population in Java is only 2%.
131 Extract from interview with Al Purwa Hadiwardoyo, Dec 13.2006. This confirms the view of social researchers who suggest that members of small groups have more opportunity to interact with members of large groups increasing the likelihood of interfaith marriage.
132 Catholic-Muslim marriages could be described as being as successful as marriages between two Muslims but for Catholic couples the rate of divorce in Indonesia is only 1%. Hadiwardoyo notes that before the 1974 marriage law 35% of Muslim marriages ended in divorce but with the passing of the Marriage Law that figure has been reduced to 15%-20%.
churches on the subject of preparing interfaith couples for marriage and is a resource for couples, their parents, ministers, Elders Councils and local congregations.\footnote{PERCIK, 
*Pergumulan Persiapan Perkawinan Beda Agama* [Struggles surrounding Interfaith Marriage Preparation] (Salatiga: Pustaka Percik, 2008). The booklet includes a section on interreligious marriage in the Bible and gives a number of short case studies. An overview of current practice in a number of churches and some local variations is provided along with an outline of how churches working with KCS assist couples to have their marriages legalised.} Examples are provided of current practice in a number of Christian churches in which churches provide the Civil Registry Officers (KCS) with a covering support letter stating that the non-Christian party is a *simpatisan*.\footnote{Ibid, 23. A *simpatisan* is considered someone who is linked with, and currently studying about, Christianity. The booklet notes that there are cases where a Muslim partner “pretends” to be linked to the Christian community as a *simpatisan* in order to fulfil marriage registry office requirements and this might be considered a manipulation of data or giving false identification. (It could also be inferred that the number of interfaith marriages are therefore being under-reported.)} With this assurance marriages are usually able to be registered with the KCS without difficulty.\footnote{Churches usually have a person who acts as an assistant to the KCS facilitating communication and ease of administration.}

There is a degree of diversity in policy and theology within the Indonesian Christian churches in terms of how interfaith marriage is viewed. The Roman Catholic Church and some Protestant churches such as the GKJ and GKI assist interfaith couples to have their marriages legally registered whilst operating within the restrictions of the Marriage Law. Even in those churches which have clear policies on interfaith marriage some variation was noted.\footnote{Protestant churches such GKI and GKJ have clear policies but there was evidence from interviews that ministers and elders’ councils may adapt the policy to suit their circumstances.} Where churches lack a clear policy on interfaith marriage a variety of approaches may be adopted depending on local views. Congregations may reject intermarriage altogether or may choose to respond to couples on a case by case basis.

### 4.10 INTERRELIGIOUS MARRIAGE AND THE POPULAR PRESS

Newspaper articles about interreligious marriages of well-known Indonesian artists and public figures, musicians and Indonesian celebrities are regularly
reported in the media. Some articles are critical and others supportive of interfaith couples. Some couples pursued their case through the courts or travelled overseas to marry. One article noted that an increasing number of Indonesian interfaith couples use the ‘overseas registration loophole’. They marry overseas in countries which issue marriage certificates to non-residents and the Indonesian government recognises marriages legally conducted overseas. A 2006 article cited that the Indonesian Embassy in Singapore had on average twenty Indonesian couples marrying in Singapore every month.

Articles that regularly report on interfaith marriages in the popular press incite considerable controversy. Despite the widespread view that interreligious marriages are now prohibited in Indonesia it is clear that public discourse on the topic is far from over.

4.11 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This survey of the social, cultural, legal and religious context of intermarriage in Indonesia has highlighted challenges facing Indonesia in terms of how it manages diversity and religious plurality, gives recognition to Muslim

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138 The marriage of high profile couple Deddy Corbuzier (Catholic) and Karlina (Muslim) for example, was reported in March 2005. Zainul Kamal was strongly criticised for legitimising their interfaith marriage. The marriage of Ari Sihasalle and Nia Zulkarnaen also received significant media attention, as both were well-known actors. Nia was from a devout Muslim background, the daughter of a respected Muslim leader. Their marriage was conducted in a civil ceremony in Perth and a Catholic blessing in Jakarta. Nia called a press conference in October 2003 to tell the public she was still a Muslim and her husband was still a Catholic.

139 The well-known actor Nurul Arifin (Muslim) was much criticised for her marriage to Mayong Suryo Laksono (Catholic) in 1991. She went public in 2004 to speak positively of her interfaith marriage in the hope of increasing community understanding and reportedly was inundated with emails asking for her advice.


141 For example see Patung, “Ratna Ani Lestari”, Indonesian Matters, May 5, 2006. http://www.indonesiamatters.com/322/regent-accused-of-blasphey/ (accessed July 9, 2006). During 2006 Ratna Ani Lestari, the Regent of Banyuwangi, East Java was beset by protests when thousands of people were brought onto the streets by Islamic organisations accusing her of being an apostate for her marriage to a Balinese Hindu (Professor Gede Winasa, the Jembrana Regent who ran in the election as a candidate for Governor of Bali in 2008). Some articles suggested that Ratna Ani Lestari is now not a practising Muslim.
aspirations, and upholds religious freedom as guaranteed in Indonesia’s Constitution.\(^\text{142}\)

The colonial period recognised multiple marriage laws. An independent Indonesia which aspired to have a unifying law found it extremely difficult to arrive at an agreed understanding. The process of formulating Marriage Law showed that Islam could be influential in the shaping of public policy and enhanced the public position of Islamic law.\(^\text{143}\) Muslim voices succeeded in forcing the State to give greater attention to religious bases of authority in exercising its law-making power.\(^\text{144}\) A question raised for Christians and other minorities was whether Islam would wish to occupy a more influential place in the shaping of public policy, a question that has been asked with more urgency in recent years.

There have been few legal issues have generated greater controversy over a longer period in Indonesia than interreligious marriage and contesting viewpoints have tended to become more rather than less pronounced.\(^\text{145}\) The formulation of the Indonesian Marriage Law took place in a climate in which the Muslim and Christian communities were experiencing considerable religious revitalisation and there were Muslim concerns about Christianisation. The Suharto government, like the Dutch colonial strategy before it, promoted Islam’s ritual and religious role but restricted Islam’s political influence to regulations on marriage, divorce and inheritance.\(^\text{146}\)

\(^{142}\) The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Article 28E states, “Every person shall be free to choose and to practise the religion of his/her choice …Every person shall have the right to the freedom to believe his/her faith (kepercayaan), and to express his/her views and thoughts, in accordance with his/her conscience.” Article 29 states, “The State shall be based upon the belief in the One and Only God” and “The State guarantees all persons the freedom of worship, each according to his/her own religion or belief.”


\(^{144}\) Cammack, Young and Heaton, “Legislating Social Change in an Islamic Society: Indonesia's Marriage Law”, 73.

\(^{145}\) Mark Cammack, “Legal Aspects of Muslim–Non-Muslim Marriage in Indonesia”, 1.

\(^{146}\) Steenbrink, “Indonesian Politics and A Muslim Theology of Religions”, 223-246.
In the post New Order context conflicting theologies of religions have become more visible and the debate on the political role of Islam in society has resumed. An analysis of intermarriage in Indonesia highlights the internal debates within the Muslim community about the validity of contextual approaches to sacred texts and the extent to which classical understandings of *syari’ah* can be reformulated. The differing and indeed contesting views relating to interreligious marriage raises important questions about the role of Islam in Indonesian society, the place of *syari’ah* in public policy, how the majority Muslim community understands its relationship with non-Muslims, and particularly, what Islam stands for, its mission and vocation. These questions will be vital in shaping the future of Indonesia.

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CHAPTER 5
MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN INTERMARRIAGE IN AUSTRALIA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a description of the cultural and religious diversity of Australia and the legal context of marriage before surveying literature on the subject of intermarriage. There is a growing body of research on intermarriage in multicultural Australia but to date the specific subject of Muslim–Christian intermarriage has been given limited attention. This chapter provides the larger framework in which to interpret the experiences of Muslim and Christian respondents in the Australian sample whose narratives are central to this inquiry.

5.1.1 Australia’s cultural and religious diversity

Australia with its twenty million people has become one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the world. The 2006 census reported that twenty-two percent of the population was born overseas, four hundred different languages were spoken at home, and there were more than 250 different ancestries. ¹ In the last three decades the religious and cultural make-up has changed dramatically and the high levels of immigration and the policies of multiculturalism have made Australia a “more flexible, porous, and open-ended national culture”. ² As part of this changing context Australians now encounter other faiths with greater frequency. ³

¹ 22% of Australia’s population was born overseas according to the 2006 Census. The top five languages spoken at home (other than English) were Italian, Greek, Cantonese, Arabic, and Mandarin. See Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census. http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/4a256353001af3ed4b2562bb00121564/5d3cc840c7bcefbca2573410017db9afOpenDocument
Thirty-five percent of Australians in the 2006 census reported having more than one ancestry. An increasing number of people define themselves as bicultural Australians or Australians with multiple identities. This means that it is more difficult to compartmentalise people’s cultural identity as people create blended, hybrid and hyphenated identities. Cultural and religious identities in the Australian context are continually being re-negotiated, reshaped and redefined.

5.2 RELEVANT LITERATURE RELATING TO AUSTRALIAN FAMILIES

During the last thirty years there have been enormous changes and transitions affecting families. Weeks and Wilson note that Australia, in line with most other Western societies, has undergone a major cultural shift in the nature of marital and family arrangements. There has been a decrease in fertility; a multiplication of different models for marriage; a questioning of patriarchy; a removal of the notion of illegitimacy; no fault divorce on the grounds of irreversible breakdown; and greater equality between partners. Marriages are, “permanently negotiable”. As Australia families become increasingly diverse social researcher, Robyn Hartley suggests that diversity is now ‘the mainstream’. Her volume provides accounts of the changing face of Australian families brought about through Australia’s cultural diversity. Although there is

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4 David de Vaus, *Diversity and Change in Australian Families: Statistical Profiles* (Melbourne: Institute of Family Studies, 2004). De Vaus examines family and household types; fertility; relationship breakdown; spending; time use; caring for children, older people and those with disabilities. Over three-quarters of Australian children still grow up in households with both their natural parents. Marriage trends in Australia show an increasing age for marrying; a growth in de facto relationships (seventy-two per cent live with their partner before marriage); a decline in religious weddings with half now being married by a civil celebrant; and challenges to the notion that marriage is only between a man and a woman. One quarter of all women will never have children. Following relationship breakdown 30 per cent of children have no contact with their non-resident parent. The divorce rate in Australia in around 40% and has declined since it peaked in 2001.


7 Ibid, 1-24. Hartley brings together various chapters describing Aboriginal families, Chinese–Australian, Italian–Australian, Filipino–Australian, Greek–Australian, Vietnamese–Australian.
now a plurality of values reflected in Australian families Hartley suggests that most families in Australia reflect and respond to three main trends: the transference of western liberal values which emphasise the rights of the individual; generational shifts; and an increasing tendency to marry outside one’s own ethnic group.\(^8\)

The resilience of the family as an institution can be seen in the capacity of the family to respond to change.\(^9\) It is interesting to note that a happy marriage and family life remains an aspiration of many Australians even though there is now no single way of defining ‘family’.\(^10\) Some family researchers speak of the way in which families and cultures tend to be individualistic or collectivistic.\(^11\) Those who come from collectivistic cultures tend to show strong family attachment. They may have overseas family obligations and may wish to duplicate familiar patterns of family support by living near others from their community. Western family values in contrast put an emphasis on the rights of individuals and personal autonomy.\(^12\) Underlying areas of tension in many Australian families occur relate to how these different value systems interact. Social researchers Sawrikar and Katz suggest that Australian families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds ‘walk a fine-line’ between cultural preservation and cultural adaptation. The experience of racism and

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10 Commonwealth of Australia, “To have and to hold: Strategies to strengthen marriage and relationships”, (Canberra: The Commonwealth of Australia, 1998), 73. Families in all societies are expected to care for and nurture children, transmit values and provide financially for them. Sociologists see families as primary agents for socialization, social control and transmission of cultural values; psychologists see families as primary units in which children are reared and individual personalities develop.
12 See Peter McDonald, “Australian families: values and behaviour”, in *Families and Cultural Diversity in Australia* ed., Robyn Hartley (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1995), 25-47. Anglo-celtic families expect couples to set up their own households and whilst the extended family networks are still active there is a focus on the nuclear family. Liberal progressive families have seen changing gender roles, greater equality for women, an emphasis on children’s rights, acceptance of couples living together before marriage, a decline in the birth rate, and an increase in divorce.
discrimination also affects families from minority communities and in recent years this has particularly been the case for Muslim-Australian families.  

Hartley notes a significant lack of Australian research on marriage and family life particularly in relation to examining how different cultural and religious groups understand marriage. She highlights the need for more research in the area of intermarriage and intercultural parenting and notes the strong connection that exists between religion and family life which warrants greater attention.  

To date there has been limited research conducted on the impact on children of growing up in intercultural and interfaith families.

5.3 THE LEGAL CONTEXT OF MARRIAGE IN AUSTRALIA

According to the 1961 Marriage Act, “marriage means the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life”. The definition of marriage in the 1961 Marriage Act does share key features with a Christian understanding of marriage. The 1961 legislation also makes some references to churches and Christian denominations (rather than speaking in more general terms about religious communities). MacFarlane thinks this does not point to a legal bias in the law but reflects the era in which the law was written, formulated at a time when there was greater religious homogeneity in

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13 Sawrikar and Katz, “Enhancing family and relationship service accessibility”. They describe collectivistic cultures as those which place a strong emphasis on family obligations over individual autonomy; social harmony over individuation and which tend to have hierarchies based on age and gender. See also the American study of marriage, Don S. Browning and David A. Clairmont, ed., American Religions and the Family: How Faith Traditions Cope with Modernization and Democracy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). The typography presented by the editors emphasises differences in the ways religious traditions respond to the modernising mainstream culture.

14 Robyn Hartley, “Families, Values and Change: Setting the Scene”, 18. Religions have a direct relevance for family life, gender roles, and imparting values and views about morality.


16 Peter Bentley, “Marriages in Australia: Changes and Challenges”, Christian Research Association Bulletin 18, nos. 4-6, Dec. (2008). Marriage is a union between a man and a woman which requires there are no other parties; it must be voluntary decision; and is for life. Core to a Christian understanding of marriage are particular elements including the notion of monogamy, ‘leaving’ and ‘uniting’, and marriage as a life-long commitment.
Australian society. The Australian Constitution prohibits the establishment of a ‘state’ or ‘national’ church or religious body and prohibits imposing any particular religious observance. The free exercise of religion and the principle of equality of religions are upheld in Australia’s legal system.\(^{17}\) In the multicultural context of Australia further work is likely to occur to ensure that the legal needs of different religious communities are taken into account by various Australian parliaments.\(^{18}\)

Efforts to consider the impact of multiculturalism on the Marriage Law were initiated in 1989 with an Australian Law Reform Commission inquiry.\(^{19}\) The report did not introduce any major changes to make the Marriage Law to make it more sensitive to the needs of cultural minorities and this was a cause for disappointment for some.\(^{20}\) Australian Muslim legal expert, Jamila Hussain believes that Muslim and Jewish women would benefit from changes in the law that would recognise religious divorce and give people the alternative of choosing to divorce under the civil law or religious law.\(^{21}\) Currently there is

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\(^{17}\) Peter MacFarlane and Simon Fisher, *Churches, Clergy and the Law* (Sydney: The Federation Press, 1996), 4. MacFarlane suggests that it is an important aspect of Australian law that no one religion is preferred over another.

\(^{18}\) MacFarlane, “Marriage, Divorce and Children”, in *Churches, Clergy and the Law*, 208-276. There is the suggestion that over time as minority religious communities interact with the legal system it is likely that that there will be a corpus of Australian court decisions and statutes catering more specifically for the legal needs of people of diverse faiths.

\(^{19}\) Patrick Parkinson, “Taking Multiculturalism Seriously: Marriage Law and the Rights of Minorities”, *Sydney Law Review* 16 (1996), 473, 505. The result was the 1992 report “Taking Multiculturalism Seriously: Marriage Law and the Rights of Minorities.” Parkinson raised the question, “Can a society with deep roots in European traditions of law and life, embrace the cultural identities of other societies without losing its own? Is it possible for there to be one set of laws which applies to all, irrespective of race or religion, which is at the same time ‘multicultural’?”

\(^{20}\) Hussain, *Islam: Its law and society* (Sydney: The Federation Press, 2004), esp. chapter 6. A problem has arisen for some Muslim women wanting a religious divorce if their husband refuses to pronounce the *talaq*. Hussain notes that there is no *syari‘ah* court in Australia and no properly appointed *qadi* (Islamic judge) with power to grant divorce. Australian Muslim women seeking a divorce may have to travel overseas at great cost or seek the assistance of a group of local *sheikhs* to establish an informal tribunal to deal with these matters. Hussain thinks there is no reason why Australian law could not recognise religious divorce as it currently recognises both religious and civil marriages as long as these were conducted according to the Marriage Act and the parties choose this method of terminating their marriage. Some Muslims would like religious divorce recognised and would like to see further amendments to recognise the rights of a spouse not only to make prenuptial agreements in relation to financial matters but also other binding and enforceable agreements.

further research being conducted in the area of Muslim marriage and divorce in Australia and the roles of religious and civil law.22

In general the Australian marriage law Law is relatively generous in the freedom it provides to religious bodies to organise themselves as they see fit but all religions are subject to Commonwealth laws in relation to the celebration of marriage (and divorce and the welfare of children). Control is exercised through requiring that only celebrants who are Commonwealth-authorised are legally permitted to celebrate marriages within Australia.23 A Muslim religious ceremony by an unauthorised celebrant is therefore not recognised as a legal marriage under Australian law. The custom in Australia is usually to engage the services of an imam who is a registered marriage celebrant so that the marriage is valid according to Australian law.

Hussain notes that the Marriage Act of 1961 and the 1975 Family Law Act were not specifically designed to take into account the needs of Australia’s emerging multicultural society. Nevertheless marriages can be conducted according to Islamic law and the custom of the participants provided that the basic requirements of the Marriage Act are met.24 Hussain thinks there have not been any major problems for Muslims complying with the Marriage Act in terms of being able to fulfil the obligations of Islamic law but there are some

Family Law Act are quite different to those under Islamic law. Divorce statistics suggest that Muslim families in Australia are affected by mainstream trends and migration has placed pressure on families leading to higher levels of divorce than would usually be the case in traditional Muslim societies. Conciliation, mediation and arbitration in resolving disputes are the recommended methods of settling marital disputes within Islam. Hussain recommends that the Muslim communities set up their own family mediation service with those who understand fully the cultural and religious issues.

22 Anisa Buckley of the Centre for Islamic Law and Society (CILS) and Ghena Krayem of Sydney University are currently completing doctoral work in the area of Islamic family law in Australia.

23 See MacFarlane, “Marriage, Divorce and Children”, 6, 19.

24 Hussain, Islam: Its law and society, 208. Marriages that are arranged are permitted as long as there is consent given by both parties. There is no prohibition in Australia of customary Muslim written marriage contracts being prepared and signed since the September 1999 Family Law Amendment Bill (permits recognition and enforcement of financial agreements made before, during, or at the end of a marriage). A dowry (mahr) is permissible; and there is freedom for Muslim marriages to be held at a mosque, in a home or in any public place. Marriages celebrated overseas may be recognised in Australia. The Department of Immigration needs to be convinced that the marriage is genuine. The usual requirement is two years cohabitation before a permanent visa will be issued.
areas where difficulties may arise. Hussain welcomes further discussion on how Australia’s legal system could embrace a wider concept of cultural and religious diversity. Importantly for this study Australian law takes a neutral position towards religion and has no legal or institutional prohibitions to interreligious marriages, a situation that is not the case in some other countries.

5.4 INTERMARRIAGE IN AUSTRALIA

Intermarriage contributes to shifting values and emerging cultural understandings. It also introduces new family patterns in Australia. There is a small but growing body of literature on the subject of intermarriage though it has mostly focused on ethnicity and intercultural marriages rather than religious affiliation. Obtaining Australian data relating to interreligious marriage has also proved difficult.

5.4.1 Contrasting approaches to intermarriage

There are two contrasting approaches to intermarriage. One emphasises the problems whilst the other highlights the positives. Intermarriage may be viewed as threatening religious or cultural heritage. Prompted by the desire to

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25 Jamila Hussain, “Family Law and Muslim Communities”, 161-187. Hussain notes that the Marriage Act 1961 is secular in approach and this differs from a Muslim understanding of marriage. Australian law also does not regulate relationships within marriage whereas Syari’ah provides guidelines for conduct within the family (with the husband having legal obligations to support his wife and children). Some Australian Muslims find it surprising that the Family Law Act statute gives families no special legal status, rights or duties, but describes in detail situations of marriage breakdown and divorce. Islamic rules relating to inheritance are not recognised under Australian law but Muslims may direct in their will that their estate be distributed according to Islamic law.

26 Robyn Hartley, Families and cultural diversity in Australia, 17-18.

27 Cahill, Intermarriages in International Contexts: A Study of Filipino Women Married to Australian, Japanese and Swiss Men (Queson City: Scalabrini Research Centre, 1990), 4.

28 See for example Cahill (1990); Price (1994, 1999, 2001); Khoo and Penny (2000); Khoo and Lucas (2001); Birrell and Healy (2000); Brown (2000); Khoo (2002); and Heard, Birrell and Kho (2009). The journal People and Place has provided an important avenue for the publication of research on issues relating to immigration, ethnicity and intermarriage.


30 D. Cahill, G. Bouma, H. Dellal and M. Leahy, Religion, Cultural Diversity and Safeguarding Australia (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2004), 95.
preserve a community’s ethnic or religious identity, intermarriage may be strongly discouraged. An alternative view sees intermarriage as an indicator that barriers between different groups are diminishing and there is a high degree of interaction and intermingling of lifestyles and cultural and religious practices. Higher levels of intermarriage are expected in diverse, tolerant, open and inclusive societies. It has been argued that the nature of Australian society itself is impacted by successive waves of immigration and what is currently viewed as ‘mainstream’ is itself undergoing significant change.

The degree to which a community seeks to separate itself or permit interaction with other communities is a subject addressed by some Australian researchers. Hugh Mackay, noting the high rates of intermarriage in Australia, has raised the question of whether intermarriage leads in the longer term to assimilation. Castles, Kalantziz and Cope have suggested that intermarriage for minorities, may lead to disappearance of ethnic differences and difficulties in maintaining ethnic identity.

Various studies on intermarriage in Australia reflect different ways these issues are perceived and whether intermarriage as a phenomenon is viewed as something that diminishes ethnic and religious identity or as something that enhances the emerging and ever-evolving Australian culture.

5.4.2 Intermarriage: an ever present factor in the shaping of Australia

There have been a number of sociological and demographic data studies on intermarriage in Australia which suggest that intermarriage has played and will continue to play a crucial role in shaping Australia’s identity. Charles Price’s research on ethnicity in Australia highlighted the extent to which intermixture

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31 Birrell and Healy, “Out-marriage and the Survival of Ethnic Communities”, 37-46. They suggest that intermarriage occurs where prejudice between different groups is minimal, or at least is not insurmountable.
has existed since 1788.\textsuperscript{34} Price notes that the greatest change in Australia’s make-up has been the increase in those who describe themselves as being a mixture of Anglo-Celtic and non-Anglo-Celtic heritage (thirty percent of the population). Price suggests that this grouping will be a key element in determining Australia’s future.

Some studies have highlighted the high rate of intermarriage in Australia’s indigenous population despite Australia’s history of cultural division.\textsuperscript{35} Birrell argues that intermarriage does not necessarily lead to a weakening of indigenous identity if identity is conceived of as a social rather than biological process.\textsuperscript{36} It has been argued that location, education and income levels are the main determinants affecting the rate of intermarriage rather than race.\textsuperscript{37}

Cahill was one of the first Australian researchers to examine intermarriage. His 1990 study investigated the experience of Filipino women married to Australian, Japanese and Swiss men. Cahill conducted over two hundred and fifty individual interviews and notes that intermarriage whenever it occurs is usually an emotive topic.\textsuperscript{38} Ethnic leaders tend to vary from condemnation to ambivalence, or adopt a position of resigned acceptance. Christian leaders,

\textsuperscript{34} C. A. Price, “Australian Population: Ethnic Origins”, \textit{People and Place} 7, no. 4 (1999), 12-16. Price has estimated that 60% of Australians are ethnically mixed and 20% have at least four distinct ancestries. See also Siew-ean Khoo and Charles A. Price, \textit{Understanding Australia’s Ethnic Composition} (Canberra: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 1996).


\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. In 1998 65% of indigenous births registered had mixed parentage. The high rate of intermarriage suggests a diminishing of social distance though other indicators suggest the gulf between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians remains.


\textsuperscript{38} D. Cahill, \textit{Intermarriages in International Contexts: A Study of Filipino Women Married to Australian, Japanese and Swiss Men} (Quezon City: Scalabrini Research Centre, 1990), 1.
sometimes citing Biblical reasons, perceive interfaith marriage negatively, as leading to an inevitable loss of faith and dwindling commitment.\(^{39}\)

A historical survey of intercultural marriage in Australia from early European settlement until contemporary times is provided by June Owen who draws from her own experience as well as interviews with one hundred mixed-race couples. She includes many positive stories of mixed race couples who have strong and lasting relationships and suggests that many interracial couples could be considered at the forefront of the struggle for a more tolerant and open Australian society.\(^{40}\) On a positive note, the former uneasiness and hostility towards interracial marriages has to a large extent subsided. The focus of Owen’s study was intercultural rather than interfaith marriages and only a few of her interviews were conducted with those who married across religious differences. Owen considers that a shared religious faith is a source of strength for interracial couples and leads to more consistent religious training for the next generation.\(^ {41}\)

### 5.4.3 An increase in intermarriage across the generations

A sense of belonging and feeling ‘Australian’ tends to increase over time and especially over the generations. In a study of Australians’ ancestries based on the 2001 census data relating to people’s ancestry, Siew-Ean Khoo and David Lucas from the Australian Centre for Population Research at the Australian National University found that the proportion of people marrying outside their ancestry group increases over the generations.\(^ {42}\) For those of Greek ancestry for example less than twenty percent of the first generation had spouses of a

\(^{39}\) Ibid, 3,139. Some emphasise problems in intercultural and interfaith marriage. Cahill calls this the ‘stunting’ approach. Others affirm the positive aspects of such marriages including the intercultural linkages and transcultural ties that are formed. Cahill refers to this view as the ‘liberating approach’.


\(^{41}\) Ibid, 108. Owen’s thinks interracial marriages are more likely to survive if the couple have a shared faith.

different ancestry. The proportion increased to over thirty-five percent in the second generation and to seventy percent in the third generation. In another study Khoo explores how Indian and Chinese groups reflect a similar pattern. The second generation may continue to have strong in-marriage but there is a pronounced trend towards out-marriage in the third-plus generation.\footnote{Siew-Ean Khoo, “Interrmarriage in Australia: Patterns of Ancestry, Gender and Generation”, \textit{People and Place} 12, no. 2 (2004).} Although intermarriage rates varied considerably across different groups, overall the figures for intercultural marriage are rising rapidly. Birrell and Healy’s study looked at second generation trends in marrying within or outside their community as an indicator of the diminishing hold of first generation communities on the marriage choices of the next generation. Factors such as community isolation, limited upward mobility, sharp cultural differences, and a desire to maintain religious identity may contribute to lower levels of out-marriage but higher prospects for community maintenance across successive generations.\footnote{Birrell and Healy, “Outmarriage and the Survival of Ethnic Communities in Australia”, 37-46. There is a high degree of interaction across ethnic differences and a substantial degree of educational and employment mobility in Australian society. Maintaining an identity through close association with one’s religious or ethnic community may provide a safe haven in the face of hostility or prejudice. At the same time, whether the host community is welcoming or not some communities may strongly discourage out-marriage.} An increase in intermarriage across the generations has been reported in Australian studies of various ethnic groups and Khoo, Birrell and Heard’s analysis of the 2006 census figures.\footnote{See Siew-Ean Khoo, Bob Birrell, and Genevieve Heard, “Interrmarriage by birthplace and ancestry in Australia”, \textit{People and Place} 17, no. 1 (2009), 15–28. See also Robyn Hartley’s volume, \textit{Families and Cultural Diversity in Australia}. The Chinese, Filipino and Lebanese ethnic studies highlight intermarriage as an important factor.}

\subsection*{5.4.4 Religion as a crucial factor}

Anthony Gariano’s 1994 study focused specifically on religious adherence statistical data obtained from the 1991 census. He noted that only a small proportion of those identifying with the Greek Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish faiths were involved in de facto relationships suggesting that these communities were maintaining their traditions which reinforced religious morality though there was also evidence that attitudes within religious sub-groups were shifting.
over time. Gariano and Rutland contrasted the rate of outmarriage for different religious communities for the 1996 and 1991 census figures. Intermarriage between different Christian streams had become more pronounced suggesting that old hostilities to intermarriage across Christian denominations had significantly weakened but there had been a slight decrease in outmarriage for Muslims (and Hindus). 7.4% of Muslim men and 4.3% of Muslim women were in interfaith marriages according to the 1996 census.

Gariano and Rutland’s study indicated that factors affecting intermarriage are complex. The researchers suggested that minority communities may discourage interreligious marriage in efforts to ensure religious maintenance and this seemed to be the case for the Australian Muslim community which had relatively low rates of outmarriage.

Gariano and Rutland were prompted to ask whether low rates of intermarriage in the Muslim community was an indicator of barriers preventing close social interaction. They suggest that multiculturalism has made significant inroads in respect to the dominant Christian denominations but marrying outside one’s own religious community continued to remain low for some communities. In Gariano and Rutland’s study the figures appear high for Christian out-marriage though most marry other Christians.

The 2006 census revealed that interchurch marriages had further increased although by far the majority of Christians married Christians from other

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46 Anthony Gariano, “Religious Identification and Marriage”, in People and Place 2, no. 1 (1994), 4-47.
48 Ibid. In their study of the 1996 census the rate of intermarriage for Jews was 14.1%, Buddhists 13.2 %, Greek and other Orthodox 14%, and for Muslims 7.4 % (of 39, 024) for males and 4.3% (of 37,756) for females.
49 Ibid. For example, Jews tended to intermarry further away from the Melbourne hub and this was also the case for Greek Orthodox living further away from their community.
50 Ibid. The figures for ‘out-marriage’ for Anglicans in the 1996 census was 36.2%, Catholics 33.6%; and other Protestants (32.6%) with religious out-marriage being significantly higher for women than for men from Christian denominations. The 2001 census showed that 60% of Catholics married other Catholics but overall 91% of Catholics married other Christians, similar to the Anglican figures. 54% of Uniting Church members were married to other members of the Uniting Church but overall 93% were married to other Christians.
denominations rather than entering an interreligious marriage.\footnote{See Heard, Khoo, and Birrell, “Interrace in Australia: Patterns of birthplace, ancestry, religion and indigenous status”, Centre for Population and Urban Research, Melbourne, July 2009. The Monash researchers report that 37% of Catholics, 41% Anglican and 43% Uniting Church married outside their denomination.} The 2006 Census figures for Muslim intermarriage will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

Long term prospects of maintaining a separate ethnic community are likely to prove more difficult when the rate of out-marriage is high.\footnote{Birrell and Healy, “Outmarriage and the Survival of Ethnic Communities in Australia”, 45.} Birrell and Healy note that high rates of in-marriage for those of Middle Eastern heritage have coincided with a significant inflow of male and female spouses from Lebanon and Turkey. They conclude that communities which retain close links with the ‘homeland’ and which are continually receiving new immigrants are more likely to be able to maintain and strengthen their ethnic identity.

### 5.4.5 Living with a double heritage

Australian researcher Greg Brown has drawn attention to the effect of globalisation and technology, the use of the internet, and relatively cheap long distance travel, which has meant that immigrant communities are able to maintain closer contact with their homelands than was feasible in the past.\footnote{Greg Brown, “The Diasporic Challenge to identity: Insights from the Australian–Croat experience”, \textit{People and Place} 8 no. 3 (2000), 68} Where ‘diasporic’ communities experience significant social distance from mainstream Australian society this may become more pronounced and ethno-national identities may be re-asserted.

Using the example of Australian–Croats, Brown observes how a migrant community connects not only with their host country but also with places of origin, and national and ethnic kin in other countries. This may be manifested in the way in which an immigrant community participates in homeland politics and reflects the presence of ‘multiple loyalties’. Brown suggests that whilst divided loyalties may weaken Australian’s national integration and occasionally
lead to conflict, in most cases dual loyalties complement one another. Brown’s positive assessment of the phenomenon of dual ethno-national heritage is relevant for the study of those who grow up in families with a dual religious heritage which enhances as well as complicates identity.

5.4.6 Levels of religiosity and intermarriage

Some studies suggest that higher levels of religiosity may be linked to lower rates of out-marriage. Meng and Gregory’s study examined how intermarriage may provide a way for immigrants to acquire host country customs, language and skills, and obtain contacts and connections which improve their knowledge of the local labour market. They found that for individuals arriving in Australia at nineteen years of age or below, the intermarriage rate was significantly higher. The higher incidence of interfaith marriages amongst young people in Australia may be due to high levels of tolerance in society or be a sign of the decline in the importance of religion in social life and reflect an increase in nominalism and secularism.

Meng and Gregory suggest that individuals entering an interreligious marriage need to have the ability to adapt to a different cultural and religious system of beliefs. They proposed that individuals with higher levels of religiosity are more likely to search for a partner with religious compatibility.54

Having a religious commitment is listed as one of the six determinants of marital stability in one Australian study.55 Other studies indicate that interfaith marriages may be less stable than marriages between people of the same

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55 Commonwealth of Australia, *To Have and to Hold: Strategies to Strengthen Marriage and Relationships*. Tabled in the House of Representatives on 22 June 1998, 86. Other factors which assisted marital stability were effective communication and conflict resolution; realistic expectations of marriage; equitable division of labour in the family; fertility; and length of marital duration. Growing up in a home where parents were religious tended to also be an indicator of marital stability.
A shared religious orientation is seen as a strength that contributes to an enduring marriage. Some studies suggest that parents are more likely to pass on religious affiliation if they have a common religious background.

Accessing religiosity and spirituality is not a simple matter. PREPARE-ENRICH which had developed materials used for marriage counselling, has done research in the area of ‘spiritual compatibility’. A UK study by Larson and Olson drew on a sample of 24,671 married couples who took the ENRICH Inventory in the year 2000-2001. Larson and Olson use the term ‘spiritual compatibility’ for the consensus, satisfaction and agreement couples reach about how they express spiritual values and beliefs. Larson and Olson’s study does not close-off the possibility of interfaith couples discovering spiritual compatibility but they suggest that religious differences can become a source of tension and interfaith marriages require high levels of tolerance and understanding in negotiating aspects of their shared life, such as rituals, relating to relatives, arranging holidays, and the all important question about the religious upbringing of children. The extent to which couples develop shared spiritual practices, have shared spiritual experiences, and perceive God to be active in their marital relationship contributes to marital adjustment and satisfaction. This point made by Larson and Olson has particular relevance for this inquiry.

56 See for example, Steven. L. Nock, Sociology of the Family, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1992); See also L. C Robinson and P.W. Blanton, “Marital strengths in enduring marriages”, Family Relations 42 (1993), 38-45. A shared religious faith was a prominent feature for many couples in their study.
59 Peter J. Larson and David H. Olson, “Spiritual Beliefs and Marriage: A National Survey Based on ENRICH”. The sample was split into three distinct groups based on their PCA or ‘Positive Couple Agreement’ scores and ‘Spiritual Beliefs content scale’ (of the ENRICH Inventory). An association between high spiritual agreement and the level of closeness a couple experienced was observed. https://www.prepare-enrich.com/pe_main_site_content/pdf/research/beliefsandmarriage.pdf (February 20, 2009)
5.5 INTERCHURCH MARRIAGES

It was only a few decades ago that there was strong opposition to marriages between Catholics and Protestants in Australia. A number of important studies on interchurch marriages were undertaken including interchurch consultations to work out practical guidelines for interchurch marriages.61 A Catholic–Uniting Church in Australia document in 1999 expressed the new understandings that had emerged in Catholic-Protestant relations:

Their presence in our churches needs to be recognised and celebrated. They are living ecumenism on behalf of the churches in the most significant manner possible, often without sufficient recognition and support… The pain of separation that we all experience is particularly focused in the intimacy of their lives, and we need to do everything possible to assist them by promoting ever closer unity in Christ.62

The 11th International Conference of Interchurch Families and Christian Unity met in Newcastle on the theme, ‘Sharing our Dream Downunder’ in 2005.63 Previously the Association of Interchurch Families had produced the important document ‘Interchurch families and Christian Unity’.64 At the Newcastle gathering Gerard Kelly from the Catholic Institute of Sydney spoke of the important initiatives that had taken place in recent years. Kelly highlighted the fact that every marriage represents the meeting of two different people and suggested that the starting point of any marriage should be an

61 See William Tabbernee, Marriage in Australian Churches (Melbourne: Victorian Council of Churches, 1982). Tabbernee provided a biblical survey of marriage followed by an overview of different theologies of marriage in the eleven main churches in Australia in an effort to build greater ecumenical understanding on the subject of marriage and interchurch unions.

62 Report of the National Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Uniting Church in Australia, Interchurch Marriages: Their Ecumenical Challenge and Significance for the Churches (Collingwood: Uniting Church Press and St Pauls, 1999), 90. The report recommended joint pre-marriage counselling to give couples the opportunity to understand the similarities and differences in the way the two churches perceive and practise the Christian faith. The on-going pastoral care and encouragement of couples was highlighted. Guidelines were provided for pastors preparing the wedding ceremony of Catholic-Protestant couples.


acknowledgement of diversity with the vision of demonstrating the unity of God. Interchurch families were now viewed as pioneers in the search for Christian unity and there had been very significant attitudinal changes. Delegates’ testimonies highlighted the need for further work as painful exclusion continued to occur and in some places guidelines were not always being practiced nor were interchurch marriages being celebrated in a way that was inclusive and honouring of both traditions. As noted in Chapter Two the experience of Catholics and Protestant intermarriage may provide an important comparative framework for discussing Muslim–Christian intermarriage.

### 5.6 MUSLIM INTERMARRIAGE

In the 2001 census 91.9 percent of Muslims were married to other Muslims. 5.4 percent of Muslims were married to Christians, up slightly from the 1996 census however the proportion with spouses from other religions decreased during that time. The 2006 census revealed that 93.8 percent of Muslims were married to other Muslims. If one takes the total number of Muslim relationships (married and de facto) into account 92.46 percent were married or living with a Muslim partner. Muslim intermarriage therefore shows a tendency to remain steady or slightly decline as Muslim communities become more established in Australia.

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65 Gerard Kelly, keynote address presented at “Sharing Our Dream Downunder”, Newcastle, 18-21 Aug. 2005. Kelly drew on the idea of covenant relationship for marriage which entails multiple acts of forgiveness, reconciliation and re-commitment. ‘Covenant’ sets out core values in a relationship, including love, faithfulness, mercy and justice, and a commitment made before God, with God as its witness.


5.7 PENNY AND KHOO'S STUDY ON INTERMARRIAGE

Two Australian social researchers Siew-Ean Khoo and Janet Penny produced a significant study on intermarriage in 1996. Their research drew on data from the 1991 census figures showing that sixteen percent of Australian families were composed of overseas-born and Australian-born partners. They highlight intermarriage as an increasingly important factor in Australian family life. Case studies of forty-five marriages (in which one partner is an ‘established resident’ and the other is a migrant from one of six communities), provides a snapshot of the changing nature of Australian families. 68

According to Khoo and Penny mixed marriage can be an indicator of levels of tolerance and acceptance of diversity within a society. Their research confirms this view. They also note that some communities have a lower propensity to intermarry. 69 One of the surprises Khoo and Penny found in their study was the number of the Australian partners who adopted aspects of the cultural world of their partner to quite a significant extent. 70 Migrant partners made similar concessions in taking on the orientation of their Australian partner. 71

With assimilation to the culture of the Australian partner at one end of a continuum and adoption of the other’s culture at the other Khoo and Penny made some interesting discoveries. Whilst some families were firmly fixed at one end or the other most were in the middle reflecting cultural compromise and syncretism. These intercultural families adopted an identity based on neither partner’s background but chose aspects of both that suited them as a

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69 Ibid, 187. Khoo and Penny suggest that the increasing incidence of mixed marriages is an indicator of change within cultural subgroups as the first generation guardians of the traditions lose their hold on the second generation. They also note the existence of strong taboos in some communities. Italian men for example were expected marry within their own community. This was also the case for Lebanese and Chinese–Australian women.

70 Ibid. There were Anglo–Australian partners who learnt the language of their partner and were actively involved in their partner’s ethnic community. In a few cases the Anglo–Australian partner converted to the faith of their partner.

71 Few of the families involved in the study were bilingual and the majority deliberately chose Anglo–Australian names for their children for example.
family. Penny and Khoo describe this ability to live with two cultures as a ‘liberating solution’. The ability to recognise and draw on both traditions led to a greater sense of contentment and security for both partners and for their children.

In Khoo and Penny’s study half of the case studies involved interreligious marriages but three-quarters of those interviewed were “avowedly or essentially secular”. Of those who did cross religious boundaries few were deeply committed to their faith and most saw themselves as being in primarily secular partnerships. Penny and Khoo’s study does not go into detail about the religious aspects of the marriages in their sample groups but they observed that religiously practising respondents did not appear to find that intermarriage lessened their cultural and religious identity. Having a common or a similar perspective on life was helpful but religious differences were not considered a direct cause for difficulties in marriage. In some cases respondents encountered opposition from one or both sets of parents but in almost all cases their families still attended the wedding and over time these concerns tended to subside. In the view of Khoo and Penny, intermarriage in Australia appears to have generally been well received.

The framework Khoo and Penny’s study has similarities and differences with this inquiry. In contrast with Penny and Khoo, this inquiry has a greater number of respondents actively practising their faith and religious issues, far from being peripheral, are central. The lens used by Khoo and Penny was Australia’s evolution from being a largely Anglo-Celtic country to one which is ethnically mixed and the experience of cultural interaction. They explore how immigrants

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72 Ibid, 215-210. For example, children were often raised with behaviour of the Australian-born parent (such as valuing self-reliance) combined with selected values from the non-Australian partner such as respect for elderly members of the family, closeness and loyalty to the family.
73 Ibid, xiv. Penny and Khoo suggest that these intercultural families freed themselves from limitations of cultural expectations of either cultural heritage. Just over half the families in Khoo and Penny’s study appeared to be happy. Some families succeeded better than others in achieving a ‘symmetry of integration’.
74 Ibid, 195, 202. A few respondents (mainly Indonesian and Lebanese) were practising Christians or Muslims.
75 Ibid, 195.
integrate with the host society. The present study explores religious self-understandings of those in interfaith marriages, how faith undergoes change, how faith is shared and passed on, and how couples negotiate areas of difference while retaining their religious convictions. According to Khoo and Penny intermarriage both complicates and enriches family life. In their view intermarriage does not appear to necessarily lead to a loss of religious and cultural identity. This is an important point of reference for the present inquiry. The notion of ‘symmetry of integration’ whereby couples draw from the heritage of both partners and develop new patterns of family life has direct relevance for the present inquiry.

5.8 ATA’S STUDY OF MUSLIM–CHRISTIAN INTERMARRIAGE

Abe Ata’s research represents the first major study conducted in Australia that specifically focuses on Muslim–Christian intermarriage. Ata himself noted the limited availability of material on the subject and the significant hurdles faced when embarking on a study of this kind. Community leaders were reticent in providing information and the absence of national marriage registries and data bases, and restrictions on access to information, contributed to the difficulty he found in locating a sample group of respondents.

Ata surveyed the views of one hundred and six respondents in Melbourne. His study focused on religious affiliation as the principal characteristic of intermarriage with ethnicity, birth-place, race and status falling outside of his frame of reference. Ata was particularly interested in examining the complicating and enriching elements in the family dynamics of interfaith

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77 Ibid, 13.
78 Ibid, 58. There were 60% male and 40% female. One third of respondents were born in Australia; 33% of those had religious ceremonies, 47% chose a civil celebrant; 20% were ‘other’ (with a number being in de facto relationships).
households. He suggested that couples involved in interfaith marriages lived in a setting of ‘permanent dialogue’.  

Ata’s study does not examine the particular religious changes and adjustments interfaith couples make. In this respect the scope of Ata’s study is significantly different from the present inquiry. Most of the respondents in Ata’s study were not actively practising their faith and tended to be secular in approach. He thinks that if partners display tolerant attitudes they are more likely to have a harmonious relationship whereas stronger religious behaviour (indicated by strictly following diet or daily activities) is more likely to create tensions.

In Ata’s view Muslim identity in Australia in general relates more to ancestry and group belonging than religious convictions. Ata considers it likely that religious identity will be less important for those who have been born in Australia of immigrant parents than for their parents.

In contrast to Ata’s position some studies have suggested that an estimated 30-40 percent of Muslims in Australia actively practise their faith and have pointed to some positive signs of religious maintenance amongst Muslim communities. Further research is required to examine how particular Muslim communities in Australia are communicating Islam to the next generation.

Ata found that whilst some Australian interfaith couples encountered significant difficulties, including a lack of communal support, they faced fewer hurdles and

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79 Ibid, 15.  
80 Ibid, 19.  
81 Ibid, 14, 42. In his sample Ata noted the couple’s orientation towards mobility including signs that couples adopted western style clothing and mannerisms.  
82 Ibid. Ata suggests that individuals may seek refuge away from their traditional religious culture through identification with secular mainstream society. He is also of the view that many Muslims born in Australia tend to have nominal or only symbolic self-identification as Muslims. He expresses the same view in his West Bank research. See Abe Ata, Christian and Muslim Intermarriage: A West Bank Study (Ringwood: David Lovell & The International Centre of Bethlehem, 2000), 18. There Ata refers to the work of Hourani (1953) which described going to the mosque as less about personal belief and more about confirmation of a distinct set of principles, lifestyle, language and social outlook.  
83 Ibid, 17. Ata speaks of only a small percentage of second generation migrant Muslims being active in their religious community but this area to date is in fact under-researched.  
84 See Saeed, Islam in Australia, 72.
experienced fewer tensions in comparison to his earlier West Bank study.\textsuperscript{85} A number of the couples in his study were successfully negotiating differences, achieving compromise and selectively adopting the most suitable values from both traditions.\textsuperscript{86} Ata concludes by suggesting that such couples offer a new ‘paradigm of partnership’. He expects that whilst a dramatic increase in intermarriage is unlikely to occur in Australia, ethnic, racial and national barriers will become less important in the future.\textsuperscript{87}

Subsequently Ata wrote an article with Glen Morrison which develops a theological appraisal of intermarriage. Describing those in interfaith marriages as ‘new wine’, Ata and Morrison suggest that such marriages are full of promise and signal hope for a divided world that needs to learn about unity-within-difference. Ata and Morrison suggest some Muslims and Christians have a God-given vocation to embark on the crossing journey that is represented by their interfaith marriage.\textsuperscript{88}

5.9 INTERRELIGIOUS MARRIAGES: AN AREA FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In Religion, Cultural Diversity and Safeguarding Australia researchers Cahill, Bouma, Dellal and Leahy note that the decision to marry outside one’s own group can create considerable turmoil for those involved and their families. Intermarriage represents a ‘rupture of boundaries’ and can be a barometer of social cohesion. Intermarriages reveal people’s willingness to cross boundaries, of religion, language and culture.\textsuperscript{89} In various national consultations the researchers observed that religious leaders experienced a degree of discomfort

\textsuperscript{85} A much higher number of couples in Ata’s Australian sample felt that a mixed marriage was ‘better’ than a mono-religious marriage (41%) and intermixing in Australia did not appear to carry the same degree of stress as was reported in his earlier study.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid, 97.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid, 101.
\textsuperscript{89} Cahill [et al], *Religion, Cultural Diversity and Safeguarding Australia*, 95.
when discussing this ‘vexed and difficult issue’. The religious leaders they consulted expressed a range of attitudes from acceptance to condemnation, with others responding with antipathy or genuine ambivalence. A number expressed the fear that interreligious marriage leads to a loss of faith and declining participation in their religious community. This led the research team to conclude that at the present time couples receive minimal assistance from their faith communities and tend to be left to ‘fend for themselves’. Although the incidence of interreligious marriage in Australia is relatively low the researchers predict that it is likely to become more prevalent in the future. They note that interreligious marriage is a largely unexplored area of research and recommend that further investigation be undertaken.

5.10 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has provided an overview of some important social and demographic studies on intermarriage in Australia which point to the way in which Australian families are becoming increasingly diverse. There is a growing body of research on the phenomenon of intermarriage in Australia. These have tended to highlight the intercultural nature of Australian society. Whilst research on multiculturalism is extensive, studies on religious settlement in religiously diverse Australia, remains an undeveloped area.

The work of a number of social researchers, in particular Penny and Khoo, and Ata have raised a number of important considerations that are relevant to this inquiry. Detailed research on interfaith families and the various adaptations and adjustments couples and their children make is still required. Interfaith couples and their families are now part of the rich mosaic of Australian life. This inquiry seeks to contribute to the field of research on the diverse nature of family life in Australia giving particular attention to the experience of

90 Ibid, 95.
91 Ibid, 95.
92 See Bouma, Many Religions, All Australian, 98-100.
93 Hartley, Families and cultural diversity in Australia, 18.
religiously practicing Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages. How they live out their faith, negotiate their relationships and build interfaith families provides a window to observe how Australia’s national culture is not fixed but is ‘in the process of becoming’.94

CHAPTER 6
NARRATIVE INQUIRY AS A METHOD FOR MISSIOLOGICAL STUDY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter One observed a heightened ‘turn to the narrative’ in recent decades within theology and noted some of the benefits of a narrative approach in social research. Integral to this inquiry is the researcher’s appreciation of people’s stories as a source for knowing and understanding the world. The adaptability of narrative inquiry for different disciplines and for cross-disciplinary research and its applicability to practical theology made it an attractive method to adopt for this missiological inquiry. This chapter begins with a discussion on the nature of narrative, the benefits and application of narrative inquiry and the challenges involved in using this method of research. The second part of the chapter explains the actual processes that were utilised in the gathering and analysis of data.

6.1.1 Narrative and narrative inquiry: its benefits and application

There is considerable debate about how to define ‘narrative’ and a range of ideas from the social sciences and from theology has informed the understanding of narrative that is used in this study. Atkinson and Delamont advocate for a broad and inclusive perspective that avoids being too prescriptive. They define narrative as “culturally appropriate ways in which personal experience is shared, knowledge is transmitted, memories are enacted, and testimony is constructed”.¹ Narrative is a primary means by which past events are understood, values are transmitted and human life and actions are rendered meaningful. Through narrative human beings discover how the world

works and their role within it. In the broadest sense, life itself has the character of story, and human experience is brought to expression in and through narrative. From this perspective, narrative is a pervasive aspect of human identity which is embedded in social encounters, and is present in all cultures, expressed through culturally shared conventions.

According to feminist theologian Elizabeth Johnson, the transformative power of narrative is grasped through the interrelationship between the story, the storyteller, and the listeners. Authority and authenticity come from speaking about lived experience. As a method of research narrative inquiry seeks to understand how human beings make sense of the world in which they live and how people’s lived experience is situated in time and place. Narrative inquiry seeks to probe the human-centred nature of learning with all its complexities and subtleties and in a holistic way transcend the traditional discipline divides. One of the benefits of using narrative inquiry is the way in which it can be applied to a cross-discipline study. Narrative methods have been used in practical and contextual theology. For the purpose of this study the researcher seeks to apply narrative inquiry to the field of missiology.

6.2 NARRATIVE INQUIRY: SOME CHALLENGES

6.2.1 Representation

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In narrative inquiry the researcher becomes an interpreter of respondents’ stories. Narrative inquiry is a ‘mixed blessing’ according to Atkinson and Delamont because narrative accounts cannot simply be taken at face value, and they are not always consistent and coherent. Since the mid 1980s questions have been raised within qualitative research concerning how one ethically goes about representing the lived experience of others. In a post-colonial context there has been a more critical look at the representations of early social anthropologies and ethnographies which showed the influence of bias in their conceptions. This has led to a ‘crisis of representation’ – a general questioning of the ability of researchers to fairly represent others. In the area of missiology and mission history these questions have also clearly come into focus.

Representing and interpreting the lives of others needs to be done responsibly and with great care. Another way of responding to the crisis of representation has been to give particular attention to those whose voices have been muted. Liberation theologians share this perspective and feminist methodologies emphasise the importance of allowing the voices of those who have been marginalised to be heard. Within social research it has been a contested issue whether the researcher should aim at maintaining a neutral position or be an advocate for social and political liberation. This inquiry is sympathetic to the advocacy approach but recognises that it can also be problematic if a partisan

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8 Atkinson and Delamont, eds., *Narrative Methods*, xxxiv. What is recounted may not fully represent the reported events or the teller’s private experience. Narrative involves ‘speech acts’ that have rhetorical and persuasive properties and construct a particular version of events.
11 See Atkinson and Delamont, *Narrative Methods*, xxv. Atkinson and Delamont describe this as adopting a ‘redemptive view of oral history’.
13 Denzin and Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative*, 575. Denzin and Lincoln argue that social research should begin with the perspectives of individuals and groups who have been oppressed by ideological, economic or political forces.
approach is adopted. On a subject as sensitive and politically divisive as interfaith marriage this issue became particularly pronounced.

Human experience is fluid and changing and a person’s life story is never finished. Identity is therefore constantly being reconstructed. For this reason narrative inquiry needs to be alert to the danger of what Riessman calls “narrative smoothing”, a tendency to ignore contradictory evidence or reduce what was originally nuanced, in efforts to create simplified categories.

Contemporary social research has developed a heightened awareness of the problems, politics and ethics of doing empirical inquiry and the importance of recognising the otherness of the culturally differentiated ‘Other’. One way through the impasse is through acknowledging that there is no one way of seeing, hearing, or representing the world of others that is universally valid or correct. Neither is there value-free knowledge. Qualitative researchers underline the importance of being self-reflective or reflective as a researcher. They also highlight the partial and limited nature of interpretative findings.

15 This inquiry is based on the view that the experience and testimony of Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages is valuable for missiological study but this inquiry did not set out to either advocate for or to discourage interfaith marriage itself.
16 See Clandinin and Connelly, Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research, 147. Clandinin and Connelly make the important observation that all people have ‘multiple plotlines’.
19 See J. Van Maanen, Tales of the field (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 35. This view is also promoted by social philosophies of hermeneutics and in postmodernism.
20 Hans-Georg Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics. Translated and edited by David E. Linge (Berkley: University of California Press, 1977). Over against the dominant idea of the objectivity of knowledge Gadamar develops a conception that takes the interpreter’s rootedness in temporal realities into account in a central way. ‘Hermeneutics’ applies when the interpreter encounters meanings that are not immediately understandable but require interpretative effort. Through dialogical engagement old and new understandings are fused and different horizons bridged.
6.2.2 Reflexivity

‘Reflexivity’ is the capacity of the researcher to reflect on their own actions and values during research and is considered an essential aspect of qualitative research practice. The researcher using narrative inquiry needs to be aware that as listener, they hear stories from a particular perspective.21 Narratives convey what is of value from the point of view of the teller and are constructed ways of perceiving the world.22 They represent rather than mirror reality. Narratives are a distillation of experience that has been interpreted and creatively authored.23 Consequently, a ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ is required recognising that there is inevitably a gap between the experience as lived, and the telling of it. Human beings can be forgetful, sometimes lie, become confused, exaggerate, hide or repress meanings.24 A similar suspicion towards oneself as researcher is also necessary as investigators do not have direct access to the lived experience of others. Through interviews, analysis of transcripts, and interpretation, the researcher’s own perspectives are brought into the mix and some degree of subjectivity is unavoidable.

The participatory role of researchers in qualitative research means that they are not detached observers standing outside and above the text but come with their own pre-understandings. This is not necessarily an impediment. The identity of the researcher, whilst bringing complexities and ambiguities, may also provide a window into the experience of the participant.25 ‘Reflexivity’ on the part of the researcher requires that there be an effort to strike a balance between detachment and subjectivity so as to be able to hear the voice of participants as well as the voice of the researcher within the research text.

21 Riessman, Beyond Reductionism, 45.
24 Polkinghorne, Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences, 154.
25 Riessman, “Doing Justice: Positioning the Interpreter in Narrative Work”, 193-214. Riessman points to the impact of the researcher’s understanding of the world (including their gender, race, class, beliefs and ethnicity) on the way they do research.
6.2.3 Reliability, validity, credibility and authenticity of narrative research data

Qualitative researchers tend to challenge traditional empirical notions of truth but share a set of interpretive research practices. Various criteria have been developed to judge the findings of social research drawing attention to such issues as reliability, authenticity, credibility, validity and verification in research practices. Questions that have been considered important in qualitative research include: How can one establish confidence in the ‘truth’ of the findings? Are there patterns or themes emerging? What is the applicability of findings?\(^\text{26}\)

Literature in the field of narrative inquiry has raised important areas for consideration that have been incorporated into the research design of this study. For this inquiry ‘reliability’ refers to the care taken in the process of gathering stories, writing up of transcripts of interviews and handling the stories.\(^\text{27}\) ‘Validity’, drawing from the work of social researcher Clive Seale, is to be judged in terms of how the research demonstrates knowledge of current social issues or social theories, and accurately understands and reports participants' viewpoints, thoughts, intentions, and experiences. Seale suggests that originality and credibility of findings provide other ways of judging the validity of social research.\(^\text{28}\) ‘Verification’ is strengthened through checking new information against previous findings and drawing from a range of sources and different methods of gathering data. ‘Authenticity’ refers to the way data is presented, and the extent to which findings stimulate new understanding or provide a catalyst for action.\(^\text{29}\)


\(^{27}\) This draws on the work of Polkinghorne and other narrative researchers who suggest that reliability of qualitative research data refers to the trustworthiness of transcripts rather than consistency with which the research project delivers results that can be replicated.


\(^{29}\) Clandinin and Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*, 85. The work of educationalist John Dewey is helpful in providing criteria for judging the value and validity of research. Clandinin and Connelly look for that which is enhances personal and
6.2.4 Doing research interculturally

Chicago based theologian Rivera-Rodrigues looks towards the transformation of theology through a deeper engagement in intercultural realities. For this to happen, “new inter-discursive hermeneutical habits” are needed.\(^{30}\) Taking time to appreciate and understand others and the cultural and historical locations from which we come is essential.\(^{31}\) ‘Thinking in solidarity’ is also important and this involves critically questioning cultural and religious understandings which are oppressive. Being able to critically interpret one’s own perspectives and cultural framework is an additional ‘habit’ that is essential when doing intercultural research.

The intercultural nature of this study required the researcher to be able to move across the different linguistic and cultural settings of Indonesia and Australia.\(^{32}\) Knowledge of Indonesian language and familiarity with both social contexts was therefore important.

Narrative inquiry relies on the researcher’s ability to understand and respond to personal and environmental cues, and to be attentive to linguistic expressions, modes of perception, and social and cultural conventions. They therefore need to hone their hermeneutical understanding when doing research in a cultural context which is not their own.

6.3 THE METHOD ADOPTED FOR GATHERING DATA

This section provides an overview of the three-fold process that guided the empirical part of this study. These include: the interview process; transcribing social growth. Whilst there is no one true version of events narrated, not all interpretations are equally valid.


\(^{31}\) Ibid, 68.

\(^{32}\) Intercultural refers to mutually reciprocal relationships among and between cultures; cross-cultural is the crossing between two or more different cultures.
interviews and analysis of data. Various considerations and questions arose at each stage of the research process. Before embarking on a more detailed description of the three-fold process, the ethical guidelines which underpin this inquiry and questions about the relationship between researcher and participants are discussed.

6.3.1 The Interview Process

Interviews took place with seventy four respondents representing twenty-four couples in Indonesia and fifteen couples in Australia. Interviews with ten adult children and consultations with a number of religious and community leaders provided additional information that helped provide a richer and fuller picture of the issues faced by Muslim–Christian couples and their families.

6.3.2 Ethical issues

Permission to conduct interviews was granted from Charles Sturt University Ethics in Human Research Committee after it received assurances that stringent ethical requirements would be followed at every stage of the research. Key ethical principles included: preserving anonymity, ensuring confidentiality, and guaranteeing data protection.33

Once respondents were identified and had agreed to participate in the research they were provided with an Information Sheet informing them of the nature of the inquiry and its purpose, and the care that would be taken in respect to material of a confidential nature.34 The contact details of the researcher and the University were provided and there were clauses that told them they could withdraw from the study at any time if they wished. Participants willing to be involved in the research signed an Informed Consent Form giving permission

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34 Assurances were given that tapes and transcripts would be kept securely and measures would be put in place to safely dispose of confidential records five years after completion of the study.
for the information they shared to be used for the purposes of this study. Pseudonyms were used in place of participants’ real names and any identifying details were removed or altered from the transcript of interviews.

The research process in its entirety represents an ethical endeavour. Broader ethical issues included the researcher’s conduct in the setting up and conducting of interviews; the subsequent handling and analysis of data; and in the interpretation and reporting of data to ensure that the views of respondents were fairly represented. Sensitivity to ethical issues was a serious consideration throughout the research process.

6.3.3 The Relationship between the researcher and participants

One of the advantages of indepth interviewing as a research method is that conversation gives access to direct lived experience. In narrative inquiry the emphasis is on the accounts and observations of respondents, but the process requires a collaborative relationship between the researcher and participants. Negotiating relationships is therefore an important aspect of successful qualitative research. Feminist approaches to research have stressed the importance of establishing relationships in which there is trust and reciprocity, and which avoid deception or manipulation. Empathy and authenticity on the part of the researcher is more likely to elicit honesty, confidence and openness from the respondent.

This inquiry required a good degree of rapport and trust between researcher and participants. Topics discussed were of a sensitive nature, relating to people’s personal lives and intimate relationships, and their religious convictions. There was always potential for a degree of emotion to be expressed in interviews.

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35 See Appendix 1 for a copy of the Information Sheet and the Participant Consent Form.
37 Connelly and Clandinin, Narrative Inquiry, 81. Connelly and Clandinin highlight the relational quality of narrative inquiry which also affects the outcome of the findings. They recommend that the researcher “falls in love” with their respondents but also be able to step back and see the stories of the participants in the larger landscape.
38 Webster and Mertova, Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method, 107.
As researcher I brought to the task previous experience of moving into unfamiliar settings and familiarity with Indonesian language and cultural norms. This meant that I was not viewed as a complete outsider.

Having agreed to be part of the research project, the respondent was able to nominate a time and place for the interview. In most cases interviews took place in their home, in an environment in which respondents felt comfortable and relaxed. Notions of ‘guest’ and ‘host’ also came into play and respondents were able to take the lead in terms of offering hospitality. Interviews were conducted using a conversational rather than formal tone, and were more open-ended than highly structured. The semi-structured interviews provided space for respondents to initiate areas they wished to discuss and to ask questions. Respondents could, if they chose, side-step questions they did not wish to directly answer and make choices about what information they wished to divulge. In these ways interviews were conducted in a collaborative spirit. At the same time, there is always an element of asymmetry in the relationship between researcher and respondent. The researcher initiated the interview and was expected to guide it through the different stages. Respondents shared at depth their experience, but responsibility for interpretation and analysis of transcripts, and the writing up of findings lies with the researcher. 39

The relational aspects were central to this inquiry in the interview stage and impacted the development and direction of the research. 40 In this sense, narrative inquiry is ‘jointly accomplished.’ 41

39 Weiss, Learning from Strangers, 119. Respondents in this inquiry, as noted by Weiss, often expressed appreciation for the opportunity which the interview provided. It was not uncommon for there to be a surprising depth of sharing. The experience of having someone’s uninterrupted attention may be a positive or even therapeutic experience for respondents, particularly for those who have not had the opportunity to reflect at depth on their experience with others.

40 The researcher has had continuing contact with some respondents by email or in person. A number expressed interest in being kept informed on the progress of the research.

6.4 RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

The comparative nature of this inquiry required the selection of participants from both the Australian and Indonesian contexts. The researcher wished to explore the faith and mission understandings of Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages. Participants selected were Muslims and Christians in such marriages. Usually one or both partners were actively practicing their faith.\footnote{There were some respondents’ whose religiosity was more pronounced than for others.} This study sought respondents for whom a religious component was part of their lives and who were therefore able to reflect on their religious convictions and religious identity.

In the Indonesian sample respondents were selected from urban and rural settings and a range of ethnicities. In the Australian sample, a number of the couples had a partner with an Indonesian heritage and there was the intention of hearing how respondents contrasted the two different contexts. In addition a number of other respondents in the Australian sample were selected from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

The majority of respondents fitted these criteria although there were four cases where this was not strictly the case but the researcher deemed that their experience was relevant to be included in this inquiry.\footnote{There were two interviews with divorcees. In addition there were two couples who could not strictly be described as ‘interfaith’ because conversion had occurred. For one respondent in the Australian sample this occurred in 2007 after 28 years of marriage. In the other cases the conversion experience had left a number of unresolved issues relating to religious identity.}

6.4.1 The Indonesian Sample

Recruiting Indonesian respondents took place informally through word of mouth. In a six week period during December 2003 and January 2004 interviews were conducted with twenty couples, a widow, a divorcee and a widower. An additional couple was interviewed in January 2007. Interviews were conducted with couples in Bali, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Malang and
Surabaya. Additional couples were recruited from a small regional town in central Java and surrounding villages. A good range of ethnic and age differences and mix of social profiles and educational backgrounds were represented. In terms of Christian affiliation, fifteen of the twenty Christians were members of a mainstream Protestant denomination; seven were Roman Catholics, one belonged to the Seventh Day Adventist church and one was Pentecostal.

Recruiting couples in Indonesia proved to be relatively straightforward and uncomplicated. This is perhaps not surprising considering the oral culture and communal nature of Indonesian society and the more widespread incidence of interreligious marriage. In day to day interactions in Indonesia it is not difficult to meet someone who has a relative, neighbour or acquaintance who is in interfaith marriage. The names of two couples who had married in Australia were an initial point of contact. The researcher’s knowledge of Indonesia and Indonesian connections also proved helpful in the process of recruiting participants. Christian clergy who were approached were able to introduce me to members of their congregation who were in interfaith marriages. In some cases the couples interviewed were able to provide the names of others known to them and in this way further couples were identified through a snowballing effect. Of interest is the fact that none who were invited to be respondents in the study declined to be interviewed. 44

On a second research visit to Indonesia in January 2007 interviews took place with seven adult children from the interfaith families represented in this study. This proved to be an additional rich resource of data. Some follow-up conversations with the original couples also took place.

44 It helped that the researcher was usually introduced to a couple by someone they trusted. In addition, as a foreigner and a guest, I had a privileged position and this is likely to have been a contributing factor for the high uptake.
6.4.1.1 Educational and career backgrounds

There were significant variations in age, experience, economic and educational backgrounds. One third of the couples were highly educated professional people including doctors, teachers, lecturers, public servants, white collar workers and those holding responsible positions in the armed forces or navy. Couples ranged from lower to middle and professional incomes. Most lived in urban areas, while four couples lived in a village or small town context.

6.4.1.2 Cultural Backgrounds

As a group there was a wide spread of cultural identities and ethnicities represented. All but one interview was conducted in Java but half the respondents were married to someone belonging to a different ethnic group.45

6.4.1.3 Muslim–Christian make-up of couples

Of the twenty four partnerships, fifteen were Muslim men married to Christian women and nine were Muslim women married to Christian men.

6.4.1.4 Date of marriage

Couples married between 1951 and 2002 with more than half marrying in the 1960s and 1970s at a time when interfaith marriages faced fewer hurdles than is currently the case. Figure.1 provides a break-down of dates of marriages of the respondents in the Indonesian sample group.

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45 Some of the ‘intercultural mixes’ were Batak and Javanese (3 couples), Chinese and Madura (1 couple); Chinese and Javanese (2 couples); Javanese and Dutch heritage (1 couple); Manado and Javanese (2 couples); Javanese and Maluku (1 couple) and Balinese and Sumatra (1 couple). For the five couples interviewed in Jakarta, cultural heritage appeared less of a factor. They identified more with their shared experience of growing up in Jakarta and being part of a modern multicultural city.
6.4.1.5 Type of Marriage Ceremony

A significant variation in the choice of marriage ceremonies was represented in the Indonesian sample. Non-Muslim marriages are registered through the *Kantor Catatan Sipil* or Civil Registry office. Muslim marriages are registered through the Muslim District Religious Affairs Office or *Kantor Urusan Agama* (KUA). Seven couples had a civil ceremony only.\(^{46}\) Thirteen couples had a Muslim ceremony, nine of which had a Muslim marriage only (registered through the Office of Religious Affairs or *Kantor Urusan Agama*) and four had a Muslim ceremony and a Catholic or Protestant blessing. Eight couples had a Christian ceremony with four of these having a Christian ceremony only and four having a Christian and a Muslim marriage ceremony. Two couples married in Australia (one in a civil ceremony and the other in a Protestant marriage ceremony conducted by an Indonesian minister working in Australia which was followed by Muslim marriage ceremony). Since the mid 1980s the civil marriage option has become increasingly difficult to obtain in Indonesia.\(^{47}\)

Some couples incorporated cultural and ethnic traditions in addition to having a religious marriage ceremony but a study of cultural marriage practices fell outside the scope of this study.\(^{48}\)

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\(^{46}\) Couples 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 22 and 23.

\(^{47}\) Of the two who had civil ceremonies since 1984, one was married in Australia and the other had special assistance due to close contacts they had in a civil registry office. Interfaith couples wishing to marry in a civil ceremony without a religious ceremony now encounter enormous difficulties. In principle they could go through the courts to request permission but there were reports that this is lengthy and expensive and not always successful.

\(^{48}\) For a Javanese couple for example, the marriage ceremony might go on for a number of days and include a variety of intricate rituals that have cultural significance fused with traditional Javanese religious elements. It was not uncommon for couples to formalise their marriage in a
6.4.2 The Australian Sample

Participants were interviewed in the second half of 2007 and early 2008. The Australian participants consisted of fourteen couples and one divorcee. It took longer to identify Australian respondents in comparison to attempting the same exercise in Indonesia and locating couples in Australia proved a more difficult exercise. A number of reasons may account for reluctance on the part of some respondents to take up the invitation to be interviewed. An advertisement placed in Indonesian newspapers in Australia yielded only one respondent. Word of mouth was a more effective method of identifying

religious ceremony and later invite guests to a wedding celebration in which traditional clothes and cultural elements were present

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See Appendix 3b for an overview of the Australian participants

On six occasions interfaith couples became known to me through various contacts but they declined to be interviewed.

In Australia personal privacy is highly valued and participating in a research project of this nature requires a sacrifice of time, which may be unwelcome. It also requires a degree of sharing of personal experience which some may find threatening or intrusive. A number declined to be interviewed. In two cases marital problems were suspected; in another case the young professional couple was moving overseas. In a fourth case contact was made with the mother of a prospective respondent who declined on behalf of her daughter and son-in-law citing as the reason that she hoped her son-in-law would soon convert. In addition some ‘interfaith contacts’ turned out to be conversion stories falling outside the scope of this study.
respondents. Ten of the fifteen couples were recruited through church contacts. One couple was recruited after contacting a Lebanese Muslim leader in Sydney. Interfaith networks provided the name of another couple.\footnote{The Indonesian mosque in Sydney was contacted but no interfaith couples were identified which may either indicate a low incidence of interfaith marriage within the Indonesian Muslim community in Sydney or may suggest that those in interfaith marriages are less active in their religious community.}

6.4.2.1 Educational and Career Backgrounds

Most of those interviewed were from middle-class backgrounds and tended to be highly educated. Only one couple had educational backgrounds in which neither had completed high school. The sample group included two full time mothers, three lecturers, two cleaners, two engineers, two lawyers, a chaplain, a refugee and immigration advice and advocacy worker, a person working in the media, two librarians, a nurse, an alternative health care worker, a person who worked in clerical and sales and four teachers. Six couples were retired. Couples recruited lived in Melbourne, Perth, Darwin and Sydney.

6.4.2.2 Cultural Backgrounds

The Australian sample group therefore was made up of couples who represented interfaith and intercultural marriages. Six were marriages between Australian Christian women and Indonesian Muslims.\footnote{In most of these cases the Australian women had studied Indonesian language and lived for a significant period of time in Indonesia. The Indonesian Muslim husbands originated from diverse parts of Indonesia such as Minangkabau, North Sumatra, Java, Islands in Eastern Indonesia and South Sulawesi.} In four marriages both were of Indonesia heritage.\footnote{All but one couple had different ethnicities such as Chinese and Javanese or Batak and Betawi. One marriage was between an Australian Christian woman of Indonesian descent and an Indonesian Muslim man. Three couples had met in Indonesia and one in Australia.} Five couples had a Middle Eastern background. Three of these were marriages between Australian or British women of Anglo-Celtic heritage and men with Middle Eastern backgrounds.\footnote{Partner came from Lebanon, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq and Iran.} Two of the couples consisted of those who had grown up in Australia who had been shaped by both the Australian context and the migrant experience of their parents,
Middle Eastern, Italian or Indonesian heritage respectively. Only one couple shared the same ethnic heritage.

6.4.2.3 Muslim–Christian make-up of couples

The bulk of the couples in the Australian sample consisted of Muslim men married to Christian women. In only two of the fifteen marriages were Muslim women married to Christians and one of these converted to Christianity in 2007.

6.4.2.4 Date of Marriage

Couples in the Australian sample had married between 1954 and 2006.

**Fig. 6 Date of Marriage – Australian sample**

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4.2.5 Type of marriage ceremony

The marriages for the Australian sample varied considerably. Ten of the fifteen marriages were formalised in Australia. Three were formalised in Indonesia.\(^{56}\) One couple had their marriage formalised in Australia in a church wedding and in Indonesia, in a Muslim ceremony. One marriage was formalised in the UK (with a Muslim ceremony and a full nuptial mass) and the Middle East. Of those marrying in Australia two couples had a civil marriage (in one of these a minister was invited to lead prayers); two had a civil ceremony and a Muslim ceremony; four couples celebrated their marriage in a Muslim and a Christian ceremony.

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\(^{56}\) Two had Muslim ceremonies in Indonesia and one couple had a civil marriage followed by a Catholic blessing.
ceremony; and one had a joint ceremony conducted by a Muslim *imam* and a Protestant minister. Fig. 7 summarises the variety of ways in which marriage ceremonies were arranged by those in the Australian sample.

**Fig. 7  Type of Marriage Ceremony- Australian sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEREMONY</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Indonesia &amp; Australia</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUSLIM</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRISTIAN (and civil)</td>
<td>1 Prot.</td>
<td>1 RC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO CEREMONIES</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1(UK/Middle East)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOINT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIVIL ONLY</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.5 FORMAT OF INTERVIEWS

One issue that emerged early on was choosing between a structured interview with standardised questions, a semi-structured interview or an unstructured interview. The decision was made for indepth interviews to be semi-structured and most were conducted face to face, some with both partners together and others separately.

I usually spoke with couples over the telephone to arrange a time and place to meet and to explain the purpose of the study. Each interview usually took between one and two hours. On meeting couples the purpose of the research project was clarified and permission was sought to tape the interview which provided the opportunity to listen in a more relaxed and focused way. The Information Statement was read and the nature of the inquiry and the ethical
guidelines that would be followed were explained. 57 Respondents were invited to sign a consent form giving permission to use materials within the framework of the inquiry.

Some time was then spent building a climate of trust and rapport. This included giving some information about myself as well as conveying my interest in them and their experience. Family photographs displayed often provided a helpful way to begin the interviews. Respondents were invited to be as honest as possible knowing that their names and identifying details would not be used.

6.5.1 Interviewing couples face to face: together or separately?

More than half the Indonesian sample and a third of the Australian sample were interviewed by having the husband and wife present at the same time. The benefit of this format was that it provided an opportunity to observe how couples interacted with each other and functioned as a unit. It was possible to see warmth in the relationship or alternatively sense a distance in the way respondents related to one another. The researcher was able to register how respondents reacted to comments their partner made. In some cases couples stopped to laugh or smile at one another, checked details, or finished each other’s sentences. Interviewing couples together provided additional confirming data about how couples interacted and expressed religious ideas in the presence of each other.

It was not always possible to interview the couple together and so separate interviews were arranged. This proved an equally valuable way to proceed and allowed for different dynamics to come into play. Interviewing respondents without the presence of their partner may have enabled increased frankness, though it did not appear that respondents in joint interviews were less forthcoming about areas of difficulty once rapport had been established.

57 See Appendix 1 for a copy of the Information Sheet in both languages which explains that confidentiality and anonymity would be respected and tapes and materials would be safely stored and disposed of after completion of the study.
In the Indonesian sample all the interviews were conducted through face to face meetings except in one case when a respondent was interviewed over the phone. Thirteen couples were interviewed together while three respondents were interviewed on their own because they were divorced or widowed. Eight couples were interviewed separately for some or all of the time due to work commitments or family interruptions.

In the Australian sample face to face interviews were conducted with ten couples. Five of these couples were interviewed together and two separately. Another three face to face interviews took place without one of the partners present due to work or family commitments. Three respondents were interviewed over the phone and one interview was conducted by email.

6.5.2 Questionnaires

A questionnaire was developed early on in this inquiry (in English and Indonesian) in order to obtain background information about respondents before the face to face interviews. For some of the Australian interviews the questionnaire proved a helpful tool in preparing for interviews and could be emailed to participants prior to meeting. This strategy worked less well in Indonesia where the electronic medium was not always available. Introducing a written component into the interview process tended to introduce a formality that interrupted the free-flowing conversational style of the interview. The use of the questionnaires in Indonesian was therefore abandoned and the information was included in the indepth interviews.

6.5.3 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews combined with some unstructured time allowed participants to also raise topics of interest to them. A conversational style rather

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58 See Appendix 5 for copy of the questionnaire.
than a formal question-answer style was adopted. One of the benefits of this approach was that participants’ issues and perspectives often yielded interesting insights that may not have been forthcoming if the interview had strictly followed set questions.  

6.6 KEY AREAS COVERED IN INTERVIEWS

In qualitative research the value of open-ended questions with a minimum of interruptions has been noted. There is an art to indepth interviewing and good questions enhance the data that will be obtained. As this was a missiological inquiry, it was important to identify questions that would provide information about how respondents live out and practise their faith, interpret the meaning and purpose of their marriage and understand the mission of God in the world.

A narrative approach asks questions that invite story-telling rather than seeking generalised responses to standardised questions. There was an intentional effort by the researcher to facilitate and not impose preconceptions onto the discussion and respondents usually quickly warmed to the subject. Negotiating transitions from one subject to another occurred when a topic had been exhausted or when the flow of conversation had naturally moved into a new area. The different phases in the interview loosely corresponded with different stages in the journey of the couple. Respondents tended to engage naturally in telling the story of how they met, their marriage ceremony, any obstacles they faced, and how they understood and practised their faith.

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60 Riessman, Narrative Analysis, 34.
61 See V. R. Minichiello, Aroni E. Timewell and L. Alexander. In-Depth Interviewing: Principles, Techniques, Analysis (Melbourne: Longman, 1995), 87. There are a variety of lines of inquiry. For example, some questions ask respondents to provide descriptions of events or factual details; ‘sensitising questions’ explore issues and problems in particular situations; ‘practical and structural questions’ look for how understandings have been developed and what practical actions occur; ‘opinion’ or ‘value questions’ seek to find out what people think; ‘probing questions’ ask for more details and ‘feeling questions’ are interested in what the respondent feels; ‘theoretical questions’ invite respondent to discuss the meaning of situations and events. Some participants are more expansive in the telling of their accounts while others tended to offer brief summaries and follow-up questions are needed to bring out depth and detail.
62 Weiss, Learning from Strangers, 1.
encountered, responses of family and religious community, the various issues they have had to negotiate, joys and struggles in their life together, memorable incidents, and how they go about building interfaith families. This provided an opportunity to hear how respondents viewed and evaluated their marriage.

After having a good picture of the ‘story’ of the couple the focus of the last part of the interview was on how respondents maintain and share faith. Respondents were invited to describe their religious upbringing and how this compared with the religious upbringing of their partner. They shared past and present religious practice including prayer, celebration of religious festivals, and the degree of involvement they have with their religious communities. Missiological and theological reflections were implicit throughout the interview but in the concluding part of the interview came more intentionally into focus. Respondents were asked to reflect on how their faith may have undergone change in the course of their marriage; how they viewed their partner’s faith; and the meaning of mission or da’wah in the world today.

Before concluding the interview respondents were invited to offer any additional stories, comments, insights or statements. Negotiating the end of an interview was important particularly when intimate details had been shared. Respondents often expressed appreciation for the opportunity to talk about issues that are important in their lives.

Following the interview some ‘jottings’ were written up. It was useful to identify a ‘theme song’ or ‘core message’ that conveyed the central message of the interview. Memory can tend to ‘smooth out’ details which field notes help fill in, particularly in terms of recording descriptive details of the setting or ‘landscape’ in which the interview took place. Appendix 2 provides a fuller version of the key areas that were covered.

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63 See Clandinin and Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry*, 63. In a few cases an informal conversation after the interview took place in which respondents wanted to know my views on the subject of interfaith marriage, inquired about my own situation or asked my advice. Clandinin and Connelly speak of the need to negotiate distance and closeness with sensitivity and the ethical accountability that is required throughout the interview.
6.7 OTHER INTERVIEWS

6.7.1 Interviews with adult children of interfaith families

When interviewing a couple in the Indonesian sample an adult child was present for part of the interview. They contributed some very meaningful insights and the researcher considered that there were important missiological implications to be gained from listening to the experience of other adult children. Subsequently during January 2007 seven adult children were interviewed in Indonesia and two adult children were interviewed in Australia in June 2007. Although this was not part of the original research design and it is the stories of couples rather than their children that is the central focus of this inquiry, interviews with adult children enrich this inquiry and provide additional information on how faith is passed onto the next generation.64

6.7.2 Consultations with religious and community leaders

The researcher consulted with a number of religious leaders who represented a variety of religious traditions and missiological perspectives. Twenty Indonesian leaders were identified. Some had written on the subject of interfaith marriage, others worked in various Muslim or Christian educational institutions, or interfaith organisations. Clergy who had had experience of conducting interfaith marriages, and a former KUA official were also consulted.65 The leaders indicated whether they wanted to be named or remain anonymous. Interviews were conducted with a smaller sample of five religious and community leaders in Australia including Indonesian Muslim community leaders, Protestant ministers who had conducted intermarriages, and a Catholic leader with expertise in Canon Law. Consulting religious and community leaders provided useful background information to better understand the perspectives of religious communities towards interfaith couples.66

64 See Appendix 4 for a list of adult children (pseudonyms).
65 KUA or District Religious Affairs Office is where Muslim marriages are conducted.
66 See Appendix 6 for list of religious and community leaders who were consulted.
6.8 TRANSCRIBING AND CODING INTERVIEWS

The reliability of qualitative research findings depends on the careful collection and storage of data, and careful coding and analysis. The process of transcribing the taped interviews was time-consuming. An assistant transcribed half of the Indonesian interviews (in Indonesian language). The researcher took responsibility for transcribing the remainder and for translation of relevant extracts. A simple coding system meant that it was easy to track data to its source. The coding of interviews in this study seeks to fulfil what Webster and Mertova have referred to as ‘a well referenced trail and indexing system’ that takes seriously the criteria of establishing the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research.67 The coding system is explained through examples provided.

Transcript: I21:3:14-18
I indicates that the transcript comes from the Indonesian sample. Couples are listed chronologically according to the year they were married and 21 refers to the couple number. 3 indicates the page numbering of the transcript and 14-18 refers to the specific lines that are being cited or referred to.

Transcript A2:2:9-13
A stands for an Australian couple. 2 denotes that this is the second couple on the list of Australian respondents. The reference is from the second page, lines 9-13.

Reference to interviews with religious leaders and interviews with adult children are written out in full. An example is provided: Extract from interview with Tony, son of Rahmat and Pauline (A2).68

As far as possible the natural flow of conversation has been kept omitting false starts and pauses. Transforming the spoken word from taped recordings into written language is fraught with difficulties. Taped conversations do not capture

67 See Webster and Mertova, Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method, 96.
68 See Appendix 4 for list of adult children interviewed.
the full expressiveness of what occurs when people meet face to face and it is difficult to represent the dynamic, subtle and interactional nature of conversation. Despite the limitations, faithfully recording and transcribing interviews are crucial for the next stage of analysis of transcripts.

6.9 ANALYSIS OF TRANSCRIPTS

There is no agreed methodology in narrative inquiry for the analysis of data. The development of forms of classification is an interpretive task but involves a careful reading and rereading of transcripts giving attention to themes and patterns that emerge. In the first stage of analysis ten thematic areas were identified: making the decision to marry; the impact of culture and context; complications that occurred in arranging the marriage ceremony; considering conversion; negotiating differences; religious upbringing of children; religious practice and family religious rituals; strategies that help interfaith marriages; developing a theological framework to understand the meaning of their interfaith marriage, and mission understandings.

After organising data along these thematic lines the second stage was to identify narrative extracts which were coded into four main narrative areas: narratives of meeting and marrying; negotiating differences; the religious education of children; and reflecting on faith and mission.

A further process of selection identified particular narrative extracts that described critical events which had an impact on the world view of respondents, or which illuminated a particular theme. Narrative extracts were selected which provided a snapshot into the faith and mission understandings of respondents and which were illustrative of respondents’ missiological ideas. These had a

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70 Maanen, Tales of the field, 95.
71 See Elliot, Using narrative in social research, 33. This inquiry incorporates the method of analysis outlined by Elliot.
confirmatory quality and conveyed missiological ideas, sometimes implicit and intuitively constructed, and at other times expressed in a more direct and explicit way.\textsuperscript{72}

6.10 SEARCHING FOR PATTERNS: IDENTIFYING TYPES

At the outset it was not clear what would emerge from the research project but gradually parts fitted together and a unified account about ‘what is going on’ began to take shape.\textsuperscript{73} A conceptual framework began to emerge from the missiological ideas that were implicit and explicit in the narrative data. Distinctive ways respondents understood God to be working in the world along with various ‘missiological types’ were identified from respondents’ accounts.

Within social research there is much discussion on the usefulness of ‘type’ in analysing and comparing social phenomena and the benefits and difficulties inherent in this approach.\textsuperscript{74} Producing typologies and taxonomies has been a recognised outcome of narrative inquiry.\textsuperscript{75}

In qualitative research, through a process of synthesis, key findings are linked to insights from previous knowledge or literature in the field and a central idea

\textsuperscript{72} See Webster and Mertova, \textit{Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method}, 83. Significant events may occur through external factors such as historical or political circumstances or through the natural progression of family life; may be unplanned and unanticipated events; and can have a positive or negative impact.


may emerge which provides a new clarity or depth of insight. In this inquiry a ‘typology of missiological approaches’ was developed which enabled different missiological understandings of respondents to be contrasted, and their insights related to the field of missiology. It is hoped that insights which emerge from an analysis of the narrative extracts of respondents may contribute to reflection on Christian mission and da’wah in a religiously plural world.

6.11 MARITAL SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS

It has been noted that qualities such as endurance, empathy, acceptance, flexibility, a sense of humour and evidence of intimacy, closeness, mutual support and affection have been linked to marital well-being. Communication, congruence in perceptions and expectations, and having a strong commitment to the relationship are additional factors which contribute to marital happiness. In addition a shared religious orientation has been considered important for marital satisfaction.

How couples deal with difference and whether they successfully navigate their life together is not an unimportant aspect of this study. Indepth interviews provided the researcher with a range of impressions about how couples interacted with one another and their ability to withstand various outside pressures. Subjective assessment with analysis of interviews highlighted some of the qualities that interfaith couples in this study considered important and factors which increased or reduced their marital satisfaction and happiness.

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76 Richards, Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide, 133.
77 Ibid, 129.
78 See Sotirios Sarantakos, Modern Families: An Australia Text (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1996), 127-134. Strengths include adaptability, communication and conflict skills, enjoyment, health, humour, intimacy balanced with autonomy, perseverance and tolerance.
6.12 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Missiological Inquiry Approach outlined in Chapter One is based on the assumption that much can be learned from reflecting on lived experience. Narrative inquiry as a research method helps make accessible the experience of Muslim and Christian respondents as a source for theological and missiological inquiry. The chapters which follow produce accounts that capture with honesty the perspectives of interfaith couples in this study. Chapter Seven and Eight analyse narratives of meeting and marrying, negotiating differences and creating interfaith families, in the Indonesian and Australian sample groups. In Chapter Nine a typology of five missiological types is developed as a heuristic tool drawing out missiological understandings of respondents within narrative extracts. Chapter Ten brings together the different missiological insights that have emerged in the course of this study which contribute to the task of reimagining mission and da‘wah in a religiously diverse world.
CHAPTER 7
NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE INDONESIAN INTERVIEWS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines narrative extracts drawn from transcripts of indepth interviews conducted with twenty-one couples, a widow, a divorcée and a widower in the Indonesian sample.¹ The framework for this chapter is provided by three sets of narratives: stories of meeting and marrying, negotiating differences, and passing on faith to children.² This chapter concludes by drawing out missiological implications and insights implicit in narrative extracts.

7.1.1 The legal context of intermarriage in Indonesia

It has been noted that the Indonesian Marriage Law brought with it some additional complications for interfaith couples. Even prior to 1974 interfaith marriages were not necessarily straightforward. Indonesia inherited diverse marriage laws from the Dutch colonial system and this created some complex and perplexing situations for interfaith couples.³ Prior to the 1974 Marriage Law interfaith marriages could be legally recognised in Indonesia whereas after 1974 and particularly following the mid 1980s the legal status of interfaith marriages was brought into question.

¹ Refer to Appendix 3a for a list of the Indonesian respondents who participated in this inquiry. This chapter represents Step 4 of the Missiological Inquiry Approach explained in Chapter One. The narratives of Indonesian respondents are located within the context of Muslim–Christian intermarriage in Indonesia which has already been outlined in Chapter Four.
² Interviews with a small number of adult children provide additional information about the challenges couples face in building a life together.
³ For example Hartono and Mari (4) who married in 1962 had problems arranging their marriage because they fell under different marriage laws. Hartono was ‘Indigenous’ (pribumi) while Mari was ‘European’ (Belanda). It was only with great difficulty that for the purpose of the marriage Hartono was able to ‘come under’ the same marriage law as Mari.
Respondents in this study who married before the mid 1980s reported few difficulties in arranging a civil marriage whereas after that time significantly more problems were encountered. Some couples with sufficient means married overseas.\(^4\) Others who married in Indonesia chose a Muslim or Christian ceremony. For some respondents this meant ‘conversion’ in order to secure a legal marriage. Albert and Yuli (22) reflected a view that was quite widespread: “Why does the government interfere saying those who are Muslim must marry Muslims? It’s not fair. Why interfere in the religious beliefs of others? Are we all meant to run to Australia or Singapore or Malaysia? We might be well-off enough to do this but what about others?”\(^5\)

Respondents felt that the present situation represented an infringement of their human rights and the current context undermined religious freedom as guaranteed under Indonesia’s Constitution. For Yono, a divorced Catholic (Couple 19) who did not have the money to go overseas the easiest and cheapest option was to obtain a Muslim marriage certificate. The alternative, that of living together unmarried, was not a choice he was prepared to take knowing that this has traditionally been frowned upon in Indonesian society. As a formality Yono pronounced the *shahada*. In his heart Yono was asking God to forgive him for not being true to his convictions. “This is what we are forced to do in Indonesia. We wanted to have a civil ceremony. But that was not possible. That’s not an option now. Catholics should marry Catholics; Muslims marry Muslims... In my view this has all been created by human beings. People and the government think like this, not God.”\(^6\)

Rima (Couple 13) went further, “The State should not force people to change their religion. If you force something like that on someone – that is a sin.”\(^7\) Rima thought people should be free to follow their conscience and inner convictions (*hati nurani*). Rima was grateful that she married before the implementation of the restrictions on having a civil marriage.

\(^4\) Two couples married in Australia, Tomi and Aryati (Couple 20) and Albert and Yuli (Couple 22).


\(^7\) Extract of transcript of interview with Rima I13 4: 37-40.
Some thought the changes relating to interfaith marriages could be linked to other trends in Indonesia such as a resurgence in religion in the post-Suharto period and increasing competition between Christians and Muslims. A number expressed concern at an increase in religious fundamentalism.

Muchtar, a devout Muslim and former high ranking officer in the army, thought there was a growing tendency towards religious intolerance. “Now it’s, ‘if you are not part of my group you are my enemy’ – harping back to the Crusades. But Indonesia wasn’t like that. Would we want to apply that here?” In the past friendship between people of different faiths was a hallmark of Indonesian life. Muchtar hopes the marriage laws will soon be revised but is not optimistic about the current political climate.

Dirman, another Muslim respondent expressed concern that Islam which he knows and loves was being used by some for political purposes to have a dominant position in the political life of the nation. “I hope Indonesia never loses a sense of having mutual respect for one another, and its openness. This isn’t a Muslim country and we must never force others to follow us. It is their business.”

7.2 NARRATIVES OF MEETING AND MARRYING

The first area to be explored draws on a number of narratives of meeting and marrying. Underlying many of the stories was the concept of seeking and finding one’s jodoh – the marriage partner intended by God.

8 Extract of transcript of interview with Muchtar I512:11-15, 37-41.
9 Extract of transcript of interview with Dirman I9 11:31-45. Dirman thinks the real purpose of religion is “to bring people closer to God and to become a good person”. 
7.2.1 Finding one’s jodoh (life partner)

‘Jodoh’ is translated as marriage partner or match. It carries the idea of harmonious or right fit and conveys the meaning of ‘soul mate’. There is a common Indonesian saying that ‘One’s jodoh is in God’s hands’ as one respondent explained: “For us, there is one person until death, and the term for that is jodoh, the one God has provided for you. There are three (important) events in your life: when you are born, who you marry, and the last is when you die. These are beyond our control.” Selecting one’s marriage partner is therefore not the result of one’s choice alone but is related to divine activity. Eleven couples in the Indonesian sample used this term and some made frequent reference.

*Sudarsono and Melati (Couple 1)*

Sudarsono and Melati married in 1951 after their parents arranged their marriage. For over half a century they have experienced a deeply satisfying partnership. “We have been called differently but the feeling of oneness is still there.” Sudarsono and Melati firmly believe that they met and married the person God intended for them. Melati explains that when they were growing up children respected their parents’ advice and girls and boys did not mix so freely. Sitting contentedly in their home, the walls covered with photographs of various achievements in the lives of their ten children and nineteen grandchildren, Sudarsono explains, “We believe it was God who led us to our jodoh (soul mate) through her and my parents.”

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10 Extract of transcript of interview with Frank I1 3:10-12.
11 The term jodoh was mentioned by Couples 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17 and 23. In the interview with Sudarsono and Melati (Couple 1) the term was used ten times.
13 Melati’s mother and Sudarsono’s father were cousins. Sudarsono converted to Christianity as a child following his attendance at a church after-school program. His parents did not give permission for him to be baptised. When he was a young adult his parents proposed that he marry Melati. He sought guidance from God and though Melati was not a Christian he felt he should follow scriptural exhortations that children should obey their parents.
14 Extract of transcript of interview with Sudarsono I1 1:5-6.
Dirman and Kustiah (Couple 9)

Kustiah and Dirman also expressed the conviction that their partner was their ‘jodoh’. They originally met when they were both working in the airforce. Kustiah’s Chinese family was opposed to her marrying a *pribumi* or indigenous Indonesian. Members of Dirman’s family were equally opposed to him marrying a non-Muslim however Dirman had a strong conviction that Kustiah was the one God intended for him.

I was sure that (Kustiah) my *jodoh*, was given to me by God. Before we married I spent a lot of time praying and fasting asking God to show me a sign, asking ‘Is this my *jodoh* whom I must marry?’ My mother did the same. And it’s funny but my mother, in her dreams, always saw Kustiah. So you see it didn’t just happen, there was a sign from God.\(^\text{15}\)

For Kustiah, having the church bless her marriage confirmed her belief that Dirman was her *jodoh*. Believing that their marriage was part of God’s will and purpose for their lives provided a basis and foundation for their marriage and a rationale to defend their marriage in response to criticism from others.

7.2.2 Blessed by God or living in sin?

Respondents who married without the approval of their religious community were sometimes regarded by others, or regarded themselves, as ‘living in sin’. Living without the blessing of their religious community could be a painful experience as is indicated in the following two narrative extracts.

Abdul and Herawati (Couple 12)

When Abdul married Herawati he went against his parents’ advice. At the time Abdul was not a strongly practicing Muslim but later he went through a revitalisation of faith.\(^\text{16}\) They lived in a largely Muslim village right next to the mosque. Abdul felt a sense of guilt and shame that he had not managed to raise

\(^{15}\) Extract of transcript of interview with Dirman I9 12:10-23.
\(^{16}\) Extract of transcript of interview with Abdul I12 1:4-6.
a Muslim family and thought it was a mistake to marry someone who was not willing to convert to Islam. He has considered divorcing Herawati but thinks this would be an additional sin rather than righting a wrong. Abdul was torn between believing that Herawati is his jodoh, the one God intended for him, or interpreting his marriage as ‘living in sin’.\(^\text{17}\) Abdul remains in the marriage out of a sense of duty but with little joy.

**Nini (21) and her mother, Yustina (7)**

Nini grew up in a mixed faith home. Her mother, Yustina brought her up as a Catholic. Nini and Zainal married in 1999 in a Muslim ceremony after she got pregnant and felt that the best option was to marry as soon as possible. She feels that she let her God down and her Catholic faith by pronouncing the *shahada* at the time of her marriage. Nini believes that in her church’s eyes she is ‘living in sin’. For this reason she is unable to take Mass and this adds to her sense of feeling alienated from her religious roots. Nini is looking for the right moment to ask her husband to consider having a Catholic blessing so she could be restored to fellowship with her church and regain a sense of peace.\(^\text{18}\) Nini’s mother, Yustina feels for her daughter. Her own experience is similar to her daughter’s. From 1966 until she became a widow in 1984 Yustina lived with a sense of being outside God’s blessing. After her husband died the priest told her she was again welcome to come to Mass.\(^\text{19}\)

In contrast with these two narratives other respondents challenged the notion that they were living without the blessing of God. This is illustrated in the following three narrative extracts in which respondents have a strong sense of inner sense of conviction that their marriage is blessed by God.

\(^\text{17}\) Extract of transcript of interview with Abdul I12 2: 31-36.  
\(^\text{18}\) Extract of transcript of interview with Nini I21 4:19, 3:10-16  
\(^\text{19}\) Being excluded from Mass for almost 20 years left Yustina feeling “thirsty and empty.” After Yustina’s husband died she was permitted to again take Mass. The researcher consulted Catholic priests who reported that whilst some priests maintain a hard-line approach others do not refuse Mass to anyone who comes in good conscience wishing to participate.
Sumitro and Nurila (Couple 24)

Sumitro had been a trainee for the Catholic priesthood when he met and fell in love with Nurila, the daughter of a Muslim religious leader. Leaving the seminary was a huge decision. Initially Sumitro and Nurila planned to have a Muslim and a Catholic marriage ceremony. Sumitro came to believe that marrying once before God was sufficient and for Sumitro a Muslim marriage was as valid as a Catholic one. After much inner debate Sumitro decided that he could in good conscience pronounce the shahada. Affirming the prophethood of Mohammad was for him, an extension of his faith rather than a denial of his Catholicism. Sumitro’s family and friends and his religious community saw things differently and found his decision difficult to understand. They thought that Sumitro was denouncing his Catholic faith but instead, Sumitro and Nurila firmly believe that both faiths can be affirmed in the context of their marriage and believe strongly that God is in their marriage.

Lidia (Couple 23)

Lidia’s brother, a Protestant minister, was disappointed not to be able to conduct the marriage ceremony for his sister because his church’s policy opposed mixed faith marriages. When asked if she wished she had had a church blessing Lidia, smiling, responded without hesitation, “Oh, we’re already blessed.” Lidia believes that Yudi is her jodoh and sitting in on this part of the interview, her mother nods in agreement. “Who was I to stand in the way? It all depends on God.” Although Lidia did not receive a blessing from

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20 Sumito explained that if they had wanted to have a Muslim marriage first, followed by a Catholic marriage, Sumitro would have had to ask for forgiveness and was required to state that he would do all in his power to bring children up as Catholics.
22 Extract from transcript of interview with the minister Rev Gunawan of the Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan (GKJW). Rev Gunawan hoped his church would reconsider its policy in the future.
23 Extract of transcript of interview with Lidia I23 2:36-37.
her church she believes God is active in their marriage and her life with Yudi and their young son brings them great joy.

_Yuli_ (Couple 20)

Yuli’s decision to marry Albert cost was opposed by her parents who did not want her to marry a man who was significantly older than her, a divorcee, and a Christian. They refused to give their blessing to the marriage unless Albert converted to Islam. At the time of the interview, Albert and Yuli have been married for one year after travelling to Australia for a civil ceremony. Yuli remained estranged from her family which has caused her great pain: “If He [God] hadn’t been there I could even have killed myself. I was feeling so lost and confused. It was a terribly difficult decision.”25 Yuli remains a devout Muslim and believes the experience has strengthened her faith. Although God’s leading has taken her in a direction that appears to be at odds with her family’s wishes and her Muslim tradition, Yuli has no doubts or regrets.26 She is convinced that Albert is her _jodoh_ and this has given her an inner strength.27 Excitedly she and Albert talk about the forthcoming birth of their child. For Yuli’s sake Albert would like their child to be raised a Muslim.

7.2.3 “It’s better to have one faith under one roof”

In Indonesian society there is a common expression that states: “It’s better to have one faith under one roof.” There were respondents who rejected outright the prevailing view that interfaith marriages were less worthy than other marriages. On the other hand there were respondents who agreed, especially if they experienced marital problems. Other respondents did not directly challenge the view but by example they showed that it is not invariably the case

25 Extract of transcript of interview with Yuli I2 7:4-6, 15
26 Yuli (and some of the other respondents in this study) has developed a faith perspective that reflects the ‘Individuative-Reflective’ faith as reflected in James Fowler’s _Stages of Faith_ (Blackburn, Vic: Collins Dove, 1981). An ‘Individuative-Reflective’ faith allows a person to become less concerned about fitting into society’s expectations and more concerned about obeying the truth that lies within regardless of the consequences. In this ‘fourth stage’, when faced with contradictory experiences people take personal responsibility for their beliefs and feelings.
27 Extract of transcript of interview with Yuli I2 7:12-16
that interfaith marriages are less successful than marriages in which both share a common faith.

*Muchtar and Tuti (Couple 5)*

Muchtar and Tuti state at the outset that they are not ‘the ideal couple’ according to common public perception. In their experience Indonesian society strongly conveys the message that having one faith in the family is most desirable. “We always get the ’stamp’ that a mixed marriage is bad, it’s not correct, and it shouldn’t take place.” Muchtar and Tuti acknowledge that those in interfaith marriages face additional challenges. When Muchtar went on the *haj* in all honesty his preference would have been to have had Tuti alongside of him but when asked what their life together has been like, Muchtar and Tuti respond with cheerful joviality “Very happy. We can live with the differences. It’s enjoyable!” From all appearances Muchtar and Tuti were indeed a loving and devoted couple who had lived together for more than four decades.

*Rima and Herman (Couple 13)*

Rima was a devout Muslim and never imagined marrying a non-Muslim but she believed Herman was her *jodoh* and this gave her confidence to take the step of marriage. Rima does not believe that having two faiths under one roof has been a hindrance to having a harmonious marriage. “It has never been a problem and it has never been made into a problem. We enjoy the way things are. In our home there may be different opinions but not really different views about essential things relating to faith.”

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28 This section is based on the extract of transcript of the interview with Muchtar and Tuti I5 7:12-22.
29 Extract of transcript of the interview with Tuti I5 7:23, 33-35.
30 Extract from transcript of interview with Rima I13b 1:4-7. Herman thinks that it is possible to live together happily with different religious convictions as long as there is acceptance and understanding. “I don’t disturb her in her beliefs. Whatever she is, I accept that. That is the key - acceptance and understanding.” Extract from interview with Herman I13a 2:35-36.
Anwar and Nana (Couple 14)

Anwar rejects the view that having one faith under one roof automatically means a happier marriage. Nana is a little more hesitant. She thinks that interfaith marriages bring additional complications. “It’s better to have one faith if possible…Everything will be easier, less difficulties, less conflict perhaps. It is easier to give your children a religious education. But if there is no other way and you feel strongly that you must marry this person and maintain both faiths then it doesn’t matter. The key is to deeply respect your partner…”

Nana does not think that one faith guarantees a happier marriage but she thinks it makes things easier. In Nana’s view however the two essential ingredients in a harmonious marriage are mutual love and respect for each other’s feelings. “Just that is important.”

7.3 NARRATIVES OF NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCES

Believing that their partner was the one God intended (jodoh) gave couples a sense of assurance that God was present in their marriage. Couples who were committed to affirming two faiths under the one roof face a number of challenges in building a life together and negotiating areas of difference. Alongside the need for love and respect, understanding and acceptance, a number of narrative extracts highlighted the importance of having a set of shared values.

7.3.1 Having shared values

Some couples referred to a set of shared beliefs and values which were drawn from their respective faiths or from a common cultural worldview. More often

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31 Extract from transcript of interview with Nana I14 7:23-29.
32 Extract of transcript of interview with Nana I14 5:8-15
it was a combination of both, faith and cultural understandings, which provided a framework to live together on a foundation of shared understandings.

*Dirman and Kustiah (Couple 9)*

In Dirman’s view it is not automatic that people who have the same religion share the same values. Dirman points to his own marriage as an example of how two people with different faiths share many values in common. Both Dirman and Kustiah are health professionals who have a desire to help those who are less fortunate than themselves. They both demonstrated high ethical and moral standards. They tend to judge a person’s spiritual credentials by their behaviour and believe that a person should be true in their words and actions. Dirman and Kustiah both value relationships rather than material possessions and believe that the purpose of religion is to make people better and kinder human beings. Dirman speaks with a strong sense of conviction when he says, “All our values are the same.”

Interviewed separately, Kustiah referred to a sense of ‘shared mission’ she and Dirman have that derives from values they have in common. She explains:

> It is fortunate that Dirman has the same values. That is why I was so drawn to him. Valuing human beings is something we share in common… Our mission is to help others who need our help. Dirman has a great intellect and strong humanitarian values. You can see that in the way he relates to others. He is concerned for those who are in need, the ones who are not well-off, as I am.

*Adri and Susan (Couple 11)*

Susan is Ambonese but has lived in Java for many years. She has been married to Adri for almost 30 years and over the years she has come to appreciate the Javanese traits of tolerance and acceptance of diversity which she sees in him. Sometimes she wishes Adri was a Christian so they could attend church

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33 Extract of transcript of interview with Dirman 19:1:2-8
together but drawing on the Javanese concept of *nrimo*. Susan says that she has learnt acceptance.\textsuperscript{35} Adri thinks that the Javanese world view (*Kejawen*) has the capacity to draw from what is good in different religious traditions and meld them together. This appreciation of unity and diversity is something he has intentionally sought to reflect in his marriage. “Susan often reads from the Gospels. I enjoy hearing that…Actually our differences are something wonderful. We discuss matters. We never say, ‘My faith is like this but yours is like that.’”\textsuperscript{36} Adri’s Javanese world-view values harmony and avoids rigid and fanatical forms of religion. For Adri *Gusti* (the Javanese name for God), provides the bridge between Islam and Christianity. Adri’s world view and concept of God incorporates an understanding of *Gusti Allah* and *Gusti Yesus*.\textsuperscript{37} This creates space to accommodate and appreciate each others’ beliefs and a conviction that there is an underlying unity that comes from God.

*Sudasono and Melati* (Couple 1)

Sudasono and Melati’s shared values are drawn from their respective faiths and their Javanese world-view. Sudarsono and Melati share the Javanese ideal of creating a harmonious home and draw on the Javanese concept of *nrimo* as an important quality in their marriage. Melati explained, “My father and my grandfather said to me, ‘People have to live with an attitude of acceptance (*nrimo*)’.”\textsuperscript{38} Having a deep respect for one another and for God’s work in the life of the other was also essential. Melati expressed this through a Javanese saying: “*Nek kowe pingin diregani, kowe kudu ngregani wong liyo*” [If you wish to be respected you must respect others”]. She adds, “This is something I also learnt from the Qur’an.”\textsuperscript{39} For Sudarsono, there are many parallels between the Javanese world view and Christianity. “Those concepts and

\textsuperscript{35} Extract from transcript of interview with Susan I11 8:30-31. “You must accept the way things are (*nrimo*).” The Javanese concept of *nrimo* refers to an attitude of acceptance even if it involves suffering.


\textsuperscript{37} See transcript of interview with I11 4:14-19.

\textsuperscript{38} Extract from transcript of interview with Melati I1 11:26.

\textsuperscript{39} Extract of transcript of interview with Melati 17:35-42 and 18:5-6.
teachings from Javanese culture are similar to what we find in the Scriptures – such as the importance of loving others, and not being jealous…Our forebears taught us, when we meet any difficulties, not to blame others but to look at ourselves and correct ourselves.”

Sudarsono and Melati weave together their respective faith understandings and their Javanese world view to create a set of shared values and understandings which have been foundational for their marriage.

7.3.2 Retaining faith, converting, and reverting

Some respondents reported difficulty in adjusting to their spouse’s decision to retain their own faith. Respondents sometimes held out hope that their spouse would one day consider conversion. Other respondents never contemplated asking their partner to change their faith and in turn never expected their partner to give up their religious beliefs. Yono reflected this view. “My principle is that I don’t want to make Endang into a Catholic and I also do not want to be pushed into becoming a Muslim. It’s a matter of faith. It’s something personal. I wouldn’t interfere also in what my children decide.”

Alongside the stories of maintaining faith there were three conversion stories. In two of these the decision was later made to revert to their original faith. In the third case Kartini experienced significant difficulties in adjusting to her new religious identity.

40 Extract of transcript of interview with Sudarsono I1 11: 35-41
41 Abdul (12) for example, felt a sense of guilt that he had not created a Muslim family. Christian respondent Frank (10) had assumed Muriani would convert to Christianity after they were married and he became bitterly disappointed to discover that she intended to remain a Muslim.
42 Anita (18) regularly prays that Ibrahim and her children will become Christians. Tomi (20) also hopes that Aryati will one day convert to Christianity.
44 Whilst a number of respondents ‘converted’ for the purpose of the marriage as a formality there were three cases in which respondents genuinely converted to their partner’s faith. Hasan (6) later reverted to Islam and Frank (10) reverted to Catholicism.
Kartini and Ketut (Couple 17)

Kartini had been a devout Muslim and never considered marrying a non-Muslim but when she went to Java for further studies she began a relationship with Ketut, a Balinese Christian. After becoming pregnant Kartini faced a difficult decision deciding what she should do. As a Muslim woman she thought it was wrong to marry a non-Muslim but it would have been worse to bring up a child out of wedlock. She believed Ketut was her jodoh. She also made the decision to convert to Christianity. At the time it did not seem such a difficult decision but although many years have now passed, the ‘new clothes’ do not seem to fit. “The ‘clothes’ don’t seem quite right and they can’t be adjusted to fit my shape.” Kartini has been a Christian since 1985 but still feels like a fish born in a Muslim ocean that has been dropped into a Christian ocean. Kartini’s husband David tells her he has no desire to force her to be a Christian and her faith is her choice. Kartini has learnt to operate in a Christian environment and they lived in a Christian village. “I have been dropped into this environment and I have to swim in it. I have to take on the saltiness of the sea.” Kartini’s Muslim heritage is still very important to her and when she feels sad or lonely she returns to the mode of prayer most familiar to her. Performing sholat gives her a sense of God’s peace.

Ronald and Titik (Couple 16)

Ronald and Titik built a life together in Kalimantan until a fire destroyed everything they owned. This was a shattering experience for Ronald which made him reassess his life. He had worked hard to build up his business, neglecting his family, becoming a workaholic and at times had been prone to...
drunken rages. He had converted to Islam when he married but lacked religious convictions.

Ronald and Titik returned to Java penniless with Titik two months pregnant. Ronald’s Chinese family were no help. They had disowned him when he married an indigenous (pribumi) Javanese woman. Titik’s family were poor and could do little to assist. Titik had her faith to hold onto but she was concerned that Ronald had nothing and he was devastated by his loss. One night Ronald had a vision of Jesus passing by. The dream took on a deeper meaning for him and he sensed the need to return to his Catholic faith. With Titik’s blessing Ronald started going to church. Ronald’s new-found faith gave him a sense of peace as well as a sense of direction and purpose in his life and Titik welcomed the positive changes. Ronald now gave more attention to his family and had a better balance in his life. Titik believes that being a Catholic is the right path for Ronald: “Faith can’t be forced.” Kartini had a degree of longing to return to her Muslim heritage feeling. Christianity felt like clothes that did not quite ‘fit’. Titik was able to adjust to the decision of Ronald to revert to his original faith believing that this was his calling. Conversion and reversion stories are complex and varied and represent a major area of negotiating difference. In responding to changing life circumstances couples may need to adjust or modify their expectations. Whether they draw closer or further apart tended to be signalled by the presence or absence of understanding, acceptance and mutual respect.

7.3.3 Coming to terms with a partner’s revitalised faith

A number of respondents experienced revitalised faith in the course of their marriage which required partners to re-negotiate their relationship. This is illustrated in two narrative extracts.

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49 In a separate example a spouse’s decision to revert led to detrimental affects on the relationship and it was more difficult for the partner to adjust to the changes. This was the case for Kristiani (6) after Hasan reverted to Islam and with renewed religious fervour urged her to convert to Islam.
Yono and Endang (Couple 19)

Yono supported Endang’s desire to go on the haj and helped raise funds to make it possible. As was the Muslim custom while Endang was away, Yono opened their home for prayers which were led by the local Muslim preacher (ustaf). Endang arrived home elated by the experience. Everything had gone better than expected. Her faith had been deepened and she had a sense of peace and calm that had been missing before.

Yono noticed the positive changes but was taken aback when Endang told him she now intended to wear the jilbab (Muslim head scarf) in public which had not previously been her religious practice. Yono found her decision difficult to accept. He thinks the scarf is unattractive and unsuitable in Indonesia’s climate and has an ingrained negative reaction to outward signs of piety. The issue continues to be a source of considerable tension in their relationship. If others question Yono about what it is like having a religiously observant Muslim wife Yono is quick to defend Endang’s right to practise her faith according to her own principles.

Aryati and Tomi (Couple 20)

Four years into their marriage Arytati has begun resenting the lack of time Tomi spends with the family. Tomi works long hours and on Sunday, his only day off, he goes to church twice. The burden of caring for their two children, one of whom has a learning disability, has increasingly fallen on Aryati’s shoulders. More recently, Tomi joined a Pentecostal study group and Aryati is dismayed at the effect the group has had on Tomi. One evening coming home Tomi started pressuring Aryati to consider becoming a Christian. He had ‘discovered’ that it was wrong to be married to someone who was not a Christian. Aryati became deeply upset. “When we decided to take this road we

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50 Extract of transcript with Endang 119 3:21-22.
51 Extract of transcript of interview with Yono 119 4:40-45.
52 Extract of transcript of interview with Yono and Endang 5:1-35.
had always felt loved by the ‘One Above.’ We felt we could marry as Muslim and Christian.” For Aryati, the new religious teachings threatened to destroy the foundation on which they had built their marriage.

Religious renewal can be a source of strength or a problematic factor in an interfaith marriage. Internal changes in the spiritual life of one partner in the marriage greatly affect the life of the other. These changes can enrich the marriage or become a source of tension. The narrative extract of Yono and Endang revealed the potential for conflict but also showed a high degree of flexibility, honesty and sensitivity in negotiating and adjusting to change. The narrative extract of Tomi and Aryati in contrast, reveals that religious revitalisation can lead to attitudes which threaten and undermine the integrity of the marriage.

7.4 INTERFAITH MARRIAGES AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

Both Islam and Christianity have teachings about how to foster a Christian or Muslim family and see children as very important for the ongoing life of the religious community. Families provide the context for the flourishing of human beings and their formation in every aspect of life including their religious identity. *Reflections on Interreligious Marriage: A Joint Study Document* published by the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue notes that when children arrive on the scene religious questions become more acute. The PCID/WCC *Joint Study Document* outlines four models of interfaith families. In some households children are brought up in a particular religion. There are also ‘mixed faith households’ in which some children are raised in the father’s faith and some in the mother’s. A third model is where children are raised to know about and be involved in both religions and are expected to later decide for themselves. A fourth model is one in which

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53 Extract of transcript of interview with Aryati I20 14:22-27.
children are raised with little knowledge or identification in either faith.\textsuperscript{54} Jonathan Romain offers a variation on these four models examining seven possible religious responses that may be adopted by children who grow up in religiously mixed households.\textsuperscript{55} For the purpose of this study however the four models identified in the PCID/WCC \textit{Joint Study Document} were used to analyse the interfaith families.

\subsection*{7.4.1 Models of interfaith families in the Indonesia sample}

Of the twenty-four households represented in the Indonesian sample group seventeen families brought their children up in one particular faith. This was the most prevalent model.\textsuperscript{56} There were five households who adopted the second model of ‘mixed faith siblings’.\textsuperscript{57} Two families with young children wanted to raise them to know about both faiths and expected they would later decide which faith they would adopt. In reality this proved difficult as in Indonesia by the time children have reached school age it is expected that their religion is registered so that they can join in the religious education curriculum of their faith.\textsuperscript{58} No children in the Indonesian sample were raised according to the fourth model. In the families in the Indonesian sample whilst there was variation in terms of religiosity it was usual for children to learn about and identify with a religious faith and for the families to insist that religious


\textsuperscript{55} Jonathan A. Romain, \textit{Till Faith Us Do Part: Couples who fall in Love across the Religious Divide} (London: Fount, 1996), 126-237. Children develop a single religious identity and have a religious education in one faith only; children develop a single religious identity but had a religious education in both faiths; children develop a dual religious identity and have a religious education in both faiths; children develop a syncretised faith where distinctions are blurred (and may lack of a coherent system of belief); children choose a third faith different from either parent; adult children may choose to have no religious identity despite having had a religious education in one or both faiths; adult children may choose to have no religious identity and they were given no religious education.

\textsuperscript{56} In eight of these children were raised as Muslims – Couples 1, 3, 10, 13, 16, 18, 19 and 22. Couple 19 had no children but were raising the children from Endang’s first marriage as Muslims. In nine families children were raised as Christians. Couples 5, 7 and 21 raised children as Catholics and Couples 2, 12, 15, 17 and 20 raised children as Protestant (or other Christian).

\textsuperscript{57} Couples 4, 6, 8, 9, 11 and 14 formed households with mixed faith siblings. Couple 4 were both practising their faith but tended to provide little religious guidance in the home.

\textsuperscript{58} Couples 23 and 24 had pre-school aged children.
formation was important, though this tends to be more true today than it was in the past.

7.4.2 Patterns of religious practice in parents and influence of extended families

The religious practice of parents and whether religious beliefs and practices are more central or peripheral in their lives can have an important impact on the religious education of children. The religious practice of couples in the Indonesian sample could be grouped as follows: both partners actively practising their faith and involved in their religious community; both partners practising their faith but one partner is more actively involved in their religious community; neither were actively practising their faith though both were believers; or the fourth pattern, both partner’s religious identification was low.

Thirteen couples fell into the first pattern. The second pattern was evident in eleven couples. No couples in the Indonesian sample fell into the third or fourth pattern. The faith of respondents was however not stagnant and in a few cases a partner who had not been practising their faith during the children’s formative years subsequently became more devout and at times they expressed their renewed faith through a desire to more intentionally shape the religious life of the children. The choice of religious education of children was often most influenced by the partner who was more actively practicing their faith however other factors also came into play, particularly the extent to which children were drawn into relationships with their extended families. A few examples highlight how other factors helped shape the religious upbringing of children in this study.

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59 See Yinger, “On the definition of interfaith marriage”, 104-107. Yinger suggested that in studying interfaith couples it was important to look at religious group membership as a variable rather than as an attribute.
60 Couples 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20 and 24.
61 Couples 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22 and 23.
62 Couples selected for this study were those in which one or both partners had an active faith commitment.
63 This was the case for Hasan (6); and Abdul (12) and lead to increased tension and competition in the marriage.
Sudarsono and Tuti (Couple 1)

Sudarsono and Tuti did not intentionally plan to raise their ten children as Muslims but the children were immersed in a largely Muslim village context. In his family Sudarsono was the only Christian, his parents and other members of his family were Muslims. Not surprisingly the children were shaped by their Muslim religious environment. Sudarsono also did not feel the need to insist that they follow him into the Christian faith.

Ibrahim and Anita (Couple 18)

Anita more actively practised her faith but the decision was made to bring up children as Muslims following their father, due to the strong influence and indeed pressure that was exerted by Ibrahim’s family.

Benny and Sri (Couple 3)

Benny was absent from home for seven years when the children were young. Suspected of being a communist sympathiser he languished in prison without trial. The shame connected with having a member of the family suspected of being PKI meant that Sri, even until today, never told others why Benny was absent during those years. It is also something they have not yet shared with their adult children. Benny was very grateful that Sri stood by him though many urged Sri to divorce her husband and remarry. Sri’s parents helped raise the children in his absence and when Benny was released and returned home the children were by then all practicing Muslims. The village context in which they lived was also one which was predominantly Javanese Muslim. Benny is a little disappointed that none of his children or grandchildren might ‘followed him

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64 Sudarsono converted to Christianity as a teenager but out of respect for his Muslim parents he put off being baptism until after his parents died.
65 In a similar way, Frank and Muriani (10) lived near Muriani’s parents who often cared for the children when they were young which helped shape the children’s Muslim education. Frank, a high ranking officer, was often absent from home and his extended family lived in Sumatra.
66 PKI stands for the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia).
into the Christian faith’ but he admires Sri’s faith which sustained her while he was in prison. This strong faith she passed on to the children.

7.5 NARRATIVES OF INTERFAITH FAMILIES AND PASSING ON FAITH TO CHILDREN

The following narrative extracts are illustrative of the complex patterns of interfaith family life across the Indonesian sample.

7.5.1 Bringing children up in one faith with an appreciation of both

7.5.1.1 Satisfied with the decision

Seventeen couples came to agreement to bring children up in a particular faith (with an appreciation of both faiths). Of these, ten couples appeared to achieve a good level of parental harmony regarding the decision they had made. In two cases it was not possible to ascertain levels of satisfaction due to divorce or death of a spouse. In five couples there were higher levels of dissatisfaction experienced by one partner. When the decision was made to bring children up in one faith the other partner played a crucial role in supporting the decision that has been made. Romain notes that achieving parental harmony is more important that the particular religious upbringing that is chosen. The narrative extract from Muchtar and Tuti illustrates some of the factors influencing the decision-making process for couple and what helped couples reach agreement.

67 Couples 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 13, 16, 17, 19 and 22 showed high levels of satisfaction. A few expressed some regrets, for example, Benny (3) regretted being absent from his children during their formative years.
68 This was the case for respondents 7 and 15.
69 This was the case for Couples 10, 12, 18, 20 and 21.
70 See Romain, Till Faith Us Do Part: Couples who fall in Love across the Religious Divide, 169. This point has also been noted by Jonathan Romain who noted that a partner might also undermine the decision which has been made. Examples of support that partners provided are included in a later section of this chapter under ‘Spiritual Companionship’.
71 Ibid, 173.
In 1962 Muchtar and Tuti married in a Catholic ceremony. Muchtar agreed to a Catholic wedding on the proviso that he would not be required to convert. The priest assured him this was not required but Muchtar was asked to give his assent to the children receiving a Catholic religious education. Despite Muchtar’s strong Muslim convictions he did not have a problem with his children being Catholics. Muchtar had come to value Tuti’s family’s strong Catholic convictions. Her family had been Catholics for generations and her father had been tortured and martyred by the Japanese because of his Catholic faith. Muchtar and Tuti’s three children were all baptised and given a Catholic schooling. Muchtar explained, “I felt, well, there are already too many Muslims in Indonesia – it doesn’t matter if two or three of my children turn out to be Catholics...”

Their second son, Daniel, later became a Catholic priest. Muchtar did not approve of the religious concept of celibacy which is accorded no place within Islam and it took Muchtar many years to accept Daniel’s decision. While visiting his son in Rome, and seeing how happy he was, Muchtar realised and accepted that this was his son’s vocation.

When his third son informed Muchtar that he was considering converting to Islam because he was wanted to marry a Muslim woman Muchtar asked his son to give careful consideration before taking this step remembering that he had been raised a Catholic from his childhood. Uppermost in Muchtar’s mind was not, ‘Oh good, my son wants to be a Muslim – that strengthens my side’, but instead, he wanted his son to choose freely and follow his own religious convictions.

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72 Roman Catholic policy changed in the early 1970s but at the time Muchtar and Tuti married he was required to give assent to a Catholic education.
73 Extract of transcript of interview Muchtar I5 2:7-9, 19-23.
74 This section is based on Transcript I5 10:31-49
7.5.1.2 Not yet reconciled

Some respondents encountered difficulties in being reconciled to the decision to allow children to be raised in their partner’s faith. This was the case for five couples in the study. Frank (10) felt a sense of disappointment and guilt that he had not provided a Christian environment for his children; Abdul (12) regrets not practising his faith when the children were young and failing to give serious consideration to the implications of their baptism; and Nini (21) is sorry that she entered marriage without discussing with Zainal her desire to have their child baptised. Anita (18) and Aryati (20) whose narratives are told here, confronted a number of difficulties in being reconciled to the decision to raise children in the faith of their partner.

*Anita and Ibrahim* (Couple 18)

Before Anita married Ibrahim he agreed that their children could be raised as Christians. At the time Ibrahim was not actively practicing his Muslim faith. After the birth of their first child Ibrahim’s family urged him to bring their child up as a Muslim. Ibrahim’s brother was particularly insistent. He told Anita that when a parent dies in Islam there is the need to have a child pray for you to have a safe passage to heaven. “If the children follow you Ibrahim will not have anyone to pray for him.”75 Wanting to avoid endless family quarrels Anita gave her permission. Her attitude was one of *mengalah* (yield/surrender).76

Bringing the children up as Muslims was not the path Anita would have chosen but she has sought to honour the commitment she made. Relinquishing the role of initiating children into her faith has been extremely difficult. Anita regularly reminds the children to *sholat* and arranged a religious teacher (‘guru ngaji’) to

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75 This section is based on extracts of the interview with Anita. A18 5: 24-29.
76 Anita used the terms ‘mengalah’ and ‘berkorban’ to express the need to make allowances in an interfaith marriage and not push her own point of view. She thought that this attitude was necessary to ensure marital harmony.
come to the home to teach the children to read the Qur’an. She also encouraged Ibrahim to diligently practise his Muslim faith so he could pass it on to the children. It has been particularly hurtful for Anita that Ibrahim’s attitude to her faith appears to have changed. Before they married Ibrahim drove her to church and picked her up afterwards. After their marriage he ceased doing this. Ibrahim has also expressed his dislike for Christmas decorations in the home and appears to resent Anita practising her faith. Anita feels a sense of loneliness going off to church on her own especially at Christmas.

Feeling the need to contribute to the children’s spiritual development, but not being able to do so openly, Anita resorted to giving the children a sprinkling of Christianity when she gets the chance whilst being careful not to speak against Islam. When putting the children to bed at night she taught them a simple prayer: “Lord Jesus I am going to sleep. Be with mum, be with dad, and all of us, protect us. Thank you for our health and for all the blessings you give to us.” When the children complain that their Arabic lessons are difficult Anita tells them they must follow their father but later they can choose for themselves. When her husband was away on the haj pilgrimage Anita took the children to church. There appears to be a lack of understanding on Ibrahim’s part and a lack of transparency on Anita’s part arising from the fact that the religious make-up of the home has not been negotiated in a way that is mutually satisfying and affirming. Unresolved resentments in turn have made it difficult for Anita to give whole-hearted support to the decision to raise the children as Muslims. Anita hopes and prays that her children might one day become Christians: “If God wants, He can save them…One day I am sure they will be saved.”

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77 Extract from interview with Anita A18 4:1-49.
78 In another example Frank (10), who has not fully accepted that his children are to be raised as Muslims, asks the children to say grace before the meal and prays ‘in the name of Jesus’ when his partner, Muriani is not present. One of his sons sometimes asks him to take him to a restaurant where they eat pork and he does not tell Muriani about these outings.
79 Extract from interview with Anita A18 5:9-29. In Anita’s religious understanding faith in Christ is essential for salvation.
Before their marriage Aryati agreed to Tomi’s request that the children be raised as Christians. When Tomi started talking about planning the baptism Aryati did not initially feel any concern but as the day approached she felt immensely sad and couldn’t face going to the church. As the children have grown older Aryati has supported Tomi in giving the children a Christian education. She gets the children ready for Sunday school and sometimes goes with them. As a family they celebrate both Christian and Muslim festivals. Aryati gives her children an appreciation of Islam as well as Christianity and the children see her practicing her Muslim faith. Aryati asks Tomi to be open to the possibility that when their children are older they may consider becoming Muslims. When asked how he would respond if this happened Tomi tells Aryati that he would want to discuss with them why they felt this was what they wanted to do but he would not forbid his children changing their faith. At the same time it would fill him with an immense sadness.

### 7.5.2 Mixed faith siblings

Five couples developed households which had ‘mixed faith siblings’. Some couples did not set out to establish such families. In other cases couples made the decision to raise some children as Muslims and some as Christians before children were born. This was true for Kadri and Rini and is reflected in the first narrative extract. The second narrative is illustrative of a theme which

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80 This narrative is based on extract from transcript I20 10:37-39. Tomi and Aryati have not had their second child baptised at this stage.
81 Extract from transcript of interview with Tomi I20 10:15-18
82 Couples 4, 6, 8, 11 and 14 formed households with mixed faith siblings.
83 Hartono and Mari (Couple 4) wanted their children to make their own decisions. Their mixed sibling family emerged out of giving children freedom to choose. When Hasan Udin and Kristiani (Couple 6) married Hasan agreed that children would be raised as Christians but after an experience of spiritual revitalisation he wanted to have a greater role in the religious education of his children and subsequently two of their three children were raised as Muslims.
84 Kadri and Rini (Couple 8) and Adri and Susan (Couple 11) made the decision that sons would be raised following their father’s Muslim faith and daughter would be raised as Christians following their mother’s faith.
emerged in the Indonesian sample where respondents expressed the hope that one of their children would ‘keep them company’.

Kadri and Rini (Couple 8)

Kadri never expected Rini to give up her Catholicism and Kadri never considered changing his faith. When discussing the issue of religious education of children they thought an equitable approach would be to raise sons as Muslims and daughters as Catholics, following their mother. Their first daughter Irene was baptised in a Catholic church. Kadri attended but was not required to make any promises. When their son Bima was born Rini felt a strong desire to also have him baptised but Kadri reminded her of what they had agreed and assured her that if one day Bima as an adult wanted to become a Catholic he would give him his support. “What is important is that we give input when he is young. He can make his own choice about what he wants later.” The interfaith family that Kadri and Rini have developed is one in which they offer each other mutual support. At Christmas it is Kadri who puts up the Christmas tree and during Ramadan Rini gets up early to prepare food for Kadri and her son. An interview with Irene, aged 32, and Bima, aged 21, testified to the tolerant and accepting interfaith family Kadri and Rini have created.

Nana and Anwar (Couple 14) and their daughter, Krystal

Nana very much hoped that one of her daughters would be a Muslim and suggested to her youngest daughter that she might like to ‘keep her mum company’. Krystal agreed and later attended Qur’anic lessons. She was taught to perform sholat by her mother. Krystal was also attending a Catholic primary school where she learnt to pray from the sisters and she loved her time in the Catholic environment. She later went to a government high school and attended

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86 Extract of transcript with Kadri I8: 4:29-49.
87 Extract of transcript of interview with Nana I14 4: 43-46.
Muslim classes but felt drawn back to Catholicism. When she was twenty-two she asked her mother’s permission to be a Catholic but Nana was not able to give her blessing at that time. Nana still hoped that she and Krystal could go on the Haj together. One day when Nana was sitting on her daughter’s bed she noticed the different religious objects in her room – a set of rosary beads, a statue of Maria, and a cross. Nana inquired if her daughter still felt sure that becoming a Catholic was the path she wished to take and on hearing her response gave her permission. Krystal is deeply grateful that her mother accepted her decision though it was disappointing for her. Krystal hopes that the strong bond of love between her and her mother means they can always ‘keep each other company’ even if it is not through sharing the one faith.

7.5.3 Brought up in both religious traditions

Two families in the Indonesian sample stated that they wished to bring children up with an appreciation of both faiths rather than directing them down the path of one. Their choice was partly based on the desire to create a tolerant and open, non-competitive religious environment which valued both faiths. They also expected that their children would later make up their own mind about their religious identity. Sumitro and Nurila (Couple 24) provide a narrative extract that illustrates this view.

**Sumitro and Nurila (Couple 24)**

Sumitro and Nurila met through interfaith dialogue networks and both have a strong commitment to interfaith understanding and wish to create an environment that helps their young son develop an appreciation of Islam and Christianity (as well as other faiths). They also want him to be exposed to positive values from his Javanese spiritual heritage. For Sumitro it is not so

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*88 Extract of transcript of interview with Krystal.*

*89 In Krystal’s words, her mother *menyerah* (yielded/ surrendered).*

*90 Another example was Yudi and Lidia (Couple 23). Referring to his son Yudi said, “He is more influenced by his mother now when he is little … maybe later he may learn to *sholat* and then make up his own mind.” See transcript 123:3:28-48.*
important that he become a Catholic but rather the important thing is that he becomes a good person.\textsuperscript{91} Nurila admits that in her heart she hopes her son might become a Muslim but what is more important is for him develop his own sense of religious identity. Sumitro and Nurila would like to give their son a breadth of interfaith understanding and religious freedom but they are not convinced that this kind of education is possible in the current political climate of Indonesia where most people find it difficult to accept that families could foster both faiths in the one family.\textsuperscript{92}

7.5.4 Religious freedom but limited religious guidance

The narrative extract from Hartono and Mari (Couple 4) reflects a household that provided enormous religious freedom but offered little guidance to assist children to develop a clear religious identity in one particular faith.

\textit{Hartono and Mari (Couple 4)}

Hartono and Mari agreed before they married in 1964 that if they had children they would let them choose for themselves. Both valued having an education that encouraged a breadth of thinking. Hartono also believed that faith cannot be forced but is up to the ‘One Above’ and everyone needs to follow their own sense of call.\textsuperscript{93} His attitude tends to be summed up in the words, “If they choose Islam, that’s fine. If they want to be Protestant, or Catholic, that’s fine. ‘Whatever you want to become, go ahead. It’s your decision’.”\textsuperscript{94}

When the children were young Hartono had a very demanding career which meant that he had little time to devote to the children’s religious education. Mari also now wonders if she and Hartono were too reticent in sharing their

\textsuperscript{91} Extract of transcript of interview with Sumitro I24 4:20-2410:1-46.
\textsuperscript{92} Extract of transcript of interview with Nurila I24 1:4-10.
\textsuperscript{93} Extract of transcript with Hartono I4 10: 26-32. Hartono prays five times a day and has been on the \textit{haj} but he never imposed his own faith on his children and thinks it was the right decision not to interfere in the religious choices of his children.
\textsuperscript{94} Extract of transcript with Hartono I4 10: 23-26.
faith with their children. Mari wanted to create a home life which avoided religious conflict but she now thinks it would have been better to have encouraged robust sharing of different religious views. She and Hartono just assumed that their children would develop religious belief without carefully thinking through what religious teaching, formation and direction they might need. Their five children each developed a faith but this tended to be influenced more by forces outside the home than from the family environment.\(^\text{95}\) Mari has had some regrets but is proud that the tolerance they cultivated in their home life continues to shape the lives of their children and grandchildren.

7.5.5 Some contrasting experiences: adult children

Researching the experience of those who have grown up in Muslim–Christian families is an area that to date has not been explored in depth. Interviews with eight adult children growing up in interfaith families revealed a range of different experiences to which some reference has already been made.\(^\text{96}\) A more detailed study would confirm whether the observation of Catholic theologian, Hadiwardoyo and Muslim teacher, Kausar Azhari Nur is true for this sample group. Hadiwardoyo and Kausar Azhari Nur have suggested that children in Indonesian tend to follow the mother’s religious faith because of her more central position in the life of the family.

In households characterised by understanding, acceptance and tolerance, adult children spoke with appreciation of their experience of having an interfaith family.\(^\text{97}\) Growing up celebrating Christmas and Lebaran and relating to both sides of their extended family had a major impact on children and provided

\(^{95}\) One of their five children decided to become a Muslim and ‘keep his father company’ after a Catholic sister at the school called him a ‘communist’ for not having a religion. She later married a Muslim. Another daughter became a Protestant choosing to join her spouse in his faith. Three children are Catholic and tended to take on Catholicism from the school environment. One married a Muslim and has a mixed faith family herself.

\(^{96}\) See Appendix 4 for a list of the adult children who were interviewed.

\(^{97}\) Krystal, the daughter of Anwar and Nana (Couple 14); Bima and Irene, the adult children of Kadri and Rini (Couple 6); Ita, the older daughter of Hasan and Kristiani (Couple 6) and Daniel, the son of Muchtar and Tuti (Couple 5), a Catholic priest appreciated the experience of growing up in a mixed faith home.
important skills in learning to relate to people of other faiths. A number spoke positively of having learnt to be comfortable socially interacting with both Muslims and Christians. Some felt that if they later had a partner who had a different faith they did not think this would not be a hindrance to their marriage.

One young adult felt strongly that as a result of their experience they would choose a marriage partner of the same religion. Matius was determined to marry someone who shared his faith after observing a great deal of tension between his parents. In another family two sisters had differing responses with one feeling strongly that an interfaith marriage was likely to bring additional problems and the other feeling positive about what she had learnt from both parents. Both sisters felt a sense of pride that they had developed a strong sense of religious identity despite growing up in a mixed faith home and unlike most of her friends they chose rather than inherited their faith.

In some cases adult children were raised as Muslim or Christian but converted to another faith later in their life. Krystal, the daughter of Anwar and Nana (Couple 14) converted to Catholicism choosing neither her mothers’s Muslim faith nor her father’s Protestant faith. Miriam, the daughter of Ketut and Kartini (Couple 17) had been raised in a Christian environment but was strongly drawn to Islam. A more detailed study of the children of the families in this study would be required to discover how widely movement across faiths occurs in

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98 Matius son of Abdul and Herawati (Couple 12) grew up feeling torn between his parents and saw religion being an issue of conflict in the family rather than something which united them.
99 Extract of transcript of interview with Susi and Ita daughers of Hasan and Kristiani (Couple 6) on 31 December 2006. Susi remembers feeling uncomfortable when she visited her Muslim grandparents’ home in the school holidays and was asked “Do you really think God is a human being? Do you think God has a son?” At one stage her father became a more fanatical Muslim. Susi was relieved when he later modified his views and gave the children freedom to choose their own religion. Susi thought that marrying a Christian would provide her with a greater sense of safety and security. Ita remembers her father teaching her to read the Qur’an and took her to Qur’anic recitation competitions. She was also taught to sholat. Later she was grateful that her father accepted her decision to become a Christian.
100 Extract of transcript of interview with Susi and Ita.
101 Nana was raised a Muslim and wanted to fulfil her mother’s request that she ‘keep her company’ but from her childhood felt drawn to Catholicism. Miriam, raised in a Christian village, went away to university for studies and in a new setting made friends beyond her Christian circle of friends. It had also been formative for her that on her mother’s side she had Muslim family members in Sumatra with whom she had spent holidays.
interfaith families. One narrative extract has been selected because of important missiological reflections that are implicit within the account.

Daniel, son of Muchtar and Tuti (Couple 5)

Daniel, now a Catholic priest believes he has learnt a great deal from both his parents and overall the experience of having a mixed faith family has enriched his ministry. His experience has also been helpful because of the high rate of Catholic internmarriage and the need to address pastoral issues that arise for interfaith families. Daniel also knows from experience that growing up in a dual faith family is not always easy. Problems can arise from external as well as internal influences. His grandparents on his father’s side tended to complain to his father, “Why are none of your children Muslim?” On his mother’s side there was the hope that Muchtar would convert to Catholicism. As a family they also discovered that arguments over doctrinal differences caused hurt and got them nowhere. Debating which was ‘the best religion’ was a rather fruitless exercise and they realised they needed to find different ways to engage in religious conversations.

Daniel is now a theological teacher and he has found it helpful to ponder the Gospel stories in which Jesus acknowledged the faith of those who were outside the Jewish nation. The Biblical story of the Roman Centurian is particularly meaningful for Daniel. The Roman Centurian admired and respected Jesus, and Jesus affirmed his faith and spiritual search. The Roman Centurian is “like an icon of his father.” Daniel has a deep appreciation of the role his father has played in his life and now views his interfaith family as a great blessing.

102 Extract from interview with Father Daniel. Daniel’s anecdotal experience makes him think that not all interfaith families are as harmonious as the one he grew up in.
103 Interview with Father Daniel, son of Muchtar and Tuti took place on 3 Jan. 2007.
In the Indonesian sample there was no evidence that being in an interfaith marriage led people to reduce their religiosity. A number became more religiously practising and most thought their faith had deepened in the course of their marriage. Some went through events which highlighted the importance of developing their spiritual life. A number recounted dreams or experiences of God’s closeness during times of illness or tragedy.\textsuperscript{105} A number spoke of important moments of encountering God in their life such as going on the \textit{haj}.\textsuperscript{106}

In the interfaith families represented in this study many of the children who adopted one faith were also encouraged to develop an appreciation of the other faith. How couples negotiated important religious rituals Christmas can provide a window into how couples develop interfaith families built on mutual respect.\textsuperscript{107} It was common across the Indonesian sample for family members particularly at Christmas and during the fasting month to ‘keep each other company’.\textsuperscript{108} One example was Anwar and Nana (14). At Christmas Nana put

\textsuperscript{105} After hearing that she had cancer in 2002 Rini’s Catholic faith became far more important to her (I8 7:16-25). Susan had a vivid dream in which she had fallen over in a muddy place and with no one to help her, she called out to Jesus. The dream initiated a positive spiritual change in her life (I11 4:28-35). Ronald had a vision of Jesus following the tragedy of loosing everything they owned in a fire (I16:4 41-42).

\textsuperscript{106} For Endang (19) going on the \textit{haj} led to a renewal of her faith. Muchtar also described his \textit{haj} experience as extremely meaningful. “Whatever important position or high status we might have when we go \textit{there} …we all wear the same clothes, there is no one with a high position and status. Everyone is the same. So I surrendered myself to God. And there was an awareness, most powerful for me, that human beings in God’s eyes are small (I5 6:3-14).”


\textsuperscript{108} Betty (2) got up early during Lebaran to prepare food for Lubis; Nana (14) and the children go with Anwar to church at Christmas and the family join Nana fasting some days; Herman (13) gets up early to share a meal with Rima and the children during the fasting month. In Muchtar and Tuti’s family (5) all the children would wake early to eat with their father and break the fast with him in the evening. For Adi and Susan (Couple 11), Christmas is a meaningful family occasion and at Lebaran their four children visit their parents and \textit{sungkam} as is the Muslim custom in Indonesia at Lebaran (children kneel and ask forgiveness from their parents) (I11 6:10-17). At Christmas it is Kadri (Couple 8) who puts up the Christmas tree whilst during Ramadan his Catholic wife, Rini gets up early to prepare food for her husband and son. These stories were common across the Indonesian sample.
up the Christmas tree and the family accompanied Anwar to church.109 During the fasting month the family kept Nana ‘company’.110 This created a strong sense of togetherness and was a practical expression of how both faiths were affirmed in the context of the family.

Respondents mentioned numerous ways their partner supported them in fulfilling their religious duties. Lubis appreciated how Betty always had a fresh *sarung* laid out in readiness for his early morning prayers.111 Titik appreciated how Ronald woke the children and got them showered and ready for their morning prayers.112

In terms of devotional practices most prayed according to their own tradition but for some having times of common prayer was an expression of the spiritual affinity they felt. Some prayed together during important times in the life of their family.113 Lubis and Betty (2) each prayed in their own way but conducted their prayers with an awareness of the other. Lubis explained, “I prayed first and her prayers followed. When she wakes she finds someone already waiting for the dawn.”114 When Muchtar (5) prays Tuti often read from the Bible or some devotional book and they shared insights with one another. “Sometimes he reads to me from the Qur’an and sometimes I share with him (what I am reading).”115 A number of couples prayed for each other when one was unwell.

The form joint prayer takes can be an issue. A few of the Christian respondents were unsure whether they should drop references to “Lord Jesus” and “Father” out of sensitivity to their partner’s feelings.116 There were also couples who

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110 Extract of transcript of interview with Nana I14 4:32-33.
111 Extract from transcript of interview with Lubis I2.
112 Extract from transcript of interview with Ronald and Tutik I16 5:20 and I16:8:5.
113 Dirman and Kustiah (Couple 9) for example prayed together before their daughter was married and when they were planning to make major changes to their house.
114 Extract from transcript of interview with Muhammad Lubis I2 2:26-32 and 7:27-28. At other times Betty would sit and read the Bible and pray and Lubis carried out his own prayers.
115 Extract from transcript of interview with Tuti 5 9:15-17
116 Tomi’s prayers made much reference to “Lord Jesus” which Aryati found difficult (20 12:34-45). Lani used to pray with her former husband and always ended her prayers, “in the
Some couples were experimenting with developing their own format for shared prayer. Sumitro and Nurila (24) for example learnt about each others’ devotional traditions and incorporated some of their partner’s devotional practices. Sumitro learnt to sholat so that there could be some occasions when he could pray with Nurila according to her tradition. Learning to pray according to Islam extended rather than replaced his Catholic devotional practices giving him a double heritage that he hoped he could pass on to his children. For Sumitro his interfaith marriage made religious boundaries less fixed. These examples suggest that some individuals and families develop overlapping (and in Sumitro’s case, multiple) religious identities.

There has been some discussion relating to common prayer between people of different faiths. Christian theologian Gavin D’Costa thinks such prayer is possible but requires the ability to sensitively honour the rich spiritual traditions of each faith. He envisages respectful ‘witnessing of each other at prayer’ in which the other partner enters into an inner participation in prayer, bringing their own nuances and resonances. A number of respondents in the Indonesian sample were moving in this direction. They were conscious of the differences between their two traditions but also developed a sense of spiritual companionship. Interfaith families may experience what Dupuis has called, “the deepest expression of dialogue” as both partners open themselves to God and to each other.

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117 See extract of interview with Adri and Susan I 11 2:24-26, and 6:10. Adri and Susan sometimes pray together with Adri using a Javanese meditative method of praying or semedi directed to Gusti while Susan offers a Christian prayer. Couples 14, 23 and 24 also mentioned Javanese spirituality and meditative forms of prayer.


119 See Wickeri, “Plurality, Power and Mission: Intercultural Theological Explorations on the Role of Religion in the New Millennium”, 11. Wickeri suggests that we are living in a time in which it has become necessary to redraw the boundaries which have been established in our religious traditions and suggests that increasingly it will be important to speak of our identity using such terms as ‘hybridity’, ‘collage’ and ‘syncreticism’.

120 Gavin D’Costa, The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000). Chapter 5 is on praying together.

121 Dupuis, Christianity and the Religions, 252.
7.7 IMPLICIT MISSIOLOGY AND CONCLUDING COMMENTS

A narrative study has opened up avenues for further missiological inquiry. In the process of meeting and marrying, negotiating differences and building an interfaith family Muslims and Christians were drawn into new understandings and new ways of expressing their faith and identity. In their response to various challenges, couples expressed implicit and at times explicit missiological understandings. In this concluding part of the chapter these are outlined.

7.7.1 Narratives of meeting and marrying: Blessed by God or living in sin?

Respondents grappled with the question of whether their marriage was part of God’s plan and purpose or whether it represented a state of “living in sin”. Narratives of meeting and marrying revealed the widespread use of the Indonesian term *jodoh* amongst respondents and the belief that God has had a hand in choosing their life partner. In the face of critical or negative reactions the idea that God is active and present in their marriage provided a firm foundation on which to build their marriage. The concept of *jodoh* conveys an understanding of God who is free to call people to embark on journeys that may take them along less travelled paths. This conviction gave couples the courage to make decisions that were not dependent on the approval of their family or religious community. In a communitarian society which highly values relationships it was still a very difficult decision to go against the prevailing societal view that it is ‘better to have one faith under one roof’. When religious teachings and inner conviction collide respondents may experience significant levels of inner tension. Whether people felt ‘blessed by God’ or saw themselves as ‘living in sin’ tended to be an indicator of respondents’ missiological understandings and whether they saw God as active in their lives and in their marriage. It also indicated whether respondents interpreted religious teachings as timeless, authoritative and determining of behaviour, or whether God is seen as being free to act outside these prescriptions and carefully designated boundaries.
7.7.2 Narratives of negotiating difference

In previous sections the various ways couples make adjustments were explored particularly when one partner makes the decision to retain or revert to their original faith, or when there was an experience of religious renewal. In some cases revitalisation of faith led to enhancement in the couple’s relationship. In a few narratives increased levels of religious fervour were accompanied by higher levels of intolerance. When this occurred tensions significantly increased. Some couples navigated their relationship through rocky waters and arrived at a greater level of mutual understanding.\(^{122}\)

Across the Indonesian sample it was the view that people should be free to exercise their faith without being forced to change their religious beliefs.\(^{123}\) Religious convictions are not like clothes that can be easily changed.\(^{124}\) Some referred to the Qu’ranic precept that there must be no coercion in matters of faith. The Indonesian expression *hati nurani* proved to be a rich concept. Of Arabic origin, *hati nurani* refers to that which is at the deepest core of one’s being – one’s conscience, or inner voice.\(^{125}\) Mutual respect in the way couples related to one another was a strong indicator of a missiological perspective that affirmed that God has revealed truth to each person and people must be free to follow their own conscience.

Other Indonesian concepts that respondents drew from included the concept of *nrimo* (acceptance), *toleransi* (tolerance) and *mengalah* (surrender/yield). These ideas combined, with a strong conviction that God is supreme over all and calls people according to God’s purposes, provided a firm foundation to live with

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122 Where couples were able to talk through issues and were willing to accommodate difference or modify offending attitudes or behaviour tensions were reduced.
123 For example Muhammad Lubis (2) says “You can invite but never pressure or force someone to change their faith. In principle, religion is something personal and cannot be forced.” (I2: 5:31-37) Adri (11) and Muchtar (5) and Yono (19) were very clear that they had no intention of changing their religion and would not expect their partner to either.
124 Kadri (I8:1:37-38) used this expression but it appeared elsewhere. Kartini spoke of the process of converting to Christianity as one in which she felt the new clothes ‘do not fit’.
125 *Hati* refers to heart and *nurani* is derived from the Arabic *nur* meaning light. When people speak of following their *hati nurani* they are referring to the ‘inner voice’, the light illuminated within, which is most pure and true. This can be connected to God’s revealed truth.
Couples also developed from this foundation a theological framework to promote religious freedom and tolerance, and confront views which might be considered *fanatik* or unaccommodating of difference.

Narratives revealed the need for continuous negotiation and adjustment. Couples who had a set of shared values drawn from their respective faith traditions or a common cultural heritage had additional resources to assist them in building a life together.

### 7.7.3 Narratives of interfaith families and passing on faith to children

Decisions couples made regarding the religious education of children represented a major way in which their two belief systems were brought into dialogue with one another. Most couples agreed to bring up the child in one faith with an appreciation of both faiths. Another model popular in the Indonesian sample was ‘mixed faith siblings’. In a few cases couples were attempting to bring children up in both faiths. In the Indonesian sample, the faith practice of parents was a significant factor in influencing decisions concerning the religious nurture of children but context and proximity to the extended family also played an important role.

More than half the couples were satisfied with the decisions they had made in respect to the religious education of their children. Other respondents struggled with decisions that had been made. They may have felt pressured to agree to raise their children in the faith of their partner or only given lip-service to what was agreed. Choosing the religious faith of children required sensitivity and careful negotiation by partners. Even when these qualities were present there was the potential for tension. In a few cases a tug-of-war between parents was observed in narrative accounts. Although these were not widespread in this

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126 Couples also found a sense of peace in entrusting their partner and children to God’s care believing that God is working in their lives.
study, where this did occur children received conflicting and confusing messages which could be a cause for great distress.

When respondents believed the way of salvation lay in their religious tradition only it could be a particularly difficult to relinquish control of the religious education of children. When respondents had a positive estimation of their partner’s religious tradition it was somewhat less difficult to entrust children into the spiritual care of their partner and their partner’s religious community. Even so, some respondents experienced a sense of sadness when they did not have the opportunity to initiate children into their faith. This was mitigated by finding appropriate ways both partners could help shape the religious worldview of children. Often both partners had the desire to pass on to their children some aspects of their religious heritage (even if they had agreed to bring the child up in the other faith). If this was negotiated sensitively and both partners felt that their faith was affirmed in the context of the family, this contributed to higher levels of marital happiness and satisfaction. When a partner felt that their faith was not recognised in the home they may experience a profound sense of loss and sadness.

The concept of ‘having company’, literally ‘to have a friend’ (menemani), was quite widespread in the Indonesian sample. ‘Keeping each other company’ in celebrating Christmas and Lebaran helped create a supportive home environment which affirmed and honoured both faiths and enhanced a sense of spiritual companionship.127 Where both partners had a set of shared values and had an appreciation of each other’s devotional traditions the sense of spiritual companionship was heightened. There were many examples of partners actively supporting one another in fulfilling their religious duties and supporting their children’s religious education. Many in the Indonesian sample incorporated rituals and traditions from both faiths and raised children to learn about both faiths.

127 This point was an important theme in this study and is mention by Keen. See Jim Keen, *Inside Intermarriage: A Christian Partner’s Perspective on Raising a Jewish Family* (New York: URJ Press, 2006), 121. Keen suggests that when each partner feels their religious heritage is honoured both partners are likely to be a happier as long as there are not attempts to sabotage the decision that has been made regarding the children’s religious education.
The theological framework respondents adopted in relation to their partner, tended also to operate in the way they interacted with their children. Where religious freedom and tolerance were prevalent between partners these qualities tended also to be visible with children. This meant that parents allowed adult children the freedom to follow their own sense of call.\textsuperscript{128} Adult children who had grown up in a harmonious family in which they observed loving and respectful relations tended to develop a positive view of interfaith marriages. Adult children from households in which religious conflict was prevalent expressed strong reservations. Most of the young adults interviewed appreciated the fact that their experience of growing up in an interfaith family in which they had related to both sides of their extended family had given them an understanding of Islam and Christianity and the ability to interact with ease with Muslims and Christians.

\subsection*{7.7.4 Concluding comments}

This narrative study has thrown light on the experience of Muslim–Christian couples in Indonesia. With its religiously diverse population Indonesia is likely to continue to see significant numbers of interfaith marriages. Such couples face external and internal challenges in addition to the challenges generally faced by married couples. Many acknowledged that an interfaith marriage has more complications. At times it is in defiance of legal, religious and societal pressures that Muslims and Christians make the decision to enter an interfaith marriage and this is particularly the case in the current environment that has become less conducive for interfaith couples. Some of the couples in this study faced opposition from their families and from prevailing attitudes in society. In some cases the message received by couples from their religious community was that they were ‘living in sin’ and were outside God’s will for their lives. Couples also faced internal challenges. There were significant adjustments couples made and their marriage involved constant negotiation. Respect for

\textsuperscript{128} Muchtar (5) accepted his son, Daniel’s decision to become a priest; Nana (14) accepted Krystal’s decision to be a Catholic; Ketut and Kartini (17) supported Miriam’s decision to convert to Islam.
their partner and their deeply held convictions appeared to be a major contributor to marital happiness and harmony. Having a set of shared values helped couples create a sense of togetherness and common vision.

Having two faiths ‘under the one roof’ carries with it the potential for conflict and disappointment as well as for great enrichment and spiritual companionship. The arrival of children and making decisions about their religious upbringing represented the greatest challenge for couples. Having a deep and abiding belief in the presence and blessing of God in their marriage provided a foundation that sustained couples and helped them persevere in overcoming difficulties. Despite the additional complicating factors that an interfaith marriage entails, the testimony of a significant number of the Muslim and Christian respondents in the Indonesian sample was that strong and loving bonds can be forged across religious differences.
CHAPTER 8
NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE AUSTRALIAN INTERVIEWS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the missiological implications which can be drawn from the interview transcripts and narrative extracts of Australian Muslim–Christian couples. Chapter Two and Chapter Five provided the background for this chapter by providing an overview of mission and da‘wah issues in the Australian multicultural context and a review of relevant literature in the area of intercultural and interfaith marriage in Australia. With these ‘storied landscapes’ in mind this chapter now examines the empirical data obtained from conducting indepth interviews with twenty two Australian respondents representing fifteen interfaith couples.1 Particular narrative extracts based on transcripts of interviews were selected which highlight challenges respondents face in building their life together. How Australian respondents in this study make meaning of their lives and the mission understandings they develop is investigated using narrative inquiry. Narratives of meeting and marrying; negotiating differences; and passing on faith to children provide the framework for this chapter.

8.2 NARRATIVES OF MEETING AND MARRYING

8.2.1 Expanding horizons

Interviews with respondents in the Australian sample revealed a variety of fascinating stories of how couples met and ultimately decided to marry. The

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1 Refer to Appendix 3b for a list of respondents in the Australian sample who participated in this project. This chapter represents Step 4 of the Missiological Inquiry Approach explained in Chapter One.
purpose of this inquiry was not to explore economic or demographic factors which might enhance the attractiveness of marrying in or outside one’s own group though this is an interesting line of inquiry. The aim instead has been to draw out from narrative extracts some of the factors that relate to faith understandings which may have missiological implications.

In the Australian sample a large number of the marriages were intercultural as well as interfaith marriages. One theme that emerged in a number of interviews was the way in which different factors in a person’s upbringing or character may have contributed to their decision to marry across cultural and religious differences. This is illustrated in the story of Pauline and Rahmat (Couple 2).

**Pauline and Rahmat**

Pauline came from a strong Catholic upbringing in a rural part of Australia. Pauline describes her home life as one that was both protected but which also encouraged her to have a curiosity for wider horizons. Her father spent time with Aboriginal fringe dwellers on the edge of town, offering transport into town for Mass on Sundays. Pauline sometimes accompanied her father and was struck by the totally different way of life she observed in the Aboriginal camps. She witnessed economic poverty but also strong relationships and a sense of cohesion as a community, which she admired. Pauline later decided to study anthropology and Indonesian studies. It was the 1960s and a growing number of Asian students were studying in Australian universities. While at university Pauline met Indonesian Rahmat. As their friendship grew Pauline began to become aware that some people would see a Catholic– Muslim relationship as a problem. Looking back Pauline wonders if she was naïve or simply idealistic. Liaisons between Catholics and Protestants were frowned upon, and her Protestant aunt was definitely viewed as being ‘on the other side of the fence’.

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3 Refer to Appendix 8b.
Pauline had always been more interested in the person rather than the label. When Rahmat finished his studies and was planning to return to Indonesia Pauline applied for a job to work in Indonesia. Neither wanted the relationship to end. Pauline also thought that it was important for her to understand the Indonesian language and culture.

Pauline’s cross-cultural journey resonates with the experience of Rahmat. Brought up in a traditional Muslim village Rahmat moved to Bali to attend high school and during that time was struck by a new realisation – ‘non-Muslims might also be good people!’ Rahmat later set about learning English and relished the opportunity to expand his knowledge of another culture through taking up a scholarship to study in Australia. When Rahmat met Pauline he felt a strong sense of affinity. He met someone who, like him, had a deep sense of faith, combined with openness and an interest in understanding the world. Through their relationship the horizons of both were expanded.

A key theme that emerged in the Australian narrative extracts of meeting and marrying was this sense of having one’s horizons broadened. Embarking on a close interfaith friendship took people beyond the limits of their cultural and religious upbringing. Some of those interviewed in this study were indeed trail blazers who married at a time when even Catholic-Protestant marriages were not accepted. Couples who more recently married across religious differences echoed the same sense of excitement and adventure. Five of the Australian-born Christian women married Indonesian Muslim men who were studying in Australia. In each of these cases their relationship launched them on a path of language learning and becoming immersed in Indonesian culture. It was the case that their partners embarked on an equally challenging cross-cultural journey learning to understand Australian culture. It helped enormously that

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5 Jillian and Jamal (Couple 7) for example met when they were both studying at university in the 1970s. Jillian was studying sociology and interested in other faiths. She felt that meeting Jamal ‘opened her eyes’ to new experiences and to an understanding of the complex issues in the Middle East. Extract from transcript of interview with Jillian: A7 2:4–14.
6 This was the case for Tanya (Couple 1), Pauline (Couple 2), Evelyn (Couple 3), Kate (Couple 4) and Hannah (Couple 9).
many of these respondents had a sense of adventure and were willing to launch into learning another culture. Many also had a pronounced sense of intellectual inquiry which allowed them to critically reflect on their own cultural and religious heritage and the culture and religious heritage of their partner.

A common thread through many of the stories was the capacity to view difference as something that makes life interesting rather than as something to be feared. There was an inner disposition to welcome and delight in differences. In the example of Rahmat and Pauline, a delight in difference was combined with a sense of affinity. Across their differences they were able to forge a deep and intimate bond. Through friendship they saw beyond labels of ‘Muslim’ or ‘Christian’ and had their understanding of the world expanded.

Every marriage involves a step of faith. The couples in the Australian sample exemplified this. They were willing to respond to an inner sense of call even though embarking on this path threatened to disrupt their world and take them in a radically new direction. In this light, Muslim–Christian couples might be viewed as those who model a risky understanding of what ‘faith’ entails in terms of stepping out into the unknown but trusting that they would find a way through whatever difficulties they might encounter.

### 8.2.2 Opposition and support from families and religious communities

In interviews respondents often described in vivid detail the various twists and turns in their relationship. How their immediate family and friends reacted; and how members of their religious community and religious leaders responded was also significant. In preparing for the marriage very few respondents have the opportunity to discuss with an experienced counsellor or religious leader issues that might emerge in a marriage between a Muslim and Christian which retrospectively they believe would have been helpful. Couples encountered a variety of reactions from those around them ranging from reservation and occasionally opposition, to a surprising degree of acceptance. Where support was present this was deeply valued. When it was lacking respondents went on
regardless believing that the bonds between them were strong. Tanya and Munir (Couple 1) who married in 1954 encountered a variety of reactions from others.

**Tanya and Munir**

Writing in her university journal in 1959 Tanya spoke of some of the challenges of marrying someone of a different cultural and religious background. “Such marriages are much like other marriages…When nothing that can be said against it matters any more, there is a very good case for it. You have, perhaps, to be a little more sure in the case of inter-racial marriage, to make up for the fact that your friends are a little less sure. I don’t advocate it in principle and for its own sake but I can recommend it in practice – especially “the piebald brats”.7

Tanya was active in the Student Christian Movement at University and sought the opportunity to talk with a minister concerning her decision to marry Munir. Tanya’s parents were supportive of the marriage but the minister advised against it and expressed concern that Tanya might lose her faith.

Munir encountered strongly negative views from Indonesian friends and work colleagues when he told them he wished to marry Tanya. Munir had served in Indonesia’s independence struggle and in a post-independent Indonesia and marrying a foreigner was viewed as being unpatriotic. He decided to marry Tanya despite being told that the marriage would not help his career (his public service career was cut short not long after).8 Both Munir and Tanya were strong-willed and independent individuals who followed their own convictions despite concerns expressed by others.

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7 Extract from a paper written by Tanya for her University paper in 1959.
8 Extract from transcript of interview with Munir A1 3:13-33.
Rebecca and Ammar (Couple 6)

Rebecca grew up in Australia with immigrant parents. Her Christian parents, were deeply suspicious of Muslims and were distressed when they heard of her relationship with Ammar. Rebecca went ahead with the wedding against her parents’ wishes and they did not attend the civil marriage ceremony. Over the years the relationship with her parents improved. Shortly before her father died he told Rebecca that she had married a good man. As Rebecca retells me the story her eyes fill with tears of regret. Her parents never allowed Ammar to get close to them and, “they missed out knowing him”.

Imran and Kate (Couple 3)

Imran and Kate had a Christian marriage in Australia and later returned to Indonesia to have a second marriage ceremony. Imran’s family was not unhappy that he was marrying an Australian but his father did suggest to Imran that he try and bring Kate into the Muslim faith. His father also stated that in matters of religion there should be no pressure exerted. In the wedding ceremony Kate repeated words she was asked to say not understanding the full meaning. From the point of view of Imran’s family Kate had pronounced herself a Muslim but at the time Kate saw herself as being adopted into Imran’s cultural and religious tradition.

Yusuf and Michelle (Couple 15)

Yusuf and Michelle married in 2006. Michelle’s friends and her parents of Anglo-Celtic background struggled with her decision to marry someone ‘from the Middle East’. Michelle’s friends who she described as broad-minded still expressed concerns to her that the marriage wouldn’t work. Her father felt that Yusuf’s culture was so different from Michelle’s culture and that of her family that there would undoubtedly be problems. “Their family will make you be

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9 Extract from transcript of interview with Rebecca A6 1:19-20.
10 From extract of interview with Imran A 4:9:14-16.
part of their culture. Their religion is their culture as well...If you marry into their family you will have to do whatever they want and it will have to be all their way.”

Michelle felt determined to go ahead. Her parents found it very helpful to discuss the marriage with the Uniting Church minister in whose church the marriage was to be conducted. The minister’s positive approach and the congregation’s willingness to welcome an interfaith couple in the church helped ease the fears of Michelle’s family.

Positive responses

Many of the Australian respondents spoke of the strong support they received from families and friends and from their religious community. A number came from Christian families that were quite devout, whose Christian values had helped them embrace culturally inclusive attitudes. Rahmat received a positive welcome from Pauline’s Catholic parents and indeed the entire rural area in which they lived. Another respondent Kate, said that her father, who was an ordained minister, “never expressed any critical word”.12 Hannah, whose father was a Methodist lay preacher and Sunday school superintendent struck up a very close friendship with Hanif from the beginning. Hannah’s mother, after some initial hesitation, did the same. “Hanif and mum discussed whether I would be allowed to go to Muslim heaven and would he be allowed to go to a Christian heaven! They got on so well and seemed to see eye to eye, so she wasn’t worried any longer”. One of Hannah’s relatives was delighted at their marriage, “Thanks for marrying a Muslim Hannah. It meant that when I wanted to marry a Catholic there was no problem!”13 The positive stories in this inquiry as well as the stories of hesitation and concern provided a snapshot of the changing shape of Australian society in recent decades as it has expanded to embrace new multicultural and multifaith perspectives.

11 Extract from transcript of interview with Michelle A15 1:19-23, 26-30.
12 Extract from the transcript of interview with Kate A4 3:32.
13 Extract from transcript of interview with Hannah A9 2: 19-29.
8.2.3 Planning the marriage ceremony

In Australia there is no legal impediment to interfaith marriages. There is also social acceptance of people’s right to choose their marriage partner. As couples planned their marriage, decisions were made about whether they would marry in a church, have a Muslim ceremony, have two ceremonies, devise a joint marriage ceremony, or choose a civil marriage. For some couples there was the additional question of whether they marry in Australia or the country of origin of the other partner or indeed whether they should have two ceremonies. An additional factor for some was to ensure that their marriage was not only legal in Australia but would be religiously valid if they travelled overseas to visit or live in the country of origin of the Muslim partner.

Making decisions about the kind of marriage ceremony therefore required careful negotiation. Speelman makes the point that ritual moments can make religious differences more clearly visible.14 Munir and Tanya (Couple 1) decided to get married in Indonesia and have a Muslim ceremony. For Tanya however, it was also important for her to have elements that acknowledged her Christian identity. A Christian minister in Indonesia had been approached but told her that he was unable to assist. On the morning of the wedding, with Munir’s agreement, Tanya invited a few Australian friends over and asked one to read the words of the Methodist marriage service. “Our friend read the part of the minister, including the love and honour ‘bit’ but not obey. And we were pronounced man and wife. That was my idea – because I needed to have that. That is what I knew as a marriage.”

Of the fourteen couples represented in this study four had a Muslim ceremony; three had a Christian ceremony; two had a civil marriage ceremony though in one of these a minister was also present who was asked to lead; and four had a Muslim and Christian ceremony. In one unusual story, Yusuf and Michelle had a joint ceremony conducted in a church led by an imam and a Christian clergy.

Yusuf knew Michelle very much wanted to marry in a church and walk down the aisle and he knew this was also something that was important for Michelle’s parents. Yusuf and Michelle therefore began inquiries about whether there was a church in which they could be married. The minister they approached had the view that the church should be a place of welcome for people of all different backgrounds. She was very impressed by the couple and took the issue to her Church Council and Elders who agreed. The minister also checked to see if there were any official rules in her denomination about joint Christian and Muslim marriage ceremonies and discovered that this was not an issue about which the church had a clear policy.

Negotiating the logistics proved quite challenging. The minister had never participated in a Muslim wedding and had found it difficult finding out from the imam exactly how he wished the service to be conducted. When the day arrived the minister welcomed Yusuf and Michelle, their guests and the imam. She then gave the next part of the service into the imam’s hands. It was a very moving experience (and a relief) to hear the imam speak of the meaning of marriage in a way that echoed her Christian understanding. After the imam signed the marriage certificate the minister concluded by offering a prayer of blessing giving thanks for the love that Michelle and Yusuf had discovered and the way in which that love bridged their religious differences. The couple and their families and guests as well as the minister and imam were pleased with the outcome.

Members of the local ministers’ group were surprised and shocked to hear the minister share her experience with them of allowing a Muslim marriage ceremony to take place in the church. On the other side, the imam was aware that others might also be critical of his actions and he did not want it widely publicised that he had conducted a Muslim marriage ceremony in a church.
Yusuf and Michelle’s story highlights the challenge interfaith marriages present for religious leaders and religious communities. Some struggle with the question of whether ‘God is at work here’ or whether they should discourage this course of action. In this narrative extract the minister was positively predisposed to the idea and had the support of her elders but others may not have made the same choice. The imam would not usually wish for this course of action but he knew Yusuf’s family well and wanted to assist them. He also knew that it was essential for Yusuf and Michelle to have a marriage recognised by Muslim law if they wished to travel to the Middle East to visit the country of Yusuf’s birth.

This section concludes with an extract from an interview with the minister who conducted Yusuf and Michelle’s wedding.

If Yusuf and Michelle can work it out together and live a life that honours each of them then their families and their friends and everybody around them will benefit from that, and it will be a modelling for peace. If there are some people in the community who can live together and show that it can be done, living with respect and integrity then this will have an effect on both communities. It’s taking mission a step further. It is not Christian or Islamic mission – it’s ‘mission for humanity’ more than anything specially in the present climate of polarisation and bad stories about ‘the others’. Yusuf and Michelle in a positive way, counteract that.¹⁵

It might be that joint marriage ceremonies can take place in the Australian context whilst such initiatives are difficult to find occurring in other places. Australia’s religious freedom and positive interfaith relations may open up the development of religious protocols in this area.

8.2.4 God is in this…

A number of respondents spoke of experiencing a sense of peace and guidance in making the decision to marry. They had a conviction that God had a hand in

¹⁵ Extract of interview with a Uniting Church minister on 23 October 2006.
bringing them together and believed God was present in their marriage. This is illustrated in the following three narratives.

**Hanif and Hannah (Couple 9)**

Growing up in Australia in the 1970s Hannah found it rare to find men to date who were practising Christians. While studying in Indonesia she met Hanif and though he was a Muslim she felt a strong sense of spiritual connection. Hanif lived out a deep faith in a way that was not so different from the way Hannah also lived. “I felt Hanif was closer to me than most young Australian men who used to like their drinking and were without religion altogether. I felt close to him as a person of faith.”  

For Hannah, this sense of spiritual affinity has been present throughout the twenty six years of their life together.

Hanif used the Indonesian term *jodoh* (described in detail in chapter 7) to explain the process that led to him marrying Hannah: “We do not choose our own *jodoh*. Our *jodoh* is a blessing from God. I hand over everything to the One who is above all.” As a devout Muslim it was also important for Hanif to be able to point to Qur’anic texts that assured him that Islam permitted Muslim men to marry Christian women. Quoting from QS 5: 5 and QS 2:12 Hanif repeated his conviction, “I believe Hannah is my *jodoh.*”  

Hanif also experienced with Hannah a strong sense of spiritual affinity. Quoting again from the Qur’an, Hanif told of the common message revealed by Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, Moses, Jesus and the prophets. Hanif affirms that God has declared, “We make no distinction between any of them.”

**Luzio and Asti (Couple 14)**

Luzio was not brought up in a practising Christian home. When he met Azita, he had a memorable experience that set him on a spiritual search. After

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16 Extract from transcript of interview with Hannah A9 4:12-17.
17 Extract from transcript of interview with Hanif 9b:1:11.
18 Extract from transcript of interview with Hanif: A9 1:8-10, 13.
spending time together at a folk festival Luzio felt a profound sense of loss when they parted. He also had an overwhelming sense of the presence of God when he realised that there was nothing he could do to gain Azita’s friendship unless God made it possible. When there was the opportunity to meet again Luzio saw their budding relationship as a gift from God. “I felt that God had caused all of this to happen.” Luzio’s spiritual awakening paralleled his growing relationship with Azita. On Azita’s part, she found it difficult to know how to respond when she discovered Luzio was going to church and wanted to be baptised. She had had negative impressions of Christians but Luzio changed that. Through Luzio she felt a renewed sense of God’s presence in her own life, “If there was nothing out there, he wouldn’t have come into my life.” She believed their relationship was a gift of God in her life and she accepted that Luzio’s calling was to be a Christian. As she got to know Luzio more there were many aspects of his faith she came to admire.

_Diwand Asti_ (Couple 11)

Asti was serving in a Christian ministry role in an Indonesian church in Australia when she met Diwan and began a friendship with him. Leaders of the congregation disapproved and issued an ultimatum that she discontinue the relationship. Asti told her elders that she was praying for God’s guidance but because this was not the answer her elders wanted to hear she was asked to step down from her leadership role until the matter was resolved. Asti returned to Indonesia hurt and confused by what had happened as she sought to discern God’s leading in her life. She had always had a strong sense of call to serve God and the church but she also had a strong sense that Diwan was to be her life-partner. Her parents were supportive as she spent time in prayer and reflection. They were sure God would guide their daughter and they assured her that they would accept whatever decision she made. Feeling a strong sense

20 Extract from transcript of interview with Azita A14 15: 14-17.
of confirmation that God would continue to use her in serving the church and that it was God’s will for her to marry Dirwan she returned to Australia.\textsuperscript{21}

Asti does not necessarily encourage interfaith marriage but she believes she was given a clear sense of direction and this was the right decision for her. She was confident to take this step because of the peace (\textit{damai sejahtera}) she experienced as a gift from God.\textsuperscript{22} Asti continues to feel grateful to God that she can use the gifts God has given her in ministry and service and she has a supportive and loving husband.

Each of these stories illustrate a theme that emerged in the sample amongst a number of respondents, that ‘God is in this’. This conviction was not only present in successful interfaith marriages but was also referred to by respondents whose marriages were ultimately not successful. Even in these cases, respondents often expressed appreciation for what they had learned through their intercultural and interfaith marriage and in particular, for the gift of their children.\textsuperscript{23} Feminist theologian Mary Hunt has written, “Friendships do not all work or last over time. Some do, but quality not quantity is a measure of their value. There is some luck involved, and… there are skills for building, keeping, and leaving friendships ….”\textsuperscript{24} For couples in the Australian sample having the conviction that God was active in their marriage and in their lives enabled them to confidently face the future with hope.

\textsuperscript{21} Extract from transcript of interview with Asti A11 1: 9-10.
\textsuperscript{22} Extract from transcript of interview with Asti A11 4:1-23.
\textsuperscript{23} Extract from transcript of interview with Imran and Kate A4 12:29 and A4 13:36-45. At the time of the interview Imran and Kate, after thirty four years of marriage, had decided to go separate ways. They both feel grateful to God for the years they have spent together creating an intercultural family in which there has been tolerance and acceptance of each another.
\textsuperscript{24} Mary Hunt, \textit{Fierce Tenderness: A Feminist Theology of Friendship} (New York: Crossroad 1991), 7
8.3 NARRATIVES OF NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCE

Adjustments need to be made in every marriage as circumstances change and there is the need for revision and renegotiation. Marriages across religious differences are likely to be more complicated than relationships between people from similar backgrounds. A conversation with Evelyn (Couple 4) provided a glimpse into the adjustments that interfaith and intercultural couples make. “Everything has to be negotiated and you can’t assume anything. There is accommodating cultural sensitivities, no dogs though I would love to have a dog; no drinking; no pork; not displaying affection in public…. ” Evelyn had to learn about culturally acceptable ways of relating in Indonesian culture. She discovered by accident for example, that it was not appropriate or permissible for Hamza to be alone in the house with his daughter-in-law. Evelyn and Hamza have had to negotiate many areas of difference with sensitivity. Those in interfaith marriages often find their world view “stretched beyond its original boundaries”. 25

It has been noted that those in interfaith marriages live in a state of “permanent and continuous negotiation.” 26 Whether couples saw differences as positive or as a problem was an important factor. Having respect for a partner’s faith and devotional practices was also crucial. Speelman discovered in her Dutch study that doctrinal differences tended to be less of a concern if other relational elements were in place and there was the ability to work towards a “convergence of vision”. 27 Good communication, having similarities in outlook and the ability to express togetherness were additional facts Speelman found to be important. These factors were also important for the Australian respondents in this study.

Three narratives illustrate adjustments made by interfaith and intercultural families. The first relates to a practical matter concerning the planning of

26 Speelman, Keeping Faith, 83, 297.
27 Ibid, 204.
family meals; the second depicts complicating factors in choosing a name for a newborn daughter and deciding which continent in which to live; the third relates to how to respond to a partner’s increased religiosity. Religious identity is often embedded in culture and in these narratives it is also at times difficult to distinguish between issues that are cultural and those which are religious.

Hanif and Hannah (Couple 9)

After marrying in 1981 and living in Indonesia, Hannah and Hanif decided to make their life together in Australia. Interfaith marriages have some additional complications according to Hanif. He would encourage those contemplating an interfaith marriage to give serious consideration of the difficulties involved and the benefits of couples having one faith. Hanif for example has had to make many adjustments that are involved in migrating to Australia including accepting a job with far less status. It is recommended that a Muslim marries a fellow Muslim and Hanif suggests this path is likely to be ‘easier’. At the same time Hanif thinks that there is no guarantee that marrying someone of the same faith and from the same village will be more successful. He describes his own interfaith marriage as a dynamic experience. “What is most important is understanding and respect for each other; and faithfulness to God, who has given us different faiths and different cultures. It has been a blessing for me.”

One example of how Hanif and Hannah have had to negotiate differences relates to Hanif’s dietary requirements. When he first visited Australia he remembers how difficult it was to find halal meat. Things have changed since then but Hanif appreciates that over the years Hannah has always willingly accommodated his needs. Not only that, but during the fasting month Hannah prepares food so that it is ready for him in the morning. Hanif feels that

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28 In Indonesia Hanif worked at a University and in Australia he works as a cleaner.
29 Extract from transcript of interview with Hanif A9b 9:6-14.
30 Extract from transcript of interview with Hanif A9b 9:8-9; 8:26-32.
31 For a time Hanif was employed as a halal adviser for a meat exporting company.
Hannah has generously, and always with good will, supported him in fulfilling his religious duties. Hannah feels the same way.\(^\text{32}\)

An interfaith marriage requires a foundation of respect and consideration for one another according to Hanif and Hannah, and the ability to ‘make allowances’. They are honest in naming the fact that an interfaith marriage requires that some additional areas need to be carefully negotiated. Hanif and Hannah would not recommend an interfaith marriage to everyone but for them it has been a source of enrichment and in the words of Hannah, provided ‘another dimension’.\(^\text{33}\)

\textit{Yusuf and Michelle (Couple 15)}

In 2007 Yusuf and Michelle were looking forward to the birth of their first child. Yusuf did not want to select a name that was ‘too Muslim’. He sometimes encountered difficulties going through security at airports and he did not want their child to have this problem. At the same time he liked the idea of choosing a name that was culturally significant. Michelle compiled a list of Persian names to discuss with Yusuf. After finding him difficult to pin down Michelle asked Yusuf why he was so evasive when it came time to make a decision. Yusuf explained that culturally it was appropriate that he speak with his father about this matter. Yusuf’s father had been overseas for six months. And when they emailed him with some suggested names to consider they received no response. When Michelle went into labour they still had no word on a preferred name. In the delivery room Michelle suggested one of the names that they had discussed. “Why not Violet?” Appearing happy with the decision Michelle introduced their daughter to Yusuf’s family as ‘Violet’. After a few days Michelle noticed that her mother-in-law never referred to their baby by name and Yusuf too had stopped doing so. When they arrived home Yusuf’s father began emailing suggested names but none were ones that Yusuf and Michelle liked. Two weeks later while preparing to go to a nephew’s birthday

\(^{32}\) Extract from transcript of interview with Hannah A9a 5:33-35.

\(^{33}\) Extract from transcript of interview with Hannah A9a 5:32.
Michelle strongly urged Yusuf to make an announcement. “Tell your mother that I want to hear her call our daughter by her name.”

In reflecting on negotiating differences in her marriage Michelle acknowledges, “It’s harder than I expected.” At the same time she is thankful for the way in which Yusuf has broadened her horizons. “He has opened my eyes to the world.” Yusuf and Michelle have had to accommodate new considerations in making decisions. Despite the additional frustrations that an interfaith and intercultural marriage entails, Michelle feels that her marriage has given her the opportunity to step outside her familiar cultural and religious upbringing. Yusuf is sometimes “caught in between” as he juggles conflicting cultural and religious expectations. Yusuf, Michelle and Violet are currently living in the Middle East. Yusuf’s parents asked him to leave his job in Australia to help their family business. Initially Michelle was adamant that she did not wish to live overseas but agreed to do so for a few years. From all accounts she has adjusted well. It is clear that for Yusuf and Michelle their life together will involve constant negotiation and adjustment as they live with different and at times conflicting expectations.

Amman and Rebecca (Couple 6)

While away caring for her ill father Rebecca experienced a sense of God’s peace and presence and this led to a sense of spiritual renewal in her Christian life. When she returned home she found that Ammar had gone through a spiritual revitalisation of his own. Up until then Ammar had been very focused on material things. He was rarely at home and was doing three jobs. Rebecca came home to find a very changed husband. Subsequently Ammar became far more involved in the life of his family and gave serious attention to his...

35 Extract from transcript of interview with Michelle A15 11:14-17.
36 Those in interfaith marriages experience a ‘double loyalty’, wanting to keep true to their partner and true to their own family and religious heritage. This point is reflected in the title of Speelman’s study of Dutch-Egyptian couples. See Speelman, Keeping Faith: Muslim-Christian Couples and Interreligious Dialogue.
37 Subsequent email contact with Michelle has confirmed that she has settled into a new life in the Middle East though she misses her family in Australia.
children’s religious education. He taught his three sons to pray and each day spent half an hour teaching them from them the Scriptures and hadith. It became a source of satisfaction and pride for Ammar that his three sons developed a strong commitment to their faith.

Rebecca was glad that Ammar loved God and was trying hard to do God’s will in his life. One day she told her sceptical mother, “Ammar believes in Allah, the same God we believe in. And my children believe in God though it is not exactly the way I believe”. 38

Although Rebecca welcomed the changes in her husband she was taken aback when Ammar announced that their marriage was not valid according to Islam and they were ‘living in sin’ because they had not married according to the syari’ah. In his zeal to be a good Muslim Ammar believed that he would not be at peace unless he fulfilled his religious duties. Rebecca was distressed and confused. In her eyes they had already been married fifteen years and God had blessed their marriage with three children. Ammar felt it was now wrong to have sexual relations with Rebecca until the matter was resolved. Rebecca prayed earnestly and found great comfort in reading texts from the Bible. In particular one text from 1 Corinthians 7: 10–16 confirmed her conviction that God did not intend for them to separate. Realising that this was something important for Ammar, Rebecca agreed to a Muslim marriage as long as she was not required to convert to Islam.

Although Ammar remembers their Muslim wedding in 1989 as a happy occasion Rebecca remembers it rather differently. She felt very uncomfortable and awkward when the sheikh asked her three times to accept Islam for the sake of her husband and children and each time she politely told him that this was not possible. Rebecca felt under considerable pressure. From Ammar’s point of view the sheikh was issuing a valid form of invitation and Rebecca was free to refuse. In practice Ammar has never denied Rebecca the freedom to

38 Based on extract of transcript of interview with Ammar and Rebecca A6 2:23-44.
practice her own faith and he has never objected to Rebecca undertaking her religious duties even if this means that she is often involved in church activities. This narrative extract highlights how religious revitalisation and renewed religious fervour may bring positive aspects to the marriage relationship as well as additional complications.

8.4 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN: A CENTRAL ISSUE

The religious education of children is a central issue for couples and chapter seven outlined four models of religious upbringing drawn from *Reflections on Interreligious Marriage: A Joint Study Document* of the WCC and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID).\(^{39}\) As was the case for the Indonesian narratives, the narratives of interfaith families in the Australian sample were analysed according to the four models.

8.4.1 Four models of interfaith families in the Australian sample

Of the fifteen couples in the Australian sample twelve had children. Almost half decided to bring their children up in one faith.\(^{40}\) Some researchers have suggested the best model for interfaith families is one in which children are brought up with roots in one tradition but having branches extending into both traditions.\(^{41}\) In the sample group one family chose the second ‘mixed sibling’ model.\(^{42}\) Two couples reflected the third model and children were being raised

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\(^{39}\) See Office on Inter-Religious Relations of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), *Reflections on Interreligious Marriage: A Joint Study Document*, 331-335. Some brought children up in one particular religion; others brought up children in mixed faith households (some following the father’s faith and others following the mother’s faith); some brought children up in both religions (with the expectation that they would later decide for themselves); and some provided minimal religious education.

\(^{40}\) Seven families brought children up in one faith. In three families children were brought up as Muslims (6, 7, 9) and in four families children were brought up as Christians (2, 5, 8, 10).

\(^{41}\) This was the case for Ammar (6) and Jamal (7).

\(^{42}\) Jamal and Jillian (Couple 7) raised their first child a Catholic. After her death they adopted two children who they agreed to raise as Muslims.
to know and participate in the beliefs, rituals and traditions of both faiths.\textsuperscript{43} Three families represented the fourth model with children receiving minimal religious instruction in either faith although in each of these cases parents hoped to convey spiritual values to their children and expected that they would later make their own decisions regarding religious faith. Children may however find it difficult to develop a strong sense of identity in either faith.\textsuperscript{44}

\subsection*{8.4.2 Patterns of religious practice in parents}

It was possible to discern different patterns of religious practice of parents. These included households in which:

i. Both partners practiced their faith and were active in their religious community.

ii. Both partners believed and practiced their faith but one was more actively involved in their religious community than the other.

iii. Both were believers but neither were actively involved in their religious community (at the time when children were being formed in religious beliefs).

iv. Neither had a strong sense of religious identity or religious belief.

Six couples fell into the first pattern.\textsuperscript{45} In these cases children generally were encouraged to adopt one faith and but were also encouraged to develop an appreciation of the other religious tradition. Six couples fell into the second pattern.\textsuperscript{46} In these six interfaith families the parent who was religiously more practising tended to have the greater influence on the religious upbringing of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{43} Couples 4 and 12. One of these couples, Bambang and Lastri (12) did not wish to disappoint either set of grandparents. They attend church in Australia and travel to Indonesia for a month every year for Lebaran. As a couple they remain undecided but feel that once their children begin school they will need to offer them a clear identity.
  \item \textsuperscript{44} In these three families (1, 3, 15) children were encouraged to be open-minded and tolerant towards others and to choose their own spiritual path but parents were not actively involved in their religious community. One respondent, Evelyn (Couple 3) expressed the hope that her sons would one day ‘find their spiritual home’. Currently one was nominally a Muslim and the other was agnostic.
  \item \textsuperscript{45} Couples 4, 6, 7, 9, 12 and 14.
  \item \textsuperscript{46} Couples 2, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 13.
\end{itemize}
children. In one instance however this was not the case.\footnote{47} Three couples fell into the third pattern.\footnote{48} In these households there was a tendency for children to be brought up without a strong religious identity in either religion. None of the couples in the Australian sample fell into pattern four as the selection process for this study selected respondents for whom a religious element has been an important aspect of their lives.\footnote{49}

Faith is not stagnant and a number of respondents reported undergoing change in the way they understood and practised their faith.\footnote{50} In two cases respondents who had been not actively practising their faith became more devoted believers and subsequently developed an increased involvement in the religious formation of children. In a few cases respondents incorporated alternative world views or philosophies into their religious make-up and in some cases also passed these practices onto their children.\footnote{51}

### 8.5 Narratives of Interfaith Families and Passing on Faith to Children

The following narratives provide a glimpse into the complex patterns of interfaith families in the Australian sample as couples make decisions about the religious education of children. Narrative extracts in this section offer five examples of couples who have chosen to bring children up in one faith and incorporated appreciation of the other faith (and varying degrees of

\footnote{47} Kate (Couple 4) was the more religiously practising partner but out of respect for her partner’s wishes she did not actively initiate the children into the Christian faith. This has led to significant feelings of disappointment for Kate.  
\footnote{48} Couples 1, 3 and 15.  
\footnote{49} Tanya (1) was formally a practising Christian but had become a more nominal member of the church or in her words, a ‘secular Methodist’.  
\footnote{50} It has been observed that some non-practising adults find buried beliefs resurface with the arrival of children and may be prompted to ‘return to the fold’ though this was not strongly present in this sample group. See Romano, *Intercultural marriage: promises and pitfalls*, 111.  
\footnote{51} These included Buddhist forms of mediation, Javanese mysticism, or new age philosophies. Rahmat and Pauline (Couple 2) and Jamal and Jillian (Couple 7) incorporated Buddhist or other forms of meditation and also shared these with their children. Budi (Couple 10) drew on Javanese spirituality or ‘kebatinan’. Evelyn (Couple 3) saw herself as having a very strong interest in alternative spiritualities but no longer considered herself a Christian.
participation in the religious rituals of the other religion). Two narratives reflect examples of couples who have created a home in which there has been a high degree of religious freedom and tolerance, but a lack of clear religious guidance or clear religious formation of the children in either faith.

8.5.1 Bringing children up in one faith with an appreciation of both

_Jamal and Jillian (Couple 7)_

Jamal and Jillian wondered how they would recover after the death of their beloved daughter in a tragic accident when she was nine years old. Jillian had strong Catholic convictions. The certainty that there was life beyond death was a source of comfort and strength for her. At the same time it concerned her greatly that Jamal was inconsolable and adrift without spiritual resources to draw on. She was relieved and thankful when friends of Jamal helped him rediscover Islam. “With a re-found faith our daughter was not lost to him. She was still with us, if not in body, in spirit.” Jamal and Jillian’s first daughter had been baptised as a Catholic and Jamal accepted this though he had felt a sense of sadness at the time of her confirmation.

Jamal and Jillian adopted two children from an orphanage in the Middle East and at the time of the adoptions were required to accept the condition that they be raised as Muslims. Jillian had no problem with this. She felt God had given them new life and was glad that Jamal had the opportunity to play an important role in shaping their children’s religious identity. Though she had no expectation that their children would be baptised Jillian wished she could give thanks to God for her daughters, whom she described as ‘two miracles’, in the context of worship. Jillian confided in her Catholic priest and he supported her in arranging a welcoming ceremony. In the liturgy the congregation prayed for

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52 Extract from transcript of interview with Jillian A7 4: 11-12.
53 Extract from transcript of interview with Jillian A7 4:24-25.
54 Extract from transcript of interview with Jillian A7 4:4-9.
Jillian and the family and acknowledged that Jillian would support Jamal in raising the children as Muslims.  

In 1996 Jamal and Jillian with their daughters migrated to Australia. Jillian has been true to her promise to support Jamal in raising their two children as Muslims. The open embrace of her Catholic church also meant a great deal to her and she has retained a strong sense of her own Catholic identity within the context of the family. Jillian affirms Jamal in his Muslim faith and has a deep appreciation of Islam as a religion. She believes she and Jamal experience a sense of oneness despite their different religious paths. Jillian has a theological understanding which affirms religious diversity. “We were given two roads because of where we were born but the two roads go to exactly the same end. We have different rituals but fundamental things are the same, God and Spirit, the same in both and so we feel a deep connection.” Every evening as they sit down to have a shared meal they join together in prayer giving thanks for God’s blessings. Jillian is not ‘into evangelism’ and she does not feel any need to try and convert others to Christianity (unless they have no faith or are strongly feeling a sense of call to take this path). Jillian feels no need to change her own faith. She was born into the Catholic tradition and this has deeply shaped her and been a source of strength in her life. “That’s where my roots are. There is beauty, wealth and history there. I wouldn’t want to give that up.”

Ammar and Rebecca (Couple 6)

Ammar was surprised and disappointed when his second son told him he wanted to marry a Christian. His first son had married a Christian who had been willing to convert to Islam. Ammar worried that his second son’s partner might lack sensitivity to his son’s religious obligations and he was concerned

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56 Jillian remembers a quote she once heard in which the different religions were described as the fingers of a hand, the palm being the spiritual beliefs shared in common.
57 Extract from transcript of interview with Jillian A7 4:26-30.
58 Extract from transcript of interview with Jillian A7 7: 12-13, 25-33.
that his son might fall away from Islam.\textsuperscript{59} When Ali pointed out that his parents’ marriage had worked Ammar explained that he thought their marriage was the exception rather than the norm. When Ammar heard that his son was planning a garden wedding with a civil celebrant he refused to attend or give his blessing to the marriage. Rebecca quietly sat with her son and asked him whether it was so difficult to marry the Muslim way as his father had requested in a religious ceremony. “Ask God to be part of your marriage. Our marriage works because God is in it.”\textsuperscript{60} Ali followed his mother’s advice and talked to his fiancée. Her family agreed to have a Muslim ceremony alongside the civil ceremony.

When Rebecca and Ammar’s third son wanted to marry he asked his grandmother’s help. This son was rather shy and reserved and he also had a desire to marry someone who was a good Muslim. Rebecca found herself travelling with her mother-in-law to Ammar’s homeland on a search for a suitable wife for her third son. Two years on he is happily married and his well-educated wife has embraced her new life in Australia.

Ammar and Rebecca delight in her three sons and their families. Rebecca has been able to accommodate and indeed inhabit Ammar’s cultural and religious world view to quite a remarkable degree. On Ammar’s part he has developed a deep appreciation for Rebecca, her commitment to the family and her strong spiritual values. Although in the past he had tried to pressure her to convert to Islam he now thinks she is equal or indeed surpasses what he could have hoped for even if he had married a Muslim woman.

\textit{Hanif and Hannah (Couple 9)}

Hanif and Hannah decided before they married that their children would be brought up as Muslims. This decision partly reflected Hannah’s desire to avoid

\textsuperscript{59} Extract of interview with Ammar A6 5:16-21. Ammar was concerned that his son would face additional difficulties if he married a Christian. She may want to decorate the house with Christian symbols, or eat pork.

\textsuperscript{60} Extract of interview with Rebecca A6 5:10-11.
the issue becoming a source of conflict in their marriage. It was also the case that choosing to live in Hanif’s home town in Indonesia, in a strongly Muslim religious environment, also had an impact on their decision. When their son was ten years old Hanif suggested to Hannah that she and their son return to Australia so that he would have the opportunity for a good education. Work commitments kept Hanif in Indonesia and during the next six years he regularly visited. His absence placed additional strain on Hannah. She encouraged her son to continue to practice his Muslim faith. Now reunited as a family Hanif is proud of what his son has achieved in his education. His son told his father that he now has no religious belief but this does not greatly concern Hanif. “Every person has to find their own identity. It’s up to him. He’s read far more books than me. I don’t force my beliefs on him. It’s in God’s hands. The foremost principle is that there should be no force. I have given him an example.” Hanif is confident that God is working in his son’s life and in time he will discover the spiritual path he needs to take.

Luzio and Azita (Couple 13)

Luzio and Azita had been married a year at the time of the interview and were beginning to give some serious consideration to the issue of religious upbringing of any children they have in the future. Azita thinks of herself as a lapsed Muslim but nevertheless her Muslim identity is important to her. Azita knows that Luzio who is a strongly practicing Christian, would like to have the children baptised. She nervously tries to imagine what this would mean for her and her relationship with their children. Azita is fearful that she might be left out from the spiritual circle that includes Luzio and the children. “Not only am I going to have Luzio in this other world but if I ever have kids, they will also be in this ‘other world’ that I am not going to be a part of.” Luzio reminds Azita of her extended network of family and friends who could help their children learn about Islam. He expresses the hope that their children, even

61 Extract from transcript of interview with Hanif A9: 14-18.
though they may be brought up as Christians, would also be encouraged to have a strong connection with Azita’s Islamic heritage and the principle of religious freedom would be expressed in their family.

*Rahmat and Pauline (Couple 2) and son, Tony*

Pauline acknowledges that she ‘just assumed’ the children would be raised as Catholics. Having come from a very strong Catholic home she did not seriously consider any other option. Interestingly, Rahmat too had just assumed the children would become Muslims. Looking back they realised that they overlooked discussing this important issue before they married. Rahmat explained, “We were in love and nothing else mattered!”

Living in Australia, after the birth of their first child they moved into a new home and the local Catholic church warmly welcomed them into the area. When the question of baptism came up Rahmat agreed. He knew this was very important for Pauline and her family and he also knew that he had no family or religious community in Australia. Realistically it would have been difficult to provide the children with a Muslim education.

After some Muslim students started arriving at his university Rahmat helped establish a Friday prayer centre. There were a few short-lived efforts whereby the Indonesian Muslims began classes for their Muslim children to develop some basic understanding of the Qur’an. After a while the students went home and the organisation became inactive. Pauline had initially been happy for the children to learn about Islam but had become concerned when their daughter came home one day from the class with a new Muslim outfit for prayer. “I remember thinking ‘O this is getting a bit serious.’ Pauline felt some relief when the group was discontinued. For Pauline, belonging to a religious

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63 Extract from transcript of interview with Rahmat A2 7:43
64 Extract from transcript of interview with Pauline A2 8:32-45, 12:26-44.
community is an essential element for the passing on of faith. If they had been living in Indonesia, near Rahmat’s family it might have been different.

Rahmat had the aspiration to teach his children about his faith but this was not something that was easy to articulate or carry out in a context where Islam was very much a minority faith, and the Muslim community was not yet well-established. For Pauline and Rahmat the absence of a Muslim community and, in contrast, the presence of a strong and supportive Catholic community was the deciding factor.

One of their adult children Tony, is proud to be sixth generation Australian on his mother’s side and have a Muslim immigrant father. Tony has no memory of any tension between his parents because of their different faiths. For this reason he finds the idea that religion can be a source of conflict in the world difficult to understand. Tony grew up with a view of Islam as a peaceful and compassionate faith because of the positive example of his father. Tony wishes Australians were less ignorant of other faiths and not so quick to label Muslims negatively. “The strong message I received at home was that there may be different religions but only one God; different practices but the same God. I still believe that’s the essence.”

Tony has consciously adopted many of his parents’ core values though today he rarely attends church. He still enjoys Christmas Mass with his parents and grandparents. Meditation is also a practice he learnt from his parents.

Tony thinks his parents tended to lead parallel spiritual paths until they took up silent meditation. This provided common ground, “Neither had to change sides or lose themselves.” Tony appreciates the fact that his parents both came from devout religious backgrounds but were able to overcome stereotypes about the ‘other’ to have a loving partnership and each have maintained their convictions with integrity.

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65 Extract from transcript of interview with Tony on 18 June 2007.
66 Extract from transcript of interview with Tony on 18 June 2007.
8.5.2 Religious freedom but limited religious guidance

*Munir and Tanya and daughter Megan (Couple 1)*

Munir thought it was his religious duty to raise his daughters as Muslims but in the 1960s in the absence of a strong Muslim community that proved difficult. If they had brought up their children in Indonesia Munir and Tanya think Islam would have been more natural for them. As ‘free thinkers’ Munir and Tanya hoped they passed on to their children an inquiring mind, a love of education and strong moral values. Tanya was still a practising Christian for a few years after her children were born. She did not consider baptism because she knew Munir would be opposed to the idea. As a working mother she found it painful leaving her two daughters at home on Sunday morning and after a time dropped out of going to church. She also went through a faith “crisis of sorts” following her father’s death. Now retired from her professional career Tanya feels a distance from the institutional church. She thinks of herself as a ‘secular Methodist’ and still loves singing the old hymns. She senses God in the journey of her life in “serendipitous events when it feels like it was meant to be”. Munir has a similar response. His Muslim identity has been part of who he is but actively practicing his faith tended not to be a priority. Looking back on the years when the children were young Tanya and Munir acknowledge that there was a vacuum of sorts in regards to their religious education. “We didn’t tell them they were anything.”

An interview with one of Munir and Tanya’s daughters Megan provided another angle on the experience of those growing up in interfaith families. Megan values the ethical and moral principles which she saw her parents live by and these she has adopted in her own life. Having no strong or clear religious grounding meant that Megan feels she grew up without a sense of

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67 From extract from transcript of interview with Tanya A1 6: 23, 29-49.
68 Extract from transcript of interview with Munir A1 7:1-11.
religious identification in either religious community. She observed her two devout grandmothers who lived with her whilst she was growing up but this left her more confused that enlightened. She watched her Indonesian Muslim grandmother pray five times a day and her Christian grandmother reading the Bible. Without a map to guide her Megan began to doubt that any religion was true. “They can’t both be right. They aren’t the same so maybe no religion is right.”

Megan went to a Christian school but her father did not allow her to attend scripture lessons. At the same time there were few opportunities to learn about Islam. In her teenage years Megan and her father often fought because of his strict rules about her going out at night. In her mind Megan tended to identify Islam with various prohibitions. Faith has not played a major part in Megan’s life but her daughter has developed strong religious convictions and this has raised questions for Megan about whether her life is missing a spiritual dimension.

*Imran and Kate* (Couple 4)

Every time Kate attends an infant baptism she feels a sense of sadness that she did not have the opportunity to initiate the children into her Christian faith. Kate and Imran did not explicitly discuss the religious upbringing of children before they married, something they would now recommend to any considering an interfaith marriage. Kate reflects, “In the early years I felt confident that problems could be dealt with on the way and I didn’t realise how deep some of the issues would be and how disappointed I would feel if the kids were not baptised.”

Imran tried to teach his sons about Islam but he acknowledges that this was limited. “In Indonesia people follow their parents but here they make their own

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69 Extract from transcript of interview with Megan on 26 June 2007.
70 Extract from transcript of interview with Kate: A45: 7-19.
decisions.” Imran encountered difficulties maintaining his own religious practices and he dropped out of the habit of regular prayer. Getting time off work to attend Friday prayers was also not possible in the work he was doing. Returning to Indonesia each year provided a way for Imran to reconnect with his religious community and restore his sense of religious identity. “When I return to Indonesia I feel close (to God). Friends invite me to the mosque and give me a sarung… To achieve what you should in your Muslim faith is difficult here. In Indonesia you just have to walk 100 metres (to the mosque).”

After the children were born Imran told Kate he did not want the children to be baptised but he did not mind if they occasionally went to Sunday school. Imran did not want to hurt Kate by insisting that their children be Muslims and Kate did not want to hurt Imran’s feelings by insisting they be Christians. Both feel a deep sense of disappointment that their children are yet to develop a sense of their own religious identity. Imran is glad that their sons have an appreciation of both their Australian and Indonesian cultural heritage. Imran and Kate are hopeful that they have passed onto their children important values such as respect and acceptance of difference, tolerance and a valuing of both the Muslim and Christian religious traditions which they may access at a later time in their lives.

8.4.2 DISCOVERING SPIRITUAL COMPANIONSHIP

Some studies have suggested that interfaith couples are likely to experience greater tension where one or both have a strong attachment to their particular faith. This study had a significant number of respondents in which one or both had a strong religious commitment. A few in the course of their marriage

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73 Extract from transcript of interview with Imran A4b 10: 1-3.
74 Petsonk and Remsen, The Intermarriage Handbook (New York: Arbor House, 1988),142. The example given is when a Christian who has Jesus at the centre of their life, is married to someone for whom Christian ideas of salvation are foreign.
also developed a heightened religiosity brought about through an experience of religious renewal. This enhanced the marriage of Jamal and Jillian (7) and for Ammar and Rebecca (6) increased religious zeal brought some additional complications as well as added benefits. Strong religious commitment was a positive factor in building harmonious families as long as it was accompanied by respect, acceptance and tolerance of difference.

Indian theologian Selvanayagam has asked whether those in interfaith marriage maintain their faith or move towards nominalism and religious indifference. Most respondents in this study reported that their faith had been maintained or had deepened in the course of their marriage. There were a few who reported that they had become more lax in their religious observance but these tended to put this down to the secular environment in Australia rather than the fact that they were in an interfaith marriage. Most maintained their level of religious involvement or became more actively practising their faith.

Kenneth Cragg suggested that an area for further exploration in terms of Muslim–Christian interfaith marriages was whether couples were developing a common language of devotion and prayer drawing on both religious traditions. There were two couples who reported that it was difficult to experience a sense of spiritual companionship with their partner. Interestingly it was these two marriages that ultimately were not sustainable.

A number of couples were developing a ‘convergence of vision’ through shared values and a shared world view. Most couples in their private prayer followed a pattern of devotional life according to their own tradition. Half of the couples also mentioned that they prayed together on some occasions, usually in a spontaneous or informal way. This for example occurred at

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75 This was the case for Ammar and Rebecca (couple 6) and Jamal and Jillian (couple 7).
76 Ammar became more actively involved in the life of his family.
77 Israel Selvanayagam, Relating to People of Other Faiths: Insights from the Bible (Tiruvalla, India: CSS-BTTBPSA, 2004), 315.
79 Two couples who experienced most marital discord did not connect spiritually or discover a common language of prayer. This was the case for Imran and Kate (couple 4) and reported by divorcee Ann (5).
significant events in the life of their family or in a time of illness.\footnote{50} In one case a Muslim parent helped get children ready for Sunday school and in another case the Christian parent reminded children that it was time to \textit{sholat}.\footnote{51} A few Muslim respondents attended church with their Christian spouse on special occasions or more regularly.\footnote{52} The important religious festivals of Christmas and the celebration of Lebaran and conclusion of the fasting month proved to be important connecting points for the interfaith families in this study and partners supported one another and at times participated in religious rituals.

For Catholic theologian Jacques Dupuis common prayer is a deep expression of dialogue and a “common conversion of partners to God”.\footnote{53} Dupuis suggests the theological foundation for common prayer lies in an understanding of the work of the Spirit of God who is mysteriously present in the heart of every human being. A few couples expressed this deeper sense of dialogue and were experimenting in terms of searching for a common language that would allow them to pray together. Rahmat and Pauline (Couple 2) and Jamal and Jillian (Couple 7) seriously took up the project of developing a common devotional practice. These two couples found it particularly helpful to spend time in silent mediation and were part of meditation groups. Overall the couples that were able to articulate a sense of spiritual companionship appeared to have higher levels of satisfaction and happiness within their marriage and family life.

8.7 \textbf{IMPLICIT MISSIOLOGY AND CONCLUDING COMMENTS}

This chapter concludes by drawing attention to various missiological ideas and viewpoints implicit in the narrative extracts in the Australian sample.

\footnote{50} This was the case for Luzio and Azita (Couple 13); Hannah and Hanif (Couple 9); Bambang and Lastri (Couple 12); Budi and Debby (couple 10); Hendro and Sugarti (Couple 8); Asti and Diwan, at Asti’s initiative (couple 11); and Ammar and Rebecca (Couple 6) who sought God’s guidance together on important issues in the life of their family.
\footnote{51} Jillian (7) reminded her children to \textit{sholat} and Budi (10) and Sugarti (8) helped get the children ready for Sunday school/church on Sundays.
\footnote{52} Reported by Couple 8, Couple 10, Couple 11 and Couple 12.
8.7.1 Interfaith couples seeking an inclusive Australia

The observation has been made that marriages do not take place in a vacuum but are situated in particular cultural, economic, legal, political, social and religious contexts. In the Australian context, where the freedom of individuals is highly valued, respondents did not face legal hurdles in marrying. A few had negative responses from their families, friends or religious community. A number reported that in the Australian context they had encountered higher levels of suspicion towards Muslims than in the past. Evelyn who married Hamza in 1972 noted the changed environment.

Some people look at me as if something is wrong if I say that I’m married to a Muslim. I would have expected that in the early days when we were still ‘White Australia’ but in the past it wasn’t there. No one said anything. Maybe because no one knew anything and were ignorant but now I get a reaction from people such as, “Oh, how do you cope?”

Evelyn expressed anger at what she describes as a media bias in the representation of Muslims and in reporting of crimes in Australia. A number of Christian respondents adopted a similar stance and wanted to challenge negative views about Islam and negative labelling of Muslims. Most suggested that the significantly higher profile given to Islam since 9/11 has translated into expressions of increased fear and suspicion in the community. In a number of cases the Christian respondents were concerned about the effect this had on their partner. Evelyn saw that Hamza experienced depression as a result and Hamza told their Muslim son not to put Islam down as his religion on his passport. In the current situation it was safer to hide his Muslim identity and not wear a beard. Depression and a sense of shame was reported by other respondents and world events led to introspection. Rahmat for example, found it confusing and worrying that Islam could be identified with terrorism. Fundamentalism was far removed from the Islam he grew up with and in his

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84 Extract from transcript of interview with Evelyn A3 2:35-39.
86 Extract from transcript of interview with Evelyn 2:32-34.
view the mission of Islam was to contribute to building a peaceful world not to create division and enmity.\textsuperscript{87}

Whilst some Muslim respondents such as Hamza became more reluctant to acknowledge their Muslim identity others responded by more openly identifying themselves as Muslims in an attempt to counteract negative stereotypes. Azita’s concerns about increased levels of community prejudice towards Muslims made her more determined to challenge negative perceptions. “I make a real point when I start my lectures of always telling my students that I am a Muslim.”\textsuperscript{88}

Some of the Christian respondents like Evelyn provided testimonies of support.\textsuperscript{89} This is illustrated by Rebecca who gave a talk at her church to help members gain a better appreciation of Islam and Muslims.\textsuperscript{90} A number of the Christian partners actively questioned the negative generalisations about Muslims or, using Pratt’s term, “the culpable ignorance” and misinformation about Islam.\textsuperscript{91} This led to a heightened commitment to promote a vision of an inclusive Australian society on the part of many of the Muslim and Christian respondents in this study.

\textbf{8.7.2 Narratives of meeting and marrying}

An important missiological theme implicit in the narratives of meeting and marrying was the idea that God moves amongst and between people in a mysterious way creating bonds of understanding, love and affinity across religious differences. A number underlined how difficult and at times

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{87} Extract from transcript of interview with RahmatA2 11:34-44.
\textsuperscript{88} Extract from transcript of interview with Azita A14: 4:28-36.
\textsuperscript{89} Pauline (2), Kate (4), Ann (5), Jillian (7) and Hannah (9) expressed concern at the ignorance and prejudice they encountered in peoples’ attitudes to Islam.
\textsuperscript{90} Extract from transcript of interview with Rebecca A 6:6:23-29.
\textsuperscript{91} See Douglas Pratt, \textit{The Challenge of Islam}, 172. Pratt suggests that distorted, flawed and prejudicial images of Islam are derived from widespread misunderstanding and ignorance. In some cases there is ‘\textit{ignorance simpliciter’}. He contrasts this to ‘\textit{culpable ignorance’} which comes from intransigence and a closed mind. In the West this has been accompanied with promotion of the view that Islam is monolithic, incompatible with democracy, and a threat to Western civilization.
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frustrating the path had been but they felt their lives had been enriched. Whilst some thought of themselves as ‘lucky’ for having met their partner, a number used religious language to express a sense of gratitude to God for the gift and blessing of their partner. They believed God has called them to embark on their interfaith marriage which had expanded their horizons and helped them discover something of the richness and diversity of God’s world.

8.7.3 Narratives of negotiating difference

Interreligious marriages in the Australian setting are often likely to be intercultural marriages as well requiring couples to navigate and negotiate across difference. This was illustrated in the *halal* story of Hanif and Hannah and the cultural adjustments for Michelle as she and Yusuf chose a name for their daughter. For Rebecca there were aspects of Ammar’s renewed religious fervour that proved challenging. A range of factors contributed to successful interfaith and intercultural understanding. A willingness to critically reflect on their cultural and religious values was important along with an appreciation of the religious and cultural heritage of their partner. Flexibility was a helpful attribute. In the process of constant negotiation couples were sometimes confronted with situations where there were irreconcilable differences and a deep gulf threatened to open up in their relationship. In order to avoid conflict or maintain harmony couples ‘make allowances’. In healthy relationships there is give and take and adjustment on both sides. A tendency to go along with the partner may be evidence of a low tolerance for conflict; or of a feeling of uncertainty about how to proceed when operating in a cultural context which is not one’s own. If

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92 Munir (1) described himself as ‘lucky’. Couples 3, 4, 5, 15 believed their horizons had been expanded or their lives enriched through their partner. Couples 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 expressed a sense of thankfulness to God for the gift of their partner.

93 Rebecca (6) agreed to participate in Muslim marriage though she felt this was neither necessary nor something she wished to do. Hannah (9) agreed for their son to be brought up as a Muslim because marital conflict was not something she wanted to see happen. Kate (4) gave up the hope of having her sons baptised, though this was a great disappointment. In general women tended to make more allowances to maintain harmony.
one partner tends to be making most of the adjustments in the relationship this may be an indicator of a power imbalance.

In every marriage couples need to renegotiate their relationship and this was perhaps even more pronounced for interfaith couples in this study. Clearly interfaith marriages require the ability to continuously grapple with difference, as both partners ‘meld’ and develop a deep understanding of each other and try to gain a convergence of vision.

8.7.4 Narratives of interfaith families and passing on faith to children

The arrival of children represented a major challenge for the interfaith couples in this study. A variety of models of religious upbringing of children were adopted. For a number of respondents it was a painful decision to relinquish control of the religious upbringing of children and entrust this to their partner.\(^\text{94}\)

It took a level of trust to allow their children to be brought up within the religious community of their partner. Those who were able to do this tended to have a positive estimation of their partner’s faith and a confidence that Islam/Christianity would positively shape their children.\(^\text{95}\) Jillian (7) demonstrated this in her affirmation of Islam as a faith that provided a rich and adequate spiritual foundation for her children.

Adult children growing up in an interfaith family in some instances expressed strong appreciation for the religious upbringing. Some interfaith families passed on a strong religious identity to their children.\(^\text{96}\) Other families struggled to help children gain a sense of belonging in either faith. Providing children with the opportunity to receive Muslim instruction in the Australian context, if the Muslim partner lacked support from their Muslim community or

\(^\text{94}\) This view was expressed in the interview with Kate (Couple 4) and Azita (Couple 14).
\(^\text{95}\) Rahmat (Couple 2), Rebecca (Couple 6), Jillian (Couple 7), Hannah (Couple 9) and Bambang (Couple 10) were able to affirm the ability of their spouse and their spouse’s religious community to provide a framework of spiritual meaning for their children.
\(^\text{96}\) Ammar and Rebecca’s children, now young adults, remain practising Muslims. Hendro and Sugiarti’s children, nurtured in an Indonesian church, continue to be active in their Christian life. Jamal and Jillian have children who value their Muslim identity.
extended family network, was a problem. This tends to be less pronounced today. Mosques and Muslim settlements have development in the last two decades and there are now strong and vibrant Muslim communities.

In whatever faith children were raised, respondents who were confident that God was at work in the lives of their children expected that their children would discover their own spiritual path and that God would call them in his own way. Narratives of interfaith family life and the decisions couples made regarding the religious education of their children represent a major way in which the belief systems of the two partners were brought into dialogue with one another. Whatever model of interfaith family was adopted, invariably parents expressed the hope that they passed on important values such as respect, loving kindness, generosity and valuing all human beings. Some couples more successfully than others, supported one another in fulfilling their respective religious duties. Some couples were able to build their family life on a foundation of spiritual companionship.

### 8.7.5 Concluding comments

Entering any marriage is not an easy path to tread. Couples in interfaith marriages will encounter additional complicating factors which cause some to stumble. In narratives of meeting and marrying, negotiating differences and building an interfaith family, respondents were stretched beyond the world they had inhabited and had to navigate their way through unfamiliar territory. Many encountered difficulties that had not been initially envisaged as well as a broadening of their horizons that they do not regret.

It did not appear that being in an interfaith marriage itself led to a loss of religious commitment. Many in fact reported that they had developed a deeper and stronger faith in the course of their marriage. Those who maintained a strong and vital faith tended to have an affiliation with a religious community or group that provided them with spiritual nurture and a sense of belonging. Migration to Australia and living in a more secular context was a challenge for
some respondents leading to a lessening of religiosity in some and a revitalised religiosity in others.

In bringing up children, the presence or absence of a supportive religious community was often a deciding factor. The experience of families varied enormously but a number appeared to pass on to children a sense of religious identity as well as a breadth of interfaith understanding and appreciation of both faiths.

Muslim–Christian marriages highlight the interplay between identity and religious plurality and how couples adjust to differences whilst also melding together and developing a sense of spiritual companionship. The stories of interfaith couples reveal various ways respondents understand God being active in their lives and in their marriage. Two thirds of the respondents in the Australian sample saw God’s hand at work bringing them together and they felt that their partner had been a gift and blessing in their life. Whilst interfaith marriage turned out to be much harder than most had imagined most felt their lives had been enriched through their marriage. Those that discovered a sense of spiritual affinity and spiritual companionship appeared to have greater levels of marital happiness and satisfaction.

Each couple had a unique story but together the stories of respondents in this study provided some fascinating snapshots into the changing shape of Australian society as it becomes increasingly multicultural and religiously diverse. From listening to their stories the researcher was able to draw the conclusion that many of these partnerships reveal an enormous commitment to live creatively with difference and to be a sign of hope in a divided world. Chapter Nine explores further the missiological implications that can be drawn from the experience of couples in this study as they share faith and rethink mission understandings.
9.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out to examine the theological vision and missiological horizon of respondents drawing from narrative extracts and statements.¹ In the process of meeting and marrying, negotiating differences and making decisions about the religious upbringing of children couples may find themselves asking whether their marriage is part of God’s will and purpose or represents ‘living in sin’? Is their partner’s faith a legitimate expression of faith in the same God? Can they entrust the religious education of their children to the care of their partner? Should they try and convert their spouse? These and other questions have missiological implications and draw forth missional responses.

At the outset of this inquiry the aim was to explore what could be learnt from the experience of Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages to assist in the search for new mission understandings for living in religiously diverse contexts. An analysis of narrative extracts and responses of individual respondents highlighted a range of missiological positions. Attention was given to the ‘living dialogue’ between partners and how, through an informal process of ‘dialectical hermeneutics’, and reflection on religious tradition and Scriptures, respondents develop intuitive understandings of mission and da‘wah. Analysis of the missiological understandings of Muslim and Christian respondents in this study revealed some distinctive patterns.² In particular, five missiological types became apparent. These included the coercional, invitational, connectional, affirmational, and actional mission approaches.³

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¹ This Chapter represents Step 5 of the Missiological Inquiry Approach explained in Chapter One.
² Responses of individual respondents was analysed rather than the responses of couples, as the two partners in any marriage may have different mission understandings.
³ As explained in Chapter six type here refers to a method of classification or categorisation for the purpose of elucidation and comparison. The typology presented here is a method to
This chapter outlines the ‘Typology of Missiological Approaches’ using narrative extracts to illustrate each type. The incidence across the sample groups is noted along with a description of the distinguishing characteristics of each type, how each type views ‘conversion’, a subject that was discussed with considerable frequency, and Biblical and Qur’anic underpinnings. One of the aims of this inquiry was to examine how the missiological responses of Muslim and Christian respondents might have wider application. For this reason efforts are made to bring the insights and experiences of respondents into dialogue with the writings of various Muslim scholars and Christian theologians and with current trends in missiology.

9.2 TYPOLOGY OF MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACHES

In social research the development of taxonomies and typologies can be a useful aid to assist in the ordering, classifying and presenting of data. Past work in developing various typologies suggests that there is value in efforts made to understand and compare differing theological responses to religious pluralism. The typology of Christian views towards other faiths developed by Alan Race, for example, popularised the terms exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. Alternative categories and typologies have also been proposed. Some Muslim scholars in Indonesia have drawn on similar categories to explore Muslim approaches to other faiths.

categorise distinctive patterns of missiological understandings that occurred across the range of data in the two sample groups.


7 Scholars of religion have expressed varying degrees of appreciation or criticism of Race’s typology with some such as Andrew Kirk and David Bosch suggesting alternative categories. See Andrew Kirk, What is Mission? Theological Explorations (London: Fortress Press, 2000), 129. Bosch used the terms exclusivism, fulfilment and relativism. See Bosch, Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, 478.
‘Five Missiological Approaches’ derives from the narrative accounts and statements of respondents and arises out of analysis of narrative extracts. It is expected that the typology developed here will have particular relevance to missiological reflection in the context of Muslim–Christian relations and contribute to the rethinking of Christian mission and Muslim da’wah in religiously diverse contexts.

9.3 THE COERCIONAL MISSION APPROACH

9.3.1 Coercional mission approaches: narrative extracts

The ‘Coercional-type’ refers to a missional approach that reflects coercion. It derives from a sense of absolute assurance of the exclusive truth of one’s own faith and a power imbalance that leads to one partner feeling that they have the right to dominate the relationship.

It should be noted that this type was atypical amongst the respondents in this study and most of the respondents expressed strong objection to coercion as a mission strategy. The ‘coercional-type’ behaviour was present in a few narratives, some of which referred to past experiences which occurred before the marriage was placed on a more equal footing. The narrative extract from Hasan and Kristiani provides an example of the presence of coercional elements.

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9 ‘Five Missiological Approaches’ did not emerge with reference to other typologies. If a comparison was to be made between ‘Five Missiological Approaches’ and other typologies one observable difference is that it is missiological considerations rather that soteriology which is central to the typology developed here. Another important difference is that ‘Five Missiological Approaches’ derives from an analysis of narratives. See Clandinin and Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry*, 40. Narrative inquiry is a research method that begins with experience as lived and told in stories, rather than from set theories.

10 This was particularly so in the Indonesian sample, in response to incidents of inter-communal conflict in recent years and a tendency to become more ‘fanatik’.
Hasan and Kristiani married in 1965 after Hasan had agreed to attend catechism classes and become a Christian as Kristiani had requested. After the birth of their first child Hasan stopped going to church. He later told Kristiani he wanted to return to his Muslim faith and developed more pronounced religious convictions. Hasan helped set up a ‘new converts association’. In his renewed religious zeal Hasan became more extreme in his views. He was dismissive of Kristiani’s faith and began to put pressure on Kristiani to convert. Later Hasan adopted a more moderate outlook. He realised that Islam taught that there must be no coercion in matters of faith and he again allowed Kristiani the freedom to attend church and express her own religious convictions. Now he is not opposed to her having Christian prayer meetings or bible studies in their home.

Overall, respondents in both sample groups were strongly opposed to any form of coercion or pressure applied as a mission strategy and often stated their own missiological understanding over against a coercional one. The response of Muhammad Lubis was typical: “In Islam and in Christianity there is the desire to invite others to join, but not by force. Invite, yes, force, no.” Other respondents challenged ‘coercional attitudes’ which they encountered. Nana’s extended family for example urged her to bring Anwar back to Islam (he had converted to Christianity in his youth). Nana’s response was, “People have their own convictions. I may want him to become a Muslim so we could go to the mosque together but there is a limit to what we can want of others if that is not what they believe. There is no value if people just say words with their lips but not in their hearts. I would not want to try and force him (against his will).”

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11 In recognition of his work in this association he was given the opportunity to go on the haj and had all-expenses covered.
12 Extract from transcript of interview I6 5:12-14
14 Extract from transcript of interview with Nana I14 2:26-36.
9.3.2 Incidence of the coercional type across the sample groups

‘Coercional-like’ behaviour was reported in a minority of the interfaith families represented in this study.\textsuperscript{15} Where these took place behaviour included restricting a partner from attending their place of worship; forbidding the use of religious symbols displayed in the home; being dismissive of their partner’s religious beliefs, or pressuring them to convert. In the Australian sample this tended to take the form of isolated incidents which caused awkwardness or discomfort. In one case it contributed to a pattern of growing mistrust that led to marital disharmony.\textsuperscript{16} In another case what might be considered undue pressure was viewed as ‘invitational’ from the point of view of the other other.\textsuperscript{17}

In the Indonesian sample a few respondents reported instances of being on the receiving end of unwelcome pressure to convert from their partner or partner’s family.\textsuperscript{18} In one case ‘coercional elements’ had an impact that was noticeable on the children.\textsuperscript{19} It was pointed out that in Indonesia you do not only marry your partner but also their extended family.\textsuperscript{20} In two cases it was the extended family that placed pressure to convert.\textsuperscript{21} There were a few other examples of coercive behaviour recounted by respondents referring to the experience of

\textsuperscript{15} There were seven narratives which had ‘coercional elements’ across the two sample groups.
\textsuperscript{16} Australian respondent Ann, was urged to convert to Islam by her brother-in-law when visiting her husband’s family in the Middle East. She became angry after hearing that it had been her husband who had requested his brother to intervene. The loss of trust engendered contributed to increasing levels of dissatisfaction in the marriage (A5 2:16-22).
\textsuperscript{17} Rebecca (A6) was placed under pressure to convert at the time of her Muslim marriage ceremony. Extract from transcript of interview with Ammar and Rebecca A6 2:23-44.
\textsuperscript{18} Apart from Hasan and Kristiani, there was also elements of a coercional approach in Abdul (I12) and Tomi (I20) after he became active in a Pentecostal Bible study group. Anita (I18) reported a change in her husband’s views so she was unable to express her Christian identity in the home.
\textsuperscript{19} Matius, the son of Abdul and Herawati (I12) described the painful predicament of growing up in a home which had been full of religious tension.
\textsuperscript{20} Extract of transcript of interview with Mari I1:30-31.
\textsuperscript{21} Lani (I15) believes her divorce was related to her unwillingness to convert to Islam. She was under sustained pressure to convert to Islam from her husband’s family who never regarded their marriage as legal. Her husband took a second wife after being threatened with losing his family inheritance. In one instance Yuli’s family (I22) cut off contact after she went ahead and married after they had given her an ultimatum to choose between him and themselves if Albert would not convert to Islam (I22 3:4-6).
others known to them rather than their own experience. In the Indonesian sample the coercional approach tended to be associated with the word *fanatik* – referring to a tendency to adopt a sense of superiority in relation to other faiths. A number of respondents thought that someone who was *fanatik* was unlikely to enter an interfaith marriage. Indonesian Christian respondent, Kustiah, (I9) thought conversely, that people who are *toleran*, flexible and open-minded are more likely to be predisposed to intermarriage. Some of the Indonesian respondents expressed concern at an increasing trend amongst both Muslims and Christians to be *fanatik*. Some respondents thought the current context in relation to Indonesia’s marriage law undermines people’s freedom to marry the person of their choice and places pressure on couples to have the same faith. For some ‘state interference’ was viewed as institutionalising coercional practices.

In the main, respondents in this inquiry expressed strong opposition to coercion as a mission strategy. Though ‘coercional practices’ in the sample groups were of a limited nature the presence of such behaviour put considerable pressure on marriages and contributed to marital unhappiness and instability.

### 9.3.3 The coercional type and conversion

The coercional type sees conversion as the goal and there is a lack of regard for the notions of religious freedom and religion as a free act of conscience. Coercional mission practices in this study used strategies such as applying

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22 For example Kadri (I8) recounted a case where his Muslim friend told his wife that unless she and the children became Muslims he would seek a divorce. Kadri told his friend he should not have married if he was unwilling to accept his wife as a Christian (I8 5:43-44 and 6:1-4).

23 Yuli described her upbringing as ‘*fanatik*.’ In the eyes of her family, “Islam is the only good religion.” (122:3 4-6). Indonesian Christian respondent, Susan thought an interfaith marriage would experience tension if a partner was *fanatik* (11 4:20-22). Muslim respondent Kadri spoke disparagingly of other Muslims who were *fanatik* (18 1:35-37). Some respondents described their religious upbringing in terms of whether it was *fanatik* or *toleran*. Catholic respondent Nini for example, described her Catholic upbringing as ‘not *fanatik*’ but thought more Muslims in Indonesia were becoming *fanatik* (121 5:17).

24 Extract from transcript of interview I9 1:9-15.
pressure. Other ‘coercional practices’ could be the offering of inducements or manipulating people’s emotions in order to bring about conversion.²⁵

### 9.3.4 Elements in the coercional type: gender, power and coercion

Believing in the superior value of one’s own faith set within an unequal power relationship leads to the possibility of one partner exercising undue pressure on the other. It has been noted elsewhere that patterns of submission and submersion or even obliteration can occur in marriages.²⁶ An analysis of narrative extracts suggested that having an exclusivist theology alone did not necessarily lead to coercive behaviour.²⁷ Behaviour which limits the religious freedom of others and places pressure on others to convert occurs in a situation in which one partner is in a position of power or privilege. Unequal gender relations also tend to be visible.²⁸ Both Christianity and Islam have been plagued by conservative and patriarchal notions that view women as being under the authority of their husbands.²⁹ In a patriarchal family model or a cultural setting it may be expected that a woman should follow the husband. A woman exercising independence and autonomous decision-making may be viewed negatively. In the instances recounted in this study it was invariably women whose religious freedom was being placed under threat. This suggests that a coercional mission approach is more about power than theology alone,

²⁶ See Dugan Romano, *Intercultural marriage: promises and pitfalls*, 2nd ed. (London: Nicholas Brealey, 2001), 171-177. Romano contrasts marriages that reflect *submission/submersion* with marriages in which there is *compromise*. Marriages in which there is a consensus approach record higher levels of marital satisfaction.
²⁷ Exclusive theology (a paradigm of interreligious relations which affirms one particular religion as the only true way to God and path of salvation) itself could not account for ‘coercional’ attitudes and behaviour which curtails the religious freedom of others. An exclusive theology is not necessarily combined with exclusive practices.
²⁸ Speelman noted that inequality was present in some of the households in her study and some dominant partners did not take seriously the perspective of their partner. In such situations the less dominant partner may adopt a variety of communication strategies. See Speelman, *Keeping Faith*, 233, 265.
²⁹ Some scriptural references are used to support patriarchal family models within Christianity and Islam. For example quoting biblical texts such as 1 Corinthians 11:2 that speaks of man’s headship and 1 Peter 3:1 that admonishes wives to be submissive to their husbands. Qur’anic texts such as Sura Al-Baqarah 2: 228 and Al-Nisā’ 4: 34 have been used to support the dominance of men over women.
and occurs in situations where there is a significant power differential bolstered by a theology that assumes a God-given right to exercise authority over others.\textsuperscript{30}

### 9.3.5 Theological and scriptural underpinnings for the coercional mission type

Both faiths at various times have promoted the idea that they have a God-given place of privilege in God’s salvation plan. A sense of religious superiority underpinned centuries of western colonialism. Muslims too have viewed Islam as exalted above all other faiths.\textsuperscript{31} Coercional mission practices may draw on images of God as judgmental and punishing or use texts to argue that Islam or Christianity is the only true religion. A difficult question beyond the limits of this study concerns the need to reinterpret religious texts which have been used to provide a rationale for coercive practices and intolerant viewpoints.\textsuperscript{32} Highlighting texts which challenge such practices is also important. Muslim respondents frequently referred to Islam’s prohibition of coercion in matters of faith referring to the Qur’anic text: “No compulsion is there in religion.” (QS 2:256).

### 9.3.6 Relating the coercional mission type to current thinking in missiology

Developing a framework for responsible relationships in mission was identified as an important issue at the Chambésy gathering on mission and \textit{da‘wah} which

\textsuperscript{30} See An-Na’im, ed., \textit{Interreligious Marriages Among Muslims}, 25. The view that men have a God-given right to exercise power over women remains widespread within Christianity and Islam. An-Na’im suggests that the concept of Islam as a religion that must be exalted above all others has also been used as a rationale to forbid Muslim women marrying non-Muslims. If a Muslim woman was made subservient to her non-Muslim husband this would create an incongruity that contradicts the exalted place of Islam. Coercion and misuse of power presumably would be more likely to occur in situations where the majority faith has greater political power and religious minorities are in a more vulnerable position. In the Australian setting Islam is a minority religion and in most of Indonesia Islam is the majority religion although in certain areas of Indonesia the majority of inhabitants are Christian.

\textsuperscript{31} See also Friedmann, \textit{Tolerance and coercion in Islam}, 161.

\textsuperscript{32} Biblical texts used to support an exclusive understanding include Acts 4:12 and John 14:6. Qur’anic texts that have been interpreted in an exclusive way include: QS 3:19 and QS 9:33.
met under the sponsorship of the World Council of Churches in 1976. The WCC made a commitment to do further work in this area and between 1993 and 1996 four regional conferences were held. In discussions on relationships in mission methods of Christian conversion which violate the freedom of the human person and contradict the spirit of Christian love were strongly rejected.

Joint studies conducted by the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) have addressed the need for collaboration rather than competition in missionary activities noting that cultural insensitivity, a ‘crusading mentality’ and unethical forms of coercion can mar mission efforts. There have been calls to develop mission practices which are respectful of the integrity of others and ensure that all forms of discrimination, pressure and intimidation are not part of the way in which mission is conducted.

A Muslim–Christian meeting convened by the WCC in Amersfoort, Netherlands in November 2000 reiterated the importance of distinguishing between witness and proselytism. Work is currently being undertaken to develop a Christian code of conduct on religious conversion. The Pontifical

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33 See “Consultation of Christian and Muslims concerning Christian Mission and Islamic Da’wah”, *International Review of Mission* LXV, no. 260 October (1976), 130. The papers from the conference were republished some years later by the Islamic Foundation (UK) with the hope that there might be renewed commitment to implement the concrete proposals from Chambésy.


35 Cooney outlines a number of discussion papers that have been developed over recent decades. Studies have also been done by the Conference of European Churches and the Middle East Council of Churches and the Orthodox members of the WCC have highlighted the issue following the end of the Cold War. Giving material support as an inducement for people to change their religion was condemned. In Manila in 1995 there was a strong appeal for sensitivity and respect in carrying out missionary activities in religiously plural contexts.


Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the WCC’s programme on interreligious relations and dialogue launched an interreligious reflection on conversion with the aim of moving towards a shared code of conduct.\textsuperscript{38} The proposed code of conduct \textit{Seeking Agreement} points to the need to overcome aggressive forms of proselytism and expresses regret for unhelpful and destructive past practices. It is envisaged that the code will uphold the right of people of faith to spread and explain their faith as long as it is done in ways that preserves mutual respect rather than exhibiting a mentality of superiority. The fact that it is considered such a code is needed recognises that coercional mission practices tend to linger on in the religious practices of communities.

9.4 THE INVITATIONAL MISSION APPROACH: LIVING AS A WITNESS

9.4.1 The invitational mission approach: narrative extracts

In contrast to the coercional type, an invitational missional response involves respectful witness. Respondents with an invitational approach pointed to the invitational imperative within their faith within the context of faith in a God who is loving and merciful. This is reflected in the following two narrative extracts.

\textit{Asti and Diwan} (Couple 11- Australian sample)

Asti hopes that one day Diwan might discover faith for himself (he is not currently actively practising his Muslim faith). Asti is convinced of the saving power of the Gospel and seeks to shares her faith with Diwan but does this sensitively, aware that Diwan is very critical of religious fundamentalism. Asti too is critical of those who assume they know God’s will in all circumstances.

\textsuperscript{38} This work was launched in May 2006. The proposed code also plans to also address, the ‘vexed issue of interreligious marriages’.  
She thinks that a self-righteous and judgemental theology is far removed from the true spirit of Christianity. Asti has a firm belief that God is working in the life of her partner. “I believe the Spirit, the light, is in him. He hasn’t embraced Christianity but he also has not rejected it…Some people can go to church but they do not show qualities such as being able to forgive others.”

By the quality of her life Asti hopes she can be a light to others and ‘a living sermon’. Her invitational mission approach was characterised by a deep respect for Diwan who is both her ‘greatest companion’ and her ‘mission field’.

\textit{Kustiah} (Couple 9- Indonesian sample)

Would those who do not convert to Christianity be eternally cut-off from God’s salvation? This question was one Kustiah struggled with having inherited this view from the religious environment in which she had grown up. When she shared her concerns with a minister he responded saying ‘God is all powerful and can’t be controlled by human beings. God has His own plans. We lend our children to Christianity or Islam, or something else, but it is God who decides.’ This was an important new concept for Kustiah. If it is God who calls people to faith she can entrust her partner and children into God’s hands. This helped Kustiah deal with her sadness and disappointment the she had been unsuccessful in converting her partner. Developing a Christian theology of call enabled her to arrive at a level of acceptance and peace.

\textbf{9.4.2 Incidence of the invitational type across the sample groups}

The invitational approach tended to be more pronounced amongst Christians. Evangelism has traditionally been understood as central to Christian mission

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{39}{Extract from transcript of interview with Asti A11 4:45-5:1and A11 3:38-39.}
\footnotetext{40}{Extract from transcript of interview with Asti A11 5:3-11.}
\footnotetext{41}{Extract from transcript of interview with Asti A11 3:40-42.}
\footnotetext{42}{Extract from transcript of interview with Kustiah I9 3:23-31.}
\footnotetext{43}{Twelve of the sixteen ‘invitational respondents’ were Christian. Overall eleven of the forty three respondents in the Indonesian sample and five of the twenty four respondents in the}
which may account for the high incidence amongst Christians. For respondents with an invitational mission approach, allowing children to be raised in their partner’s faith represented a major missiological challenge. Some respondents found strength in developing a theology of call and comfort in prayer, or particular biblical texts.44

9.4.3 The invitational type and conversion

The invitational approach views conversion positively if it is a free act of conscience in response to the call of God. Respondents feel a sense of imperative to share the message of their faith with their partner and believe the converting power belongs to God.

9.4.4 Elements in the invitational mission type

An invitational approach recognises the distinctive differences between Islam and Christianity and has a confessional starting point. The invitational aspect of faith is considered an undeniable aspect of their faith and witness involves sharing with others the good news that God has revealed. Through a person’s words and actions they seek to point others to the truth contained in their religious tradition. Any form of pressure or coercion is rejected and it is affirmed that God takes the initiative in calling people to faith.

9.4.5 Theological and Scriptural underpinnings for the invitational approach

Both Islam and Christianity wish to convey the blessing and truth God has revealed to humanity. Christians carry the mission imperative to share the Gospel to the ‘ends of the earth’.45 Muslims too believe they are called to

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Australian sample had a mission understanding characterised by invitation. Some respondents became more ‘invitational’ or less in the course of their marriage.

44 For example: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit...” (John 15:16). See extract from transcript of interview with Frank 110 5:13-15.

45 A reference to Acts 1:8.
communicate the message of Islam to all human beings. Muhammad’s mission was primarily to give a warning (mundhir) and to bring good news (tabshirr). The Prophet’s role was not to compel people to believe. Muhammad’s life becomes the exemplary model for da’wah.

Muslims invite others to recognise the Qur’an as God’s final revelation but it is God who calls human beings to the “straight path”. The notion of ‘no compulsion’ has been a key principle in da’wah. Those who have eyes to see will discern God’s presence and turn to God. Qur’anic texts highlight the sovereignty of God to bestow his message of grace on whomever God pleases.

For Christians the Gospel affirms the centrality of Christ, his life, death and resurrection, as life-giving good news for the world. There are many Scriptural passages which provide a theological underpinning for an invitational approach. The Biblical imperative to share the message can be seen in such passages as “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations…” (Mat 28: 19). Christ invited all to repent and believe and proclaimed good news to the poor. He welcomed to the Kingdom banquet those who were on the margins of society and called disciples to be witnesses. The first eyewitnesses of the resurrection were told to ‘go and tell’ and in response to the Spirit’s leading went on missionary travels establishing the first Christian congregations. Paul urged Christians to “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the

46 QS 10: 25 “God invites everyone to the Home of Peace and guides whoever He will to a straight path.” See also QS 33:21.
47 See QS 88:21-22 “So (Prophet) warn them: your only task it to give warning, you are not there to control them.” Responsibility lies with each person. Judgment is with God and. God punishes as well as showing mercy. See also QS 6:104, QS 9: 106; QS 17:15; QS 39:41 and QS 13: 40.
48 See QS 1: 7 “Guide us to the straight path: the path of those You have blessed, those who incur no anger and who have not gone astray.”
49 Although this principle has not always been practised there are some notable examples of Muslim rules which have promoted this principle and fostered tolerance of different faiths.
50 See for example QS 3: “Prophet tell them ‘All grace is in God’s hands: He grants it to whoever He will- He is all embracing, all knowing – and He singles out for his mercy whoever He will. His grace is infinite’.” See also QS 22:16 and QS 62:3-4.
hope that you have”.\textsuperscript{51} For Christians and for Muslims a transformation occurs in the life of a person who is called to move from darkness to light.\textsuperscript{52}

\section*{9.4.6 Relating the invitational mission type to current thinking in missiology}

Islam and Christianity are both religions of outreach and Muslims and Christians see themselves as called to witness to their faith. Islamic scholar Montgomery Watt in \textit{Islam and Christianity Today} suggests that an element of mutual witnessing is a necessary part of dialogue between Christians and Muslims.\textsuperscript{53} Neither can abandon what they see as essential truth but both can be open to see and acknowledge the good in the other. Watt recommends that Christians and Muslims adopt as a guiding principle the willingness to “say all the good they can justly say of the other and positively affirm the truth they see”.\textsuperscript{54} If there is to be rivalry between the two faiths, Watt suggests that it be ‘friendly rivalry’ in which each seeks to show the other “the fullest and deepest truth”.\textsuperscript{55} This concept is one that is familiar in Islam and Muslims are encouraged to compete with others in doing good works. This is expressed in the sura text: “...so race to do good: you will all return to God and He will make clear to you the matters you differed about.”(QS 5.48).\textsuperscript{56}

Indonesian missiologist Woly believes Muslims and Christians can have open and constructive relationships although they each have a firm conviction in the absolute truth of their own religious faith, and hold different understandings of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{51} See 1 Peter 1:22-23. Also Mat 10:38, Mark 1:17, Mat 8:22, Mat. 19:21, Rom 10: 14:14-15, 1 Peter 3:15; 1 John 1:1-3; 1 Peter 4:12; Rom 1:16; and 1 Tim 4:9.
\item \textsuperscript{52} There are various scriptures that support the understanding of faith as bringing light to the believer. See John 8:12. Jesus said “I am the light of the world whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Also John 1:4. See Qur’anic texts such as QS 2:257 “God is the ally of those who believe: He brings them out of depths of darkness and into the light.” Also QS 14: 1 and QS 42: 52.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid, 61
\item \textsuperscript{56} Qur’anic translation from M.A.S Abdel Haleem. See for example Anwar M. Syafi’i, “Carefully Examining Islam and Diversity”, \textit{ICIP e-journal}, September 2006. Syafi’i discusses the concept in Islam of \textit{fastabikhul khairat}, of competing in doing good.
\end{itemize}
salvation. There needs to be recognition that Muslims and Christians seek to live out their faith with integrity and obedience to God as understood within their tradition. The invitational mission approach retains a sense of the invitational imperative which is part of both Islam and Christianity. Mutual witness is to be carried out in an atmosphere of respectful witness and dialogue, and does not engage unethical mission practices.

9.5 THE CONNECTIONAL MISSION APPROACH: A SENSE OF AFFINITY

9.5.1 The connectional mission approach: narrative extracts

In the context of this study a connectional missional approach starts from the conviction that Muslims and Christians have an affinity and their two faiths share much in common. Two narrative accounts illustrate the connectional mission approach.

Hanif (Couple 9 Australian sample)

Hanif sprinkles his conversation with texts from the Qur’an. He explains, “In the Qur’an it says that our differences are ‘so that you may know one another’. Our diversity and our differences come from God! That’s what I think.”

Hanif’s connectional mission approach is based on an understanding that God’s intention for human beings is that they have good relationships with one other. He thinks Muslims and non-Muslims need to relinquish attitudes of superiority and develop mutual understanding.

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57 Woly, Meeting at the precincts of faith, 411-413. Woly thinks it is vital to recognise the ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ aspects in religion and refers to the work of Indonesian Muslim scholar M. Quraish Shihab, “Membumikan” Al-Qur’ān: Fungsis dan Peranan Wahyu Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat [“Earthing” the Al-Qur’ān: The Function and Role of Revelation within the Life of Society] (Bandung: 1992), 218.

58 Extract from transcript of interview with Hanif A9 7:37-40. Hanif refers to QS 49: 13 “People, We created you from a single man and a single woman, and made you into races and tribes so that you should recognize one another.”

59 Extract from transcript of interview with Hanif A9 10:8-11.
door” but there must be no compulsion. Hanif recalls texts from the Qur’an that remind him he is to be an example to others but ultimately it is up to people to receive the message.\(^{60}\) In his marriage Hanif feels a strong sense of spiritual affinity with Hannah and believes that God shows no partiality.

_Nasif (Couple 13 – Australian sample)_

Nasif is committed to building better understanding between Muslims and Christians.\(^{61}\) For Nasif, Islam aims to bring *rahat* or blessing to humanity.\(^{62}\) An individual Muslim’s daily life expresses *da’wah* through truthfulness, justice and kindness. *Da’wah* means changing the world beginning with one’s own efforts to be a good person and Nasif believes it is possible to “infect people with goodness”.\(^{63}\) Aggressive missionary activities or speaking ill of another’s religion threatens co-existence.\(^{64}\) Quoting from the Qur’an, “Whosoever will, let him believe and whosoever will, let him disbelieve” (QS 18: 29) Islam’s ‘live and let live’ philosophy according to Nasif, provides a basis for mutual recognition and peaceful co-existence.\(^{65}\) As long as Muslims are guaranteed freedom of worship and are not driven from their lands, Muslims and Christians can be “the best of friends”.\(^{66}\) Nasif believes that much can be learnt from reflecting upon the Prophet’s relationship with his uncle. Although his uncle admired the Prophet he never converted to Islam. “If the Prophet himself ‘failed’ to convert his uncle and yet have a good friendship…

\(^{60}\) Extract from transcript of interview with Hanif A9 7:5-7. The story of the prophet Noah provides guidance in this regard (A9 9: 19-24).

\(^{61}\) Extract from transcript with Nasif A13 6:2.

\(^{62}\) Nasif refers to Qur’anic text QS 21:107 “It was only as a mercy that We sent you (Prophet) to all people.” See extract of transcript of interview with Nasif A13 8: 9-10.

\(^{63}\) Extract from transcript of interview with Nasif A13 4: 29-40.

\(^{64}\) In the Indonesian context Nasif would like to see Christians develop a deeper appreciation of concessions Muslims are asked to make and the difficulties Muslims have in understanding the many different denominations in Christianity. It is not easy for Muslims to understand why, for example Christians need to build another church in areas which are predominantly Muslim, where there are already a number of churches. See extract from transcript of interview with Nasif A13 1:10-14.

\(^{65}\) See extract from transcript with Nasif A13 6: 11-22.

\(^{66}\) Extract from transcript of interview with Nasif 1: 19-26 (which is a reference to QS 60:7-9). Nasif also illustrates his point using historical examples of positive interactions between Muslims and Christians.
and the uncle could support the Prophet’s work, then we see we can have close relationships with non-Muslims.”

9.5.2 Incidence of the connectional type across the sample groups

Across the two sample groups there were nine respondents in the connectional mission type and a further eight showed elements of a connectional mission understanding (combined with another approach). A greater proportion of respondents with the connectional type were Muslims. This suggests that the connectional mission type may be particularly suited to Muslim da’wah understandings. Qur’anic references to the spiritual affinity between Muslims and the ‘People of the Book’ are a likely reason for this correlation.

9.5.3 The connectional type and conversion

A connectional mission approach combines respectful witness with recognition of converging elements between the two faiths. Some people will be called to embark on a new religious path and therefore there is a place for conversion.

9.5.4 Elements in the connectional mission type

A connectional mission approach does not discount the differences between the two faiths, nor relinquish a strong sense of certainty in the truth of one’s own faith, but the ‘connecting points’ and commonalities between the two faiths are affirmed as a basis for Muslims and Christians to live together in peaceful co-existence, mutual dialogue and respectful witness. Muslims and Christians share a spiritual affinity. Characteristic of those who adopt a connectional mission approach is a tolerance for difference combined with a commitment to sharing in a respectful manner the revealed truth of their respective traditions. The connectional mission approach affirms that Christianity and Islam speak of God in different yet similar ways, but God works in the hearts of all people.

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67 Extracts from transcript of interview with Nasif A13 6:26-29.
68 Seven of the nine respondents with a connectional mission approach were Muslim.
9.5.5 Theological and Scriptural underpinnings for the connectional mission type

Characteristic of those who adopt a connectional approach is a belief that it is possible for Muslims and Christians to live in a state of mutual respect for one another. From a Christian perspective this might be viewed as working together for justice and peace and sharing the common values of “God’s kingdom”. Catholic and Protestant respondents with a connectional mission approach tended to point to changing theological winds which have helped them adjust their expectation that their partner needed to convert to Christianity. Catholic respondents point to decisions made in the Second Vatican Council which promoted interfaith dialogue and opened up new horizons in Christian theology.\(^6^9\) One respondent spoke of how Vatican II enabled her to embark on a journey towards seeing the connection between her Christian faith and Islam.\(^7^0\) Another respondent contrasted the period before and after Vatican II in terms of adopting a very different approach to other faiths.\(^7^1\)

It is an areas of debate within Christian theology of religions how God’s Spirit is present in different cultures and religious traditions. For Christians a connectional mission approach often draws on an understanding of the Holy Spirit as being active in the world not confined to the visible Church.\(^7^2\) Indian

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\(^6^9\) The Vatican II declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions, *Nostra Aetate* (1965) advocated openness to other religions whilst continuing to proclaim the uniqueness of Christ. It remains a foundational text for Catholic theology in interpreting the relationship between people of different faiths. *Nostra Aetate* stated that: “The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men.”


\(^7^0\) Extract from transcript of interview with Pauline A2 3:1-3.

\(^7^1\) Indonesian respondent, Tuti said: “Before there was the view that Catholicism was the best and outside of it there was nothing else. Vatican II gave greater recognition of other faiths outside Catholicism.” Extract from transcript of interview with Tuti I5 4:22-25

\(^7^2\) John 3: 8 “The Spirit blows where it pleases.” See also Gal. 5:22-23.
theologian Stanley Samartha suggested there were ‘Gospel criteria’ that could be applied to acknowledge movements that bear the mark of the Holy Spirit. \(^{73}\)

Influential theologian and former Christian missionary, Lesslie Newbigin thought Christians should look for the presence of God in people of other faiths and not enter interfaith dialogue with the assumption that the Church is the exclusive possessor of salvation. Partners in dialogue will each have a confessional starting point but should be willing to listen and learn, offer mutual challenge and be open to the possibility of profound change occurring. \(^{74}\)

Christians then, in their dealings with men and women who do not acknowledge Jesus as Lord, will meet them and share with them in a common life, not as strangers but as those who live by the same life-giving Word and in whom the same life-giving light shines...They will join with their non-Christian neighbours in all that serves life against death and light against darkness. \(^{75}\)

Boland made the observation that a characteristic element in Islam is the understanding that the Prophet was sent to confirm the message of his predecessors. \(^{76}\) For Muslims, the message delivered by Muhammad was the same as that which God had given previously through the earlier prophets and apostles. The Qur’anic statement that God has never left any people without a prophet helps Muslims recognise the validity other religions. The Qur’ an shows some ambivalence towards the ‘People of the Book’ with textual references that provide both positive and negative assessments. Nevertheless Christians and Jews worship the same God as Muslims (e.g. Q.29.46). \(^{77}\)


\(^{76}\) See B.J. Boland, _The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia_ (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1991), 205. Boland suggests that ‘theology of religion’ in Islam differs from the theologies of religion in Judaism and Christianity because of its strong inclusive approach.

\(^{77}\) Some references pass negative judgments on the People of the book, others are more positive. See for example QS 3:113-115. “Yet they are not all alike; some of the People of the Book are a nation upstanding, that recite God’s signs in the watches of the night, bowing themselves, believing in God and … forbidding dishonour, vying one with the other in good works; those are the righteous. And whatsoever good you do, you shall not be denied the just reward of it; and God knows the godfearing”. See also QS 2:136; QS 3:199, QS 42 12-13, QS 29:46, QS 22:17, QS 2:136, QS 3:20. A more negative view of the People of the Book is presented in other texts such as QS 3: 110-115 and QS 5:51, 72-76.
described as those who are “the closest in affection” to Muslim believers. A belief in the universal revelation of God in creation and the immeasurable innate dignity of the human person connect the two faiths as does Abraham’s faith and his intimate friendship with God. Muslim scholars such as Ziauddin Sadar speak of the importance of Muslims and Christians working together to “urge what is right, and forbid what is wrong.”

9.5.6 Relating the connectional mission type to current thinking in missiology

Recognising the breadth of writings in the field, this section briefly introduces three theologians whose writings reflect a connectional elements. Canadian Christian theologian Wilfred Cantwell Smith spent a life time studying Islam. He came to the view that Islam and Christianity represent two communities which diverge in belief but in matters of faith, “converge more than one might imagine” despite the different symbolic systems used to conceptualise God and God’s relationship with the world. Christians and Muslims share the conviction that God’s mercy and grace is active in God’s dealings with humanity and a belief that God brings people to obedience and communion with him. Cantwell Smith recommended a new collaboration between Muslims and Christians so that they might learn to consciously and sincerely speak about each other's faith in the presence of one another and search for answers that are “more subtle, more realistic, more historical, more complex than the traditional ‘yes or no’.”

Indonesian scholar Nurcholish Madjid played an influential role in developing a Muslim theology of religions. He believed the Treaty of Madinah provided an

78 (Trans. M.A.S Abdel Haleem): “…you are sure to find that the closest in affection towards the believers are those who say, ‘We are Christians,’ for there are among them people devoted to learning and ascetics…” (QS 5: 82-83).
82 Ibid, 298.
inspirational example of the respect Muslims were to show people of other faiths. Past generations of Muslims who succeeded in cultivating these principles established cosmopolitan Islamic cultures and civilisations. He refers to textual support for a close connection between Muslims and Christians. Belief in the Oneness of God (Tawhid) and approaching God with an attitude of self-surrender are for Madjid the core beliefs of al-islam, a universal religion characterised by submission to God. Al-islam was the essence of Prophet's message, but in Madjid’s view other faiths too exhibit sincere belief in the One God, and a commitment to right conduct. Mutual recognition, tolerance and shared values have enabled Indonesia to be a multicultural and religiously plural society.

Catholic theologian Jacques Dupuis called for a radical reassessment of the way Muslims and Christians view each other. He described the goal of interreligious dialogue as a ‘common conversion’ of Christians and members of other religious traditions, to God. In the past Christians have often referred to other faiths in an offensive and harmful way. Dupuis advocated for a qualitative leap in Christian theology towards a more positive theological assessment of other faiths and a discovery of a new breadth and depth in the message of the Christian faith. Mission in his view, should be less concerned about enlarging the borders of the church and more focused on the mystery of God, the permeability of the church and the presence of Christ fulfilling and uniting all things.

84 Ibid, 177-201. Madjid refers to a number of texts such as QS 2:256; QS 10: 99 and QS 5: 48.
85 Ibid, 234.
86 Dupuis, Christianity and the Religions, 257. Christians can acknowledge additional and autonomous values of truth and grace in other traditions and the “unsurpassable transcendence of God’s revelation and self-communication in the person and work of Jesus Christ.”
9.6 THE AFFIRMATIONAL MISSION APPROACH: DIVERSITY AS A GIFT FROM GOD

Affirming that God works in the world universally and graciously is an important theme within Christianity and Islam. An affirmational missional approach recognises the diverse ways God works in the world and views religious diversity positively, as a gift from God for human enrichment. Consequently there is a strong affirmation of the right of others to choose their faith. An affirmational approach emphasises unity despite religious differences. The following extracts illustrate the affirmational approach.

9.6.1 The affirmational mission approach: narrative extracts

*Kadri (Couple 8 – Indonesian sample)*

Kadri distinguished himself from some of his fellow Muslims who “go looking for people who can be brought into Islam”. He believes all religious paths have merit and there is no need to try and persuade others to change their faith. “As for me, I am not a fanatic when it comes to religion and I don’t want to make religion like a set of clothes, … ‘Let’s just change this or that’. All religions are sacred and so I say, “If you believe in your religion (and that is Catholic), then be a good Catholic and live out your Catholic faith well.” But … I will continue to be a Muslim. Kadri affirmed people’s right to live out their own religious calling while being open to learn from others.

*Muchtar (Couple 5 – Indonesian sample)*

Muchtar remains firmly within his Muslim tradition but in his interfaith marriage he seeks to harmonise the two religious traditions at points of divergence as is reflected in the following extract where Muchtar makes reference to *nabi Isa*. “The Muslim version is a bit different from the Gospels

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87 Extract of the transcript of interview with Kadri I8 5:40, 45-46.
88 Extract of the transcript of interview with Kadri I 8 1:37-42.
but in principle they are the same — *Jesus did not die*. In Islam, Isa carried the cross to Golgotha and on the way the sky became dark and the Prophet Isa was taken into heaven and someone else took his place. It is different from the Gospel but the *central thing* is that Isa is the one and only person of the twenty five prophets from Adam to the Prophet Muhammad who did not die. All the other prophets have a grave. In the last times it will be Isa who returns to the earth."^89

Muchtar used a major Jakarta landmark, the National Monument or *Monas*, to describe how different spiritual paths point towards the same truth. *Monas* has a flame of fire commemorating Indonesia’s struggle for independence and can be approached from four different directions (Freedom Road South, North, East or West).

If we enter from Freedom South it will be a different road from Freedom West, North, and East but if we arrive at the peak, we will say, “Oh, what we were moving towards was the same."^90

*Anwar and Nana* (Couple 14 – Indonesian sample)

Anwar thinks that polemical debate tends to be destructive. A mature person is someone who is accepting and tolerant of others.^^91 Anwar believes that ultimately all faiths share a unity. People representing different faiths pray in different ways but all direct their prayers to ‘The One Above’.^^92 For Anwar, religion is intended to be a force for good and for peace, not a source of conflict or hatred.^^93 The conversation takes place in the carefully tended garden that Anwar and Nana have created, a calm and beautiful place to sit and relax. The mission of different faiths in Anwar’s view is to contribute to making the world the beautiful garden that God intends.^^94

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^89 Extract from interview with Muchtar A5 9:29-36.
^90 Extract of interview with Muchtar I5 9:10-17.
^91 Extract of transcript of interview with Anwar I14 5:6-17 and 6: 42-44.
^92 Extract from transcript of interview with Anwar I14 4:1-12.
^93 Extract from transcript of interview with Anwar I14 2:16-18 and 4:19.
^94 Extract from transcript of interview with Anwar I14 2:16-18 and I14 5:4-23.
Rahmat had a devout Muslim upbringing but during his life he gradually expanded his vision to include an affirmation of other faiths. He used the metaphor of different rivers to express his universal vision.

I begin to see that actually all the different faiths are like different rivers that flow from the same source. We are swimming in our own river trying to get to the same source. Of course you cannot jump from one river to another… Each river is complete as its own system, but …the aim is the same.\textsuperscript{95}

\textbf{9.6.2 Incidence of the affirmational type across the sample groups}

Across the two sample groups there were twelve respondents with an affirmational approach.\textsuperscript{96} An additional eleven respondents had strong elements of an affirmational approach which they combined with another mission understanding.\textsuperscript{97} There was also correlation between the affirmational approach and those who had a contemplative or mystical religious perspective and the affirmational missional approach appeared particularly suited to a Javanese world view.

\textbf{9.6.3 The affirmational type and conversion}

Respondents with an affirmational mission approach reject the need for conversion. Knowing and valuing one’s own religious heritage is the starting point for affirming the religious heritage of others. As one respondent stated, “Why should people move away from their religious tradition if it has been important in shaping who they are and continues to provide meaning and

\textsuperscript{95} Extract from transcript of interview with Rahmat A2 2:24-28.

\textsuperscript{96} Four of the twenty four respondents in the Australian sample and eight of the forty three respondents in the Indonesian sample reflected an approach that could be described as affirmational.

\textsuperscript{97} They combined an affirmational approach with an ‘actional’ approach which will be described in the next section.
Some saw conversion as representing colonising instincts – vestiges of an old missionary paradigm. Efforts to convert others instead should be replaced with efforts to build trust and the breaking down of barriers between people.

9.6.4 Elements in the affirmational type

An affirmational mission approach tends to be reflective of a universal vision or a desire to blend or harmonise the two traditions, or occasionally transcend one’s own faith tradition. Those with an affirmational approach tend to view Christianity and Islam as expressions of the same truth apprehended and construed in different ways, as reflected in the words of one respondent, Benny Huta: “In my opinion, all are God’s people, only their ways are different.”

Those who have an affirmational mission approach appreciate the richness of their own spiritual heritage as well as the spiritual heritage of others. Friendship rather than religious competition is promoted and mission is focused on religious harmony and the building of peaceful relations between the different religious communities.

9.6.5 Theological and Scriptural underpinnings for the affirmational mission type

Those with an affirmational mission approach see religious diversity as originating in God’s creative will for the world. For Christians there are a number of Biblical texts which provide the theological underpinning for an affirmational approach. “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it” implies

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98 Extract from transcript of interview with Nini I21 4:34-35. Nini drew from her own experience, including the sense of shame and betrayal she felt for having ‘converted’ to Islam at the time of her marriage, to highlight the importance of recognising that religion is a key part of a person’s identity that can not be easily changed.

99 Muslim respondent, Rahmat (A2) incorporated aspects of Buddhist meditation into his devotional practice. Catholic respondent Sumitro (I24) prays using two methods, drawing from his Catholic heritage as well as learning to sholat. In a couple of cases respondents moved beyond the boundaries of their own faith traditions, for example, Tanya (A1) and Evelyn (A3) described themselves as ‘post-Christian’.

100 Extract from transcript of interview with Sri I3 19:2-3.
that all peoples experience and reflect God’s grace. All creation is infused with God’s presence and God is revealed in many and varied ways. Old Testament texts refer to God’s care for all the nations not only the people of Israel. In Jesus’ ministry he affirmed faith amongst the outcasts, the sick, Samaritans and other ‘outsiders’. 

Islam teaches that every human community has been sent a bearer of truth who brings good news as well as warning to the people to walk in the path of God. Within Islam there is recognition that if God had so willed He could have made all people into one nation but instead diversity was part of God’s plan. “To everyone of you We have appointed a right way and an open road. If God had willed, He would have made you one nation” (QS 5:48).

The Treaty of Madinah referred to in a previous section can also be an important source to support an affirmational missional approach within Islam encouraging Muslims to recognise and accept the plurality of human society. The ‘pluralistic vision of the Qur’an’ has been highlighted in the writings of a number of Indonesian Muslim scholars.

9.6.6 Relating the affirmational mission type to current thinking in missiology

How Christians and Muslims understand the reality of religious diversity is a complex area of theology in both faiths. In this section reference is made to two

101 See for example Psalm 47:1, 8-9; Psalm 139:7-10, Psalm 82: 8 and Psalm 87:4. All nations share a common ancestor, see Genesis 10.
102 See Luke 7:1-10, Luke 10: 25f, Mark 7: 24-30, John 4 and the Beatitudes in Matthew 5. Old Testament stories include Genesis 14 (King Melchizedek of Salem); Exodus 18 (Jethro a priest of Midian); Numbers 22-24 (Balaam); Isaiah 42 (Cyrus) and Joshua 2 (Rahab).
103 See also QS 10:47: and QS: 10:99: “And if the Lord had willed, whoever is on the earth would have believed, all of them together. Wouldst thou then constrain the people, until they believers?”
scholars whose writings resonate with the responses of respondents who adopted an affirmational mission approach.

Indonesian Muslim scholar Zubair speaks of plurality as part of God’s intention for human life. He refers to the Qur’anic text QS 49:13. “O mankind, We created you male and female, and appointed races and tribes, that you may know one another”. Zubair believes it is not possible or desirable to erase religious differences and citing Amin Abdullah, suggests that there are different languages not one absolute language to speak of God, but all the languages serve the same function. Religions point to the universal but each religious tradition undergoes dynamic change and has aspects that are relative and temporary. Zubair suggests that people of all faiths need to combat the tendency to think that their religion alone represents absolute truth. Dialogue – not monologue – is an important aspect of da’wah and Zubair argues that da’wah needs to take seriously the normative plurality of humankind and be conducted with an awareness of the presence of other communities. Zubair’s position represents a ‘universalist’ Muslim perspective which sees Islam as affirming rather than destroying the diversity of religious expressions.

Marjorie Suchochi outlines a theological rationale for affirming religious diversity drawing on four key Christian doctrines: creation; an understanding of God as Trinity; the doctrine of the Incarnation; and the concept of the Kingdom of God. The reciprocal nature of relationships between God and human beings for Suchochi means that there will necessarily be different creative responses in the way God relates to people. To believe God is incarnate in every culture is to affirm that every culture has its own trajectory which represents a peoples’ story of their relationship with God that has been built up over centuries. The concept of God as Trinity draws attention to the way in which God’s unity is

106 Ibid, 92, 95.
107 Andy Dermawan, “Introduction”, in Metodologi Ilmu Dakwah. Dermawan introduces and summarises each of the contributions in the volume.
108 See Suchochi, Divinity and Diversity, 35.
established in and through irreducible diversity and the possibility of diversity-in-unity. Suchochi believes that Christians can delight in the ‘manyness’ of people and religious expressions. She proposes a mission understanding characterised by friendship rather than competition and suggests that such a missiology is based on a ‘theology of affirmation’.110

9.7 THE ACTIONAL MISSION APPROACH

The actional mission approach draws attention to the praxis of faith. A life dedicated to God and service to others, and actions which express kindness and love, goodness and integrity are the marks of true faith. The following narrative extracts illustrate an actional mission approach.

9.7.1 The actional mission approach: narrative extracts

Tuti (Couple 5 – Indonesian sample)

Tuti understands God as ‘Unconditional Love’ and interprets God as being active in the world wherever love is present, even if people do not name themselves as Christian. Tuti used to earnestly pray that Muchtar would become a Christian but later came to believe that Muchtar’s actions – his kindness and generosity to those in need, were proof enough that was present in his life. “I think he also lives in God.”111 Referring to the Biblical text: “Where there is love there is God”, Tuti places love at the centre of God’s mission in the world.112

110 Ibid, 43-44. 
112 Tuti’s reflections draw from the Scripture passage 1 John 4:7 “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”
Muhammad Lubis (Couple 2 – Indonesian sample)

Muhammad Lubis and Betty married in 1962. Now a widower Lubis has a deep sense of gratitude for the life he shared with Betty. He recounts how he helped Betty’s Christian community obtain permission to build their church. He and Betty used much of their savings to see the project completed but he has no regrets. Drawing on the Muslim understanding of *pahala* he feels a sense of satisfaction that they used their savings for the benefit of others.\(^\text{113}\) “Anyone who leaves behind on this earth something that can be of use to others does a good deed. When we die there are no *pahala* except these three: teaching for the benefit of many; leaving behind something that can be beneficial for many and the last is having children who follow God’s teachings. Lubis hopes that through their actions, the legacy he and Betty leave behind is a *pahala* that is pleasing to God.”\(^\text{114}\)

Azita (Couple 14 - Australian sample)

For Azita the important thing is “doing good and not doing harm”.\(^\text{115}\) Azita works with refugees and wants to make a positive impact to reduce the suffering of others.\(^\text{116}\) She is more comfortable living out her faith in actions than arguing for Islam as a doctrine and she is suspicious of efforts to convert others. Azita’s parents had come to Australia in order to obtain political freedom and freedom of expression was an important part of what her family had struggled for. She does not think her relationship with Luzion could have worked if he had seen her as an object of mission.\(^\text{117}\) At the same time, Azita believes that through Luzio she has developed a greater appreciation of Christianity, its radical concept of love and its ‘revolutionary nature’.\(^\text{118}\) She and Luzio share a strong humanitarian concern expressed in actions, concern

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\(^{113}\) *Pahala* is a Muslim term meaning good deeds that God recognises and which are rewarded by God in the after life. This section is based on an extract of transcript of interview with Muhammad Lubis I2 3:7-18.

\(^{114}\) Extract from transcript of interview with Muhammad Lubis I2 2:36-39 and 3:1-3.

\(^{115}\) Extract from transcript of interview with Azita A14 15: 6-17.

\(^{116}\) Extract from transcript of interview with Azita A14 15: 8-11.

\(^{117}\) Extract from transcript of interview with Azita A14 24:20-32.

\(^{118}\) Extract from transcript of interview with Azita A 14 22:22-34.
for justice and care for those in need. In this respect Azita affirms that their core
values are indeed, “very similar”.119

9.7.2 Incidence of the actional mission type across the sample groups

The actional mission type was widespread across both sample groups. Nine of
the Australian sample and twenty of the Indonesian sample were predominantly
actional in approach. An additional nineteen respondents had elements of an
actional mission approach combined with another approach. This proved to be
the most prevalent mission approach across both sample groups.

9.7.3 The actional type and conversion

The quality of a person’s humanity and whether they are a good person whose
behaviour reflects just, honest and kind actions was considered more important
than which religious path was chosen.120 For this reason conversion tended to
be given little attention or was seen as being less important than one’s actions
as was expressed by one of the Australian respondents, Hannah: “Even in
Indonesia I heard of some Christians boasting about converting a Muslim and it
made me squirm. I don’t like that sort of Christianity.” Hannah’s approach to
mission was not concerned to recruit people to church but doing what you can
to help others.121

Some respondents combined an actional approach with one of the other non-
coercional missional approaches and in these cases respondents adopted a range
of theological positions on the subject of conversion.122

119 Based on extract of transcript of interview with Luzio A14 21:35.
120 Yono for example, believes that those who take the selfish path and are only concerned with
securing their own well-being have an empty and ultimately meaningless life. When asked
whether he thinks salvation is only available through Christ Yono responded “O no, I think it is
our actions.” Based on extract from transcript of interview with Yono A19 13:8-11.
121 See extracts from interview with Hannah A9 6: 1-14 and A9 5: 36-41.
122 Some adopted a theological stance close to the invitational, connectional or affirmational
type.
9.7.4 Elements in the actional type

Respondents with an actional mission approach believe practical actions that help others are the true test of faithfulness. The actional mission type focuses on ethical and practical issues and constructive ways in which Muslims and Christians join together in joint mission. Arguing about irreconcilable doctrinal differences is considered unproductive when compared to the importance of giving attention to the urgent challenges facing humanity and the environment. Based on a shared ethic Muslims and Christians can contribute to a more just and peaceful world through working separately or through collaborative action.

9.7.5 Theological and scriptural underpinnings for the actional mission type

God’s compassion and concern for justice are very important themes in the Bible and the Qur’an. Both faiths understand God as judging people according to their deeds and practical actions expressing care, justice, compassion and love reveal a life guided by God. For Christians, a person who embodies these qualities is viewed as following the way of Christ and demonstrating the values of the kingdom. They live in God and are walking in the light. In contrast, God’s prophetic judgement falls on false religion which oppresses the poor. From a Muslim perspective, true virtue lies in faith and good works. Those who follow the way of justice, mercy and peace have

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123 Compare for example the story of separating the sheep and the goats and the final judgement in Matthew 25:31-46 with a similar story recorded in the Qur’an. (Trans. M.A.S Abdel Haleem): “What will explain to you what the steep path is? It is to free a slave, to feed at a time of hunger an orphaned relative or a poor person in distress and to be one of those who believe and urge one another to steadfastness and compassion. Those who do this will be on the right-hand side, but those who disbelieve in Our revelations will be on the left side, and the Fire will close in on them.” (QS 90: 12-18).

124 See Biblical text James 2:20. “Faith without works is dead.” See also Rom. 2:6 “You will be judged according to your works.” Other texts include John 13: 31-35, James 2:14-18 and Mark 10: 17-25. See QS 10: 26: (Trans. M.A.S Abdel ): “God invites you to the Home of Peace. He guides whom He will to a straight path. Those that do good works will have a good reward and more besides.” See also QS 39:10, QS 9:27, and QS 5: 69.

125 See 1 John 1:7 and 1 John 4:7-8

chosen the “straight path” and live according to the precepts of Islam in submission to God’s will.\footnote{See QS 90: 12-18. The Indonesian term \textit{orange saleh} (‘saleh’ has an Arabic origin and refers to a person who is pious, devout and dedicated to doing God's commands and avoiding that which God forbids.}

\subsection*{9.7.6 Relating the actional mission type to current thinking in missiology}

An actional mission focus was evident at a round table discussion ‘Constructing an Asian Missiology for the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century’ held in Bali in 2003 sponsored by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist participants were invited to join Asian Christians to reflect together on the shape of a possible shared understanding of mission.\footnote{See WARC, “Together in Mission Voices from the Regions”, \textit{Reformed World} 54 (March 2004), 12-29. http://warc.ch/24gc/rw041/02.pdf (accessed February 27, 2006). The gathering took place in Bali from 25-28 November 2003.} Participants envisaged the construction of a ‘new missiology’ that focused on the concrete tasks of healing and restoration. The gathering declared, “People and life are the pivot of mission.” In the face of globalisation and hegemonic geopolitical strategies, participants identified a new mission agenda that was people-centred rather than an institution-or church-centred, concerned for the environment and which promoted ways of “living together and acting together for life”.\footnote{Ibid.}

Some have suggested that the missionary priority today is not ‘our’ witnessing to ‘them’ but we and others witnessing and acting together. Dialogue and ‘diapraxis’ are required to face the contemporary challenges.\footnote{The term ‘diapraxis’ was used by Tim Yates and John D’Arcy May at the biennial conference of the British and Irish Association for Mission Studies, St Stephen’s House, Oxford, 28 June–1 July 1999. See Timothy Yates, ed., \textit{Mission: An Invitation to God's Future} (Sheffield: Cliff College Publishing, 2000).} Indonesian theologian Muhammad Ali has also spoken of the need for a new paradigm for mission that starts from the recognition that all human beings are equal before God, and God calls people to ‘righteous living’ and a deeper conversion to God, and a deeper recognition, respect and enrichment in our relationship with
His ‘theology of pluralism’ sees the ‘other’ no longer as objects of mission but as those with whom we can work to address many urgent economic and environmental challenges facing the world.

9.8 FIVE MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACHES

9.8.1 Summary of missiological approaches

Interviews were conducted with seventy-three respondents across the two sample groups representing thirty-nine couples. There were a few respondents whose mission approach defied easy categorisation but most were able to be placed in one of the five missional types. It should be noted that indepth interviews capture a particular moment in time and undoubtedly undergo change. An overview of the respondents’ mission approaches is provided in Appendix 7 and a summary of the missiological approaches is provided in Figure 8.

**Fig. 8 Summary of missiological approaches**

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<th>Connectional</th>
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# Indicates elements of this mission type were present.
One Australian respondent was not able to be placed into any type as she was unsure about her own religious identity and was straddling both faiths.

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132 Respondents may have adopted a different approach in the past. They may also adapt and further develop their missional understanding in the future in response to lived experience. The missional approaches are not ‘set in stone’ but are fluid.
9.8.2 Typology of five missiological approaches

Figure 9 presents an overview of the typology of five missiological approaches outlined in this chapter.

**Fig. 9 ‘Five Missiological Approaches’**

**COERCIONAL**
The ‘Coercional Type’ curtails the partner’s religious freedom and seeks to compel the partner to convert. An absolute assurance of the exclusive truth of one’s own faith and its superior value tends to underpin this approach. A power imbalance creates a situation in which one partner feels the right to dominate.

**INVITATIONAL**
The ‘Invitational Type’ involves respectful witness in an invitational and respectful way. By words and example people seek to point others to the truth contained within their religious tradition believing there must be no compulsion in matters of religion. God takes the initiative in calling people to faith.

**CONNECTIONAL**
The ‘Connectional Type’ sees a family resemblance in Islam and Christianity. Each partner holds their own religious tradition but there is a sense of spiritual affinity and ‘connecting points’. Muslims and Christians are called to live in peaceful co-existence, mutual learning, dialogue and respectful witness.

**AFFIRMATIONAL**
The ‘Affirmational Type’ affirms the faith of the partner and rejects attempts to convert others. Religious harmony, tolerance, dialogue and mutual enrichment are emphasised. Religious diversity is viewed as a gift from God and mystical traditions point to a sense of unity and oneness despite differences.

**ACTIONAL**
The ‘Actional Type’ expresses faith in actions. The practice of faith is the ‘benchmark’ which demonstrates a life dedicated to God and service to others. Goodness, integrity and deeds of kindness and love are considered the marks of true faith.
9.9 CONCLUDING REMARKS

9.9.1 Interfaith marriage between Muslims and Christians: a location for change and transformation

Interfaith marriages can be a location for significant change and transformation. Religious beliefs and the missiological vision of respondents in this study did not remain stagnant but underwent change in response to the ‘living dialogue’ that took place as part of their everyday lives.\(^{133}\) Through informal ‘hermeneutical conversations’ respondents interact with their religious tradition and its sacred texts, and the religious tradition of their partner. Key questions that confront those in interfaith marriages include whether they see their marriage as part of God’s purposes, how they view the presence of God in their own life and the life of their partner, responses to the subject of conversion, and whether they support the view that within the context of their marriage both faiths can co-exist and flourish. A deeper question is whether the partner’s faith is a legitimate expression of faith in the same God. For respondents this last question was important if they were going to be able to entrust children into the care of their partner and their partner’s religious community and believed it could impart a depth of spiritual richness.

Despite assumptions that interfaith marriages lead to a weakening of faith the narrative extracts of respondents suggested that faith generally was strengthened in the course of their interfaith marriage. It did not appear that being in such marriages reduced religiosity or a sense of certitude respondents had about the religious truth contained in their tradition though respondents did at times modify, question, or change some of their inherited understandings. A number of respondents moved towards a greater appreciation of the wideness of

\(^{133}\) Indonesian respondent, Susan (11), for example, was searching for a theology that could help her understand God’s saving actions in a broader way. “I showed Adri the text from John’s Gospel Chapter 14 “No one goes to the Father but by me.” He asked, “Why can’t we just go straight to God? Do people only go to God through Jesus?” This conversation raised questions for Susan for which she is still seeking answers. See extract from transcript of interview with Susan I11 8:30-36.
God’s mercy which could be experienced by people in diverse ways.\(^\text{134}\) A motivating factor that sometimes prompted respondents to rethink their missional understanding was often the witness (and positive actions) of their partner. A smaller number of respondents made the reverse journey and struggled to accept the theological legitimacy of their partners’ faith.\(^\text{135}\) A ‘theology of call’ provided an important theological foundation for the building of interfaith families and assisted in ensuring that respectful rather than coercional approaches were adopted. Contrary to the widespread view that it is difficult for both traditions to co-exist in an interfaith marriage it appeared that for many it was possible and indeed there was evidence that in some cases both faiths flourished as long as there were some important ground rules which applied.\(^\text{136}\)

9.9.2 Blessed and called to be a blessing

Many narrative extracts have been included in this study. A final extract is offered which illustrates an important missiological idea that emerged in the course of this study, the notion that interfaith couples understood themselves to be ‘blessed and called to be a blessing’.

_Sudarsono and Melati_ (Couple 1– Indonesian study)

Sudarsono and Melati who married in 1951 believe that their marriage has been an experience of God’s blessing and grace. In their small regional town in which they live they are admired and held in high esteem. Sudarsono has been

\(^{134}\) Indonesian respondent Endang for example, over time came to accept Yono’s decision to remain a Catholic and trusted that God was working in his life in ways that might be different from her own experience. See extract from transcript of interview with Yono and Endang I19 5:39-42.

\(^{135}\) How respondents channelled this renewed zeal and how couples adapted to religious change when one partner became more religiously fervent was a major challenge for a number of couples discussed in Chapters seven and eight.

\(^{136}\) These will be further outlined in chapter ten. See also Romain, _Till Faith Us Do Part: Couples Who Fall in Love Across the Religious Divide_, 6, 17. Romain suggests that the jury has been out on whether interfaith marriages lead to a loss of faith or help break down ignorance and mistrust and create a more open society which celebrates rather than fears difference.
elected the *Rukun Tetangga* (an honorary administrative role in his locality) for many years. He is a Christian and the area is largely Muslim which reflects the high esteem in which he is held.\(^{137}\) Now an elderly couple, Sudarsono and Melati are often asked, “How is it that you live so harmoniously?”\(^{138}\) They acknowledge that an interfaith marriage is not easy and that in most cases, it is easier and preferable for families to be united by one faith. In their own experience however, having different faiths has “never created problems or stopped them from feeling a sense of oneness”.\(^ {139}\)

Sudarsono is happy to share his Christian faith with anyone who asks and hopes his life expresses his faith in Jesus as ‘salt in the world’.\(^ {140}\) He can also affirm Islam as a faith that helps people become good human beings. He sees this in Melati and her many positive qualities and loving nature. Sudarsono thinks that Melati exhibits love “as much as we Christians do.”\(^ {141}\)

Sudarsono and Melati have a firm belief that Muslims and Christians can live as neighbours and friends. They believe that approaches that denigrate the beliefs of others have no place in Islam or Christianity as Sudarsono explains, “As I read the Gospels there is no part that tells us to criticise other faiths.”\(^ {142}\) Sudarsono and Melati are thankful that the religious conflict, which has occurred in other places in recent years, has never touched their community. In some small way they hope that their life together has provided a positive example to others. It seems that this has indeed been the case. On their daily morning walk they stop many times to be warmly greeted by neighbours. Sudarsono and Melati live as a testimony to the power of loving friendship. In the community in which they live they have not only been a blessing to each other but have been a blessing to others.

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\(^{137}\) See extract of transcript of interview with Sudarsono I10:5-10.
\(^{138}\) See extract from transcript of interview with Sudarsono and Melati I17:26. The Indonesian concept of *kerukunan* or ‘living together in harmony’ is highly valued in Indonesian society.
\(^{139}\) Extract from transcript of interview with Sudarsono I1 4: 43-46.
\(^{140}\) Extract of transcript of interview with Sudarsono I1 10:8.
\(^{141}\) Extract of transcript of interview with Sudarsono I1 15:12-13.
\(^{142}\) Extract of transcript of interview with Sudarsono I1 15:14-15.
9.9.3 Concluding comments

There were a variety of missiological responses evident in narrative extracts. Analysis of narrative extracts revealed contrasting missiological responses categorised as coercional, invitational, connectional, affirmational and actional. Some struggled to release themselves from a lingering tendency to assume religious superiority over their partner; some retained a strong sense of the invitational imperative and saw conversion as a valid goal of mission as long as witness took place in a sensitive and respectful way; some emphasised the connecting points between their two traditions that enabled them to have a spiritual affinity; some affirmed religious diversity as part of God’s plan and purpose for the world and considered conversion from one religion to another as unnecessary; some emphasised ethical principles and focused on developing efforts at joint mission to confront the problems facing humanity.

The missional understanding of respondents did not remain stagnant but underwent change in response to lived experience, particularly the conversation and interactions with their partner, and through reflection on their religious tradition and sacred texts and their social, religious and political context.

Respondents in this study tended to advocate strongly for approaches to mission and da ‘wah which promote respectful relations and which safeguard religious freedom. Coercion, intolerance, religious indifference and a polemical spirit were viewed as a denial of a true understanding of Islam and Christianity. They highlighted an ongoing need to challenge missional approaches that denigrate or misrepresent the faith of others or which place pressure on others to convert. Such practices were not widespread but still ‘lingered on’ in the theology and practices of some respondents and their religious communities.

The typology of five missiological approaches represents a practical outcome of this study which takes into account distinctive nuances in the way Muslims and Christians conceive of mission. In the presentation of the typology the
researcher has not set out to express preference for any one particular missional approach. The view instead is that each of the four ‘non-coercional’ mission approaches which were adopted by respondents represent a valid missional response which can be justified in terms of a theological rationale and reference to religious tradition and sacred texts.

‘Five Missiological Approaches’ represents a fresh way to conceive of the mission responses of Muslims and Christians as they respond to the experience of religious plurality within the context of a dialogical relationship. The central missiological idea emerging from this narrative study is the concept of ‘blessed and called to be a blessing’ which will be further discussed in Chapter Ten.
CHAPTER 10
BLESSED AND CALLED TO BE A BLESSING

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to bring together a number of the different threads that have emerged in the course of this inquiry offering a synthesis of key ideas and expanding further what has been developed in previous chapters. The chapter begins by offering a comparison of the experiences of interfaith couples in Indonesia and Australia before outlining a number of important missiological insights that have emerged in this study that help couples build a life together. This chapter further reflects on missional responses to the challenge of living in religiously diverse contexts referring to the Typology of Missiological Approaches and highlighting two key theological motifs: ‘respectful witness’ and ‘joint witness’. In conclusion the concept of ‘blessed and called to be a blessing’ is identified as a central missiological idea for interfaith couples in this study.

10.2 NARRATIVE STUDY OF MUSLIM–CHRISTIAN COUPLES AND THEIR FAMILIES IN INDONESIA AND AUSTRALIA

Muslim–Christian couples in this inquiry live out their lives in settings which are varied, complex and changing. Depth interviews provided a rich source of empirical data about the experience of couples and their families in Indonesia and Australia. This comparative study highlighted a number of contrasting experiences in the two sample groups. The two different contexts have been shaped by different social policies and unique historical, legal, cultural, religious and political factors.
10.2.1 Contrasting legal and religious contexts in Indonesia and Australia

Studying interfaith marriages in Australia and Indonesia has provided a window to observe Muslim–Christian relations in two very different contexts. In Indonesia, despite the fact that Muslims and Christians have lived in close proximity for centuries and intermarriage has been relatively common, there have been moves to restrict if not prohibit its occurrence. A number of options remain open to couples such as marrying overseas; pursuing their case through the courts; or choosing to marry according to the marriage laws of one or both parties (assuming that there are religious leaders willing to assist). A further option chosen, though being far from an ideal situation, was for one partner to convert as a formality in order that the marriage could be registered.

Some couples in the Indonesian sample faced opposition from their family or religious community and were viewed as ‘living in sin’. Others reported strong levels of support. A tradition of tolerance and acceptance of interfaith marriage appears to remain despite policy changes over recent decades. Empirical data indicated that interfaith couples in Indonesia today are facing significantly more hurdles than in the past and current religious trends are creating an environment which is less conducive for interfaith couples and their families.

In Australia couples do not face the same legal and administrative deterrents to interfaith marriage as they do in Indonesia. Interfaith couples may choose to have a civil marriage and/or a religious ceremony. If the couple wishes to travel overseas to the country of origin of the Muslim partner they will need to ensure that their marriage is considered valid from a Muslim perspective. Interfaith couples wishing to marry according to Islam or Christianity (or both) in Australia, as in Indonesia, have the problem of locating religious leaders who are willing to assist. It was beyond the scope of this study to assess in general

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1 Protestant church leaders interviewed in Indonesia adopted a variety of responses to interreligious marriage. Some clergy were willing to conduct such ceremonies but were constrained by their denominational policy or the decision of their local church elders not to permit such marriages. Catholic clergy following the 1970 Papal Letter Matrimonia Mixta may now conduct interfaith marriages though practice varied in terms of the receptiveness of clergy to the request of couples.
how Australian ministers and imams respond to such requests. The Roman Catholic church has a clear policy that guides Catholic clergy in Australia as elsewhere whereas it appears that to date Protestant churches in Australia have not yet formulated policies to pastorally respond to such requests. Clergy tended to follow their own discretion in consultation with local congregational leaders. In the coming years it is likely that churches in Australia will need to address the issue of Muslim–Christian intermarriage in a more serious way as has been the case for churches in multicultural contexts in Europe and North America. Empirical evidence suggested that couples were able to arrange a religious ceremony without their Muslim/ or Christian partner being required to convert. It would be an area for further study to research the views and practices of imams in Australia. There was evidence that some imams in Australia are adopting flexible approaches.

Respondents in the Indonesian sample tended to encounter opposition from their families, friends or religious community more frequently than respondents in the Australian sample. Those who faced opposition had to more carefully consider their theological rationale in order to respond to their critics.

Muslim–Christian couples in the Australian context did not confront the same legal challenges as in Indonesia but were presented with a different set of

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2 Interviews with Australian Protestant Christian clergy indicated that some colleagues in ministry would not have been willing to conduct an interfaith marriage.

3 As noted in Chapter Three, the 1970 Papal Letter *Matrimonia Mixta* led to a change of Catholic policy on interreligious marriage. The experience of Catholic–Protestant couples however indicates that Catholic marriage policy may not always be practiced on the ground. The experience of Catholic respondents in the Australian and Indonesian samples tended to reflect Catholic policy but there was a case in the Indonesian sample where a Catholic respondent reported that her priest was reluctant to conduct the marriage ceremony. In a case reported in the Australian sample a couple (A7) who married in a Catholic ceremony in the UK in 1975 had a priest willing to agree to the request by Jillian’s family to have a nuptial Mass although the marriage of a Catholic and a non-baptised person is considered non-sacramental.

4 As a valid Muslim marriage does not require the presence of an imam, a study of the practice of Muslim marriage in Australia presents some considerable challenges. For example, a couple may be legally married in a civil marriage but have a Muslim ceremony in the home or other setting not necessarily conducted by an official marriage celebrant but a respected Muslim person.

5 There was a number of imams in this study who conducted interfaith marriages in Australia. One example cited in the Australian sample was of an Australian imam who wished to remain anonymous who conducted a Muslim marriage ceremony in a church alongside a female clergy person.
hurdles. They reported feeling the brunt of the public debates about multiculturalism which have problemised Muslim immigration and heightened concerns about whether Muslims can be integrated into the fabric of Australian society. Debate about intermarriage in Australia has tended to occur in academic and religious circles. In Indonesia interreligious marriage is a subject debated both within religious communities, and as public policy.

If interreligious marriage is a barometer of social coercion and interethnic and interfaith relations commentators in Indonesia have drawn attention to the way in which tensions between Muslims and Christians has had an impact on marriage policy. Where there is interreligious rivalry and competition for new converts and for influence in the economic and political spheres interfaith marriages are likely to be viewed with suspicion. The Indonesian Marriage Law and subsequent decisions relating to intermarriage reflected in the Compilation of Muslim Law (KHI) were formulated in a context of heightened concerns about Christian missionary activities and fears of ‘Kristenisasi’. The strong Muslim reaction against intermarriage has been related more to these factors, than to Qur’anic textual considerations. As has been noted by others, external factors rather than doctrinal differences alone tend to influence relations between Muslims and Christians and affect how the issue of interreligious marriage is viewed. Moves to stigmatise interfaith marriages in Indonesia, disturbingly, have coincided with greater distance between the two religious communities and an upsurge in intercommunal and interreligious violence.

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6 Fear of Islam has emerged strongly in the media. One example has been decisions about whether approval would be granted to allow Muslim schools to be built in particular localities See for example Annabel Stafford, “Sydney unveils a new face of Islamophobia” *The Australian* June 2, 2008. http://www.theage.com.au/national/sydney-unveils-a-new-face-of-islamophobia-20080601-2kjs.html


8 In Indonesia, a heated internal debate has been occurring within the Muslim community concerning the role of Islam in the life of the nation as well as the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. Commentators have spoken of an accelerating form of Islamisation which more stridently seeks to articulate Muslim identity and advocate for *syari’ah*.

Positive interreligious relations in society impact those in Muslim–Christian marriages and the reverse will also be true. The issue of intermarriage in public opinion tends to be viewed positively, as a reflection of Australia’s tolerant and multicultural society. Minority communities have concerns that intermarriage will have a negative impact on cultural and religious maintenance and will lead to a loss of cultural heritage and a blurring or dilution of religious identity.

Muslim–Christian couples in Australia and Indonesia confront a different set of hurdles. In both contexts political leadership can harness or exploit religious differences. The formulation and implementation of well-informed and enlightened social policies is therefore critical for the well-being of those in interreligious marriages and their families and for relations between different religious communities. Interreligious marriage can therefore be a useful prism for understanding relations between the two faiths.10

10.2.2 Religious practice

Fears that interfaith marriage may lead to nominalism, religious indifference and a loss of faith were not borne out by this study. Across both sample groups many respondents were actively practicing their faith. Some were active and a few exercised a leadership role as worship leaders, Sunday school teachers, preachers, and in social welfare. Some had been on the haj and many of the Christian participants attended church regularly. Most respondents in the Indonesian sample reported that their faith and religious practice had grown in the course of their marriage. Some had undergone a spiritual revitalisation reflecting the religious resurgence that has occurred more generally in Indonesian society in recent decades. A number mentioned important moments when they had encountered God.11 Marriage outside their religious community did not appear to lead to an eroding of identity but in a number of cases, a strengthening of an individual’s religious identity.12

11 For some this was in the form of a dream, others during a time of crisis, tragedy, or illness.
12 This confirms an observation made by Sicard. See Sicard, “Interfaith Marriages”, 74.
The impact of religious renewal on respondents and their marriage varied from having a positive influence, to threatening the foundation of the marriage. When a renewal of faith led to heightened expectations their spouse would convert, tensions increased.

Some studies have suggested that those who are religiously devout are less inclined to marry outside their religious community.\(^{13}\) While this may be the case, this study was not able to gauge whether this statement was generally true.\(^{14}\) Clearly there were some respondents in this study who were religiously devout. There were also respondents who were devout but were aware that many in their religious community might be critical of their interfaith marriage. Some respondents noted that the presence of religious intolerance or extreme views would threaten or ultimately make it difficult to sustain an interfaith marriage.\(^{15}\)

Most respondents maintained their faith or thought that their faith had grown in the course of their marriage. Two respondents in the Australian study no longer considered themselves ‘Christian’ in the formal sense and expressed their spirituality outside any active involvement in a church. It did not appear that the loss of Christian faith in these instances could be directly attributed to their interfaith marriage.

There were Muslim respondents in the Australian sample who reported that they were currently less religiously practicing. The experience of living in a secular Australian context (and being distant from their Muslim family and

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\(^{13}\) For example Speelman thinks there may be a higher proportion of nominal Christians and Muslims in interfaith marriages. See Gé M. Speelman, “Mixed Marriages”, 149. Meng and Gregory suggest that individuals with higher levels of religiosity are more likely to search for a partner with religious compatibility. See Xin Meng and Robert G. Gregory, ’Interrmarriage and the Economic Assimilation of Immigrants’, *Journal of Labor Economics* 23, no. 1 (2005).

\(^{14}\) The selection criteria for respondents in this study included having a religious identity.

\(^{15}\) In Indonesia the terms *fanatik* and *toleran* were used as a short-hand method of describing contrasting ways people interpret their faith. ‘Fanatik’ refers to having extreme views and accompanying behaviour that is intolerant of others.
community) tended to be viewed as the contributing factor rather than their interreligious marriage itself. Some Muslims in the Australian sample, by contrast, believed that migrating to Australia had forced them to think more critically about their beliefs and taken-for-granted religious views, and this had helped them develop new perspectives and a deeper religious understanding.

10.3 BUILDING A LIFE TOGETHER

10.3.1 Challenging coercive mission practices through embracing a theology of call and affirming religious freedom

For couples in this study acceptance of religious freedom was essential in establishing and sustaining their interfaith marriage. Some couples early on in their marriage, or after an experience of religious revitalisation, struggled with accepting religious co-existence. They discovered that without a sense of mutual recognition and acceptance their marriage floundered. Having a ‘theology of call’ provided respondents with a theological basis to live together with difference. A theology of call affirms that the converting power belongs to God and God takes the initiative in calling people to faith. Even the respondents who felt most disappointed that their partner did not convert, were able to live with a degree of peaceful co-existence if they believed that God was working in the life of their partner and the outcome was in God’s hands. Respect for religious freedom was the basic requirement for religious co-existence in marriages between Muslims and Christians and a theology of call provided an important part of the missiological foundation for couples to build a life together.

10.3.2 Conversion

Living and witnessing in a religiously plural world inevitably raises the sensitive issue of conversion and the varying responses of religious communities. There were a number of conversion narratives within this study.
Some respondents in the Indonesian sample converted as a formality in order that their marriage could be legally recognised. With their partner’s support\textsuperscript{16} they returned to their original faith after marriage. There were four conversion narratives in this study in which respondents did intentionally decide to change their religion. In these cases there was a range of ultimate outcomes.\textsuperscript{17}

Respondents in this study had a variety of views on conversion. Some affirmed conversion as an important goal of mission and some continued to hold out hope that their partner would one day convert. If religious convictions were shared in a respectful way and the religious freedom of their partner was upheld no major disruption to the marriage was reported. A few respondents reported feeling a sense of guilt that they had not been successful in converting their spouse. In a few cases there were more strident calls for the partner to convert, or a tendency to denigrate or misrepresent the partner’s faith, which usually led to marital harmony being severely disrupted.

Many accounts indicated a shift in respondents’ views on conversion which tended to be indicative of an overall change in the way respondents understood and articulated the purpose and mission of their faith. Some questioned inherited missional perspectives and the motives of conversion-focused mission arguing that a conversion mentality should be replaced by renewed efforts to work for a more peaceful and just world.

Where a partner’s faith provided them with ‘something to hold onto’ and enabled them to live life with purpose, meaning and direction, respondents tended to move towards an affirmational or actional missional perspective. They affirmed their partner’s faith as a means of grace. The imperative to convert was sometimes replaced with a sense of appreciation of the grace and mercy of God that cannot be easily confined. Those who spoke of positive

\textsuperscript{16} In some cases ‘reconciliation rituals’ were required in order that respondents could rejoin their Christian community.
\textsuperscript{17} Two later reverted; one respondent has experienced difficulties adjusting to the change; and one respondent appeared to have successfully embraced a new religious identity.
spiritual qualities in their partner tended to develop a conviction that their partner was ‘in God’ although they continued to maintain their own faith.

10.3.3 The inexhaustible mystery of God

Many respondents came to discern the presence and activity of God in the religious practice and devotional life of their partner. An additional challenge was accepting the theological legitimacy of the other faith. It was particularly difficult for respondents if they had inherited a mission understanding that assumed God was only present in their own religious tradition.

Respondents grappled with missiological questions concerning how God is active in the world and whether the diversity of religious expressions reflects God’s purposes. One way to deal with these questions was to affirm that the way God chooses to work in the world lies beyond human comprehension and cannot be fully grasped. In the mystery of God’s dealings with the world there is evidence that divine grace operates universally in the lives of all people and the blessings of God is not the monopoly of one religious community.

10.3.4 Living in the tension

A key tension for Muslim–Christian couples in this study lay in taking seriously the unique and distinctive religious self-understandings each had and at the same time finding common ground and unifying aspects. Respect for their partner’s deeply-held convictions, the ability to critique one’s own religious tradition and a sense of humility in admitting that they did not have all the answers were important elements in building a shared life. Partners lived in the tension between affirming their deeply held religious convictions on the one hand, whilst recognising that God might work in the life of their partner in ways

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that were different from their own experience. Where couples developed an attitude of certitude combined with religious arrogance, it was difficult if not impossible to achieve a sense of spiritual partnership

10.3.5 Points of connection: prayer, religious rituals and spiritual companionship

Across both sample groups there were various ways Muslim–Christian couples and their families created a sense of spiritual companionship whilst respecting their distinctive religious traditions. Many spoke of having shared values drawn from their respective religious traditions or from their cultural heritage. Some were evolving patterns of family life drawing on the heritage of both faiths. This may suggest that boundaries between the two faiths might be more permeable than has been thought. In terms of the devotional lives of interfaith couples in this study, some maintained clearly separate religious practices whilst others more intentionally were developing shared religious practices.\textsuperscript{19} The majority of couples had some degree of spiritual interaction. They had a consciousness of their partner’s spiritual life even if they usually prayed separately. In a number of cases respondents reported that their partner’s faithfulness in undertaking spiritual practices inspired their own devotional life.

There were many examples of couples supporting one another in fulfilling their spiritual duties: reminding their partner it was choir practice or bible study night, helping children get ready for church or \textit{sholat}, driving their partner to church, preparing special food during religious festivals, supporting their spouse to go on the \textit{haj}, opening their homes for prayer meetings, Bible studies or Qur’anic classes, and joined in family religious gatherings. They prayed for their partners when they were sick, or requested prayers, joined in joint prayer at significant times in the lives of family members, and kept each other company during the important religious festivals of Ramadan and Christmas. Some Muslim respondents attended church with their partners, some Christian

respondents rose early during the fasting month to cook for their husband and some interfaith families expressed solidarity by fasting during Ramadan.

These couples expressed a strong sense of spiritual companionship and developed shared patterns of prayer drawing from both traditions. One couple read selected passages from the Bible and Qur’an and discussed their meaning. One Muslim spouse took his wife to Catholic Mass each morning. A Christian spouse learnt to sholat (pray or according to Muslim practice). One family had a time of sharing and prayer before their evening meal. Two couples found it particularly helpful to engage in silent prayer and meditative practices which enabled them to be ‘spiritual companions’ without giving up anything or changing sides.

In contrast there were couples who lacked a sense of spiritual companionship. Some felt that religiously their traditions were so different they could not envisage having a shared spiritual life. Others thought their spiritual life was personal and not something they wished to share. A few expressed the desire to share with their partner in prayer but did not know how to get over the hurdle of having distinctively different ways of addressing God. In a couple of examples joint prayer was abandoned after a Muslim partner found the use of Trinitarian language unacceptable or a Christian partner felt bound to pray ‘in Jesus name’.

Having ‘parallel’ spiritual lives was not necessarily a problem if partners were able to support one another in each fulfilling their spiritual practices and religious duties. Lower degrees of spiritual interaction tended to be reflected in reduced levels of marital satisfaction. In some cases respondents reported feeling a sense of spiritual loneliness particularly if they never had the company of their partner during important religious occasions.

Kenneth Cragg expressed the hope that interfaith couples might develop a true ‘interfaith duality’ in which neither was required to surrender their identity or be subjected to the will of the other party but they could draw on the richness of
both traditions in forming their life together. A number of interfaith couples in this study appeared to be doing just that. While some couples had little spiritual interaction, most found various ways to connect their two spiritual traditions. Some couples developed a strong sense of spiritual companionship.

10.3.6 Religious education of children

Religious understanding of children generally unfolds in stages as ultimately children develop an independent spiritual life. Negotiating differences with respect and care particularly in relation to the religious upbringing of children was extremely important. For respondents in both sample groups the arrival of children represented a major challenge. The potential for conflict or disappointment was present particularly if couples had not adequately discussed the issue of the children’s religious education prior to the arrival of children. The thirty-nine narratives of interfaith family life revealed a range of different options. Most brought their children up with a religious identity in one faith, but with an appreciation of both faiths. There were some families in the Indonesian sample which raised some children in the faith of the Christian partner and other children in the faith of the Muslim partner. Occasionally couples tried to bring children up in both faiths.

A few couples expressed disappointment or a sense of failure for not giving their children a clear religious identity. In one instance having religious discussion was discouraged in the desire to avoid conflict. In general the respondents in the Indonesian sample tended to feel satisfied that they had successfully helped their children develop religious identity.

For respondents in the Australian sample passing on faith (either Islam or Christianity) was more difficult. Indonesian society promotes the role and place of religion and requires all citizens to have a religious identity. Australia, in

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comparison, assigns to religion a more marginal place. Some of the couples in the Australian sample expressed disappointment that their adult children were not practicing the religion in which they had been raised (or indeed any faith), and expressed the hope that the religious values they had been taught would continue to influence their lives in a positive way.

Of all issues that interfaith couples face the decisions regarding the religious education of children appeared most difficult and fraught with potential conflict. Across both sample groups there were respondents who had a profound feeling of sadness when their attempts at initiating children into their faith proved unsuccessful. This was particularly the case for those with an invitational mission approach but the desire to have another member of the family ‘keep them company’ was widespread, particularly in the Indonesian sample. Where couples built a loving and harmonious home life this helped to overcome the feelings of loss. Other strategies included ‘keeping each other company’ during religiously significant times, notably Christmas and Lebaran, being supportive of each other in fulfilling their respective religious duties and ensuring that both faiths were acknowledged in the context of the home. The narratives of passing on faith to children raised many important missiological questions, in particular, whether respondents were confident in entrusting the religious formation of children into the hands of their partner, and their partner’s religious community.

Narrative extracts from adult children expressed varying degrees of appreciation for the experience of growing up in an interfaith household. Of the ten adult children interviewed most expressed appreciation for the experience of having an interfaith family with a few exceptions. Adult children tended to speak positively of interfaith marriages depending on the respectful relations and degree of happiness and harmony (or conflict and tension) they experienced in their home life. A number considered that growing up with two faiths under

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22 There were two exceptions. One adult child in Indonesia reported feeling painful confusion growing up in a household where there was pronounced religious tension between his parents. In a case in the Australian sample an adult child whose parents (A1) wanted their children to be tolerant of all faiths avoided providing religious education in either.
the one roof had made life more complicated but also very enriching. Some spoke of the spiritual qualities as well as the struggles that they had observed in their parents which they admired. Some appreciated the fact that they had had to think through their faith and had chosen their religious identity rather than it being a ‘given’. A number felt that their upbringing had given them a better understanding of both faiths. Positive relationship with both sets of extended families meant that they celebrated two rather than only one set of religious holidays and rituals. In particular, they felt comfortable relating to Muslims and Christians and had developed a sense of ease in crossing religious barriers.

10.3.7 Faith and mission understandings reconsidered

New missional perspectives were sometimes adopted in response to theological changes occurring, as was the case for Catholics following Vatican II. Other respondents underwent a change in their perspectives on faith and mission which could be attributed to the ‘living dialogue’ with their partner in the context of their interfaith marriage. Whilst a few couples chose to limit discussion on religious differences to avoid conflict this was not generally the case. For most couples spontaneous interfaith sharing was part of their life together and in the course of their marriage their spiritual life and religious self-understanding expanded. There were also cases were respondents held more tightly a sense of certitude about their own faith and became less expansive in their estimation of their partner’s faith.

For some, being in an interfaith marriage heightened their sense of being Muslim or Christian. For some respondents this led to a desire to be the best Muslim/Christian they could be, as a positive witness to their spouse. Other respondents reported a stronger sense of their own religious identity alongside a deeper appreciation of their partner’s faith and a search for what they shared in common.

Being in an interfaith marriage led some respondents to develop a deeper sense of spiritual companionship and solidarity. They became alert to distorted views
about their partner’s faith and became advocates for interreligious understanding. Some respondents found that they needed to rethink their taken-for-granted assumptions and inherited faith and mission understandings. A rethinking of religious beliefs sometimes led to critical reflection on views and practices within their own tradition. Finding individuals, spiritual mentors, interfaith networks and other resources within their religious tradition was often important for respondents as they worked through their understanding of how God works in the world. Interfaith marriages between Muslims and Christians are places where creative dialogue occurs, where the world view of respondents is stretched, and where mission understandings may need to be adjusted to incorporate new understandings.

10.3.8 Missiologies of loving friendship

Many couples underlined the challenges involved in entering a life-long interfaith union. Not all couples were successful. Interfaith marriages carry the potential for additional complications and conflict and this was present in some narratives. There were also testimonies of loving companionship and abiding friendship. Many couples appeared to develop, using Penny and Khoo’s term, a ‘symmetry of integration’.23 They drew on the heritage of both partners and were developing new patterns of family life. Some couples expressed a significant degree of ‘spiritual compatibility’.24

Feminist theologian Elizabeth Johnson has referred to the work of Divine Wisdom as “forging bonds of connectedness, kindling flames of compassion, and incarnating solidarity with the world”.25 There was evidence of this occurring in the lived experience of respondents in this study who took the step

24 Empirical evidence did not support the view expressed by Australian Muslim Mehmet Ozalp that an interfaith marriage is, “doomed to failure from the start if either person or both are committed to a religion.” See Mehmet Ozalp, *101 Questions you asked about Islam* (Blackheath:Brandl & Schlesinger, 2004). 271. ‘Spiritual compatibility’ was a term used in Larson and Olson’s study in Chapter Five.
of embarking on an interfaith marriage believing that ‘God is in this’. While social and religious structures tend to operate to reduce the likelihood of intimate friendships occurring across religious barriers, the work of an unpredictable and uncontrollable God makes loving friendships possible.\textsuperscript{26} Application of the concept of ‘friendship’ between Muslims and Christians, to missiology may indeed be a task that proves to be extremely fruitful in discerning new conceptions of Christian mission and \textit{da’wah} in religiously diverse contexts.\textsuperscript{27}

\textbf{10.3.9 Is interfaith marriage a vocation for some?}

In Islam and Christianity marriage is viewed as a vocation and gift from God and a means of grace, founded in God’s loving nature. Islam and Christianity have generally not been willing to make this same affirmation when it comes to interreligious marriages. Couples have been told that such marriages are best avoided and such marriages are less than ideal. In some cases couples may be told that they are living in sin.

There was a range of responses from religious communities towards interfaith couples. Some respondents reported that they continued to feel they were valued members of their community. In the Indonesian sample, those who had married before the mid 1980s stated that they experienced few problems. In general their religious community overlooked or ignored their interfaith marriage.\textsuperscript{28} Societal attitudes have promoted interreligious tolerance but in more recent years community attitudes have been changing.

Some communities continue to be accepting of interfaith marriage but some Indonesian respondents felt they had a stigmatised identity as a result of

\textsuperscript{26} Carmichael, \textit{Friendship: Interpreting Christian Love}, 190, 197-198.
\textsuperscript{27} Suchochi’s work has drawn heavily on ‘friendship’ in developing her missiological perspectives. See Suchochi, \textit{Divinity and Diversity: A Christian Affirmation of Religious Pluralism}, esp. Chapter 7.
\textsuperscript{28} Most respondents received no pastoral support in preparing for their marriage and in only a few cases did respondents report that they had consulted with a religious leader about their marriage.
their interfaith marriage. In the face of critical judgement there were some Indonesian respondents felt a sense of guilt for having not converted their spouse. Others had taken on board the prevailing views around them. They had come to think that their interfaith marriage was displeasing, not only to their religious community, but also to God. Other respondents questioned societal views and prevailing views asserting that God had led them to their partner and made it possible for them to create a loving partnership across religious boundaries. They insist that, despite the problems and difficulties they have encountered, their marriage is a source of enrichment and blessing. Their life of ‘unusual friendship’ was part of God’s purpose for their lives.

This study confirmed what has been observed elsewhere, that interfaith couples are left largely to their own devices. Only in a few cases were religious communities making an effort to engage the interfaith couples represented in this inquiry or take seriously their experience. Religious communities retain the notion that interfaith marriages are a problem, or an opportunity for conversion, rather than allowing their own horizons to be enlarged. A missiological question for religious communities posed by the testimonies of these couples is whether the costly and difficult path these couples have taken might be viewed as a response to God’s call and a sign of hope in a divided world.

10.4 MISSIONAL RESPONSES TO THE CHALLENGE OF LIVING IN RELIGIOUSLY DIVERSE CONTEXTS

10.4.1 Starting with a ‘Theology of Call’

The analysis of narratives enabled the distillation of five missional approaches explained in Chapter Nine: Coercional, Invitational, Connectional, Affirmational and Actional. The typology distinguished between the coercional approach and the four non-coercional approaches. A common point of departure for the four non-coercional mission approaches was the principle of
religious freedom as a basic requirement for religious co-existence. A theology of call provided a foundation for this principle affirming that every person must be free to follow their own religious convictions without force or pressure being exerted.

10.4.2 Two contrasting theological motifs: A ‘Theology of Respectful Witness’ and a ‘Theology of Joint Witness’

Building on a theology of call, two theological motifs appeared prevalent across the four non-coercional types. A ‘Theology of Respectful Witness’ conceived of Muslims and Christians as each bearing witness to the truth they have received. Respondents share their faith in ways that are sensitive to and respectful of the other partner, aware that it is God’s prerogative to call people to faith. The Invitational and Connectional mission approaches tended to reflect a ‘Theology of Respectful Witness’. A missiology that arises out of respectful witness is one which recognises that the areas of difference between Islam and Christianity can not be easily reconciled. Muslims and Christians in response to their own deeply held convictions engage in respectful witness. They do so with humility and mindfulness of God’s grace, trusting that God works in the lives of all people and takes the initiative in drawing people to faith.

A ‘Theology of Joint Witness’ is based on an understanding that God delights in diversity and different faiths have a place in God’s overall plan and purpose for the world. Religious plurality represents God’s invitation to grow in love and understanding in our relationships with one another. There is an awareness of the differences between Islam and Christianity but also a strong conviction that there are many common elements including an underlying oneness, and a vision of ‘mutual flourishing’. The ‘Theology of Joint Witness’ was characteristic of the Affirmational and Actional approaches. A missiology that arises out of joint witness states firmly that the mission priority for Muslims

29 Wickeri, “Plurality, Power and Mission: Intercultural Theological Explorations on the Role of Religion in the New Millennium”, 11, 24. Wickeri envisages the development of theologies that can assist ‘mutual flourishing’.
and Christians is to address the serious problems confronting humanity and work together for justice, peace and reconciliation. A ‘Theology of Respectful Witness’ and a ‘Theology of Joint Witness’ were contrasting theological motifs represented in the narrative extracts but potentially both can be reflective of relational and dialogical approaches in mission and *da‘wah*.

10.4.3 ‘Blessed and called to be a blessing’

Couples who believed God had a purpose in bringing them together saw their marriage as both a response to God’s call and a gift from God. They often spoke in terms of being ‘blessed’.30 Their marriage was viewed as part of God’s purposes and in their life together they pointed to the presence and grace of God. Through the quality of their life together couples pointed to God’s blessing. Their life was lived in the assurance that God intends good from their relationship, not only for the two partners and the family they create, but also for their religious communities.

‘Blessed and called to be a blessing’ emerged as a central missiological idea in this study and the ‘heartbeat’ for the four missional responses shaped by the two theological motifs: ‘Respectful Witness’ or ‘Joint Witness’. This is expressed in a diagrammatic way in Figure 10.

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30 See Larry G. Lenning, *Blessing in mosque and mission* (California: William Carey Library, 1980), 113. Both Christianity and Islam seek to be a source of God’s blessing or *rahmat* (mercy, healing grace, compassion, tenderness, forgiveness) to humanity. Lenning has provided a useful comparative study of the theme of ‘blessing’ in Islam and Christianity. He notes that ‘blessing’ is a key concept in the Bible and Qu’ran and could be a ‘missiological bridge’ between Muslims and Christians as they approach one another following the pattern of bestowing the blessing (greeting and benediction) of God.
10.4.4 Concluding comments

This chapter has drawn together a number of the themes and missiological insights which emerged from this comparative study. The religiously plural contexts of Indonesia and Australia present many challenges. Reflecting on the lived experience of Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages has provided a way to reimagine mission in such multifaith settings. A ‘Theology of Respectful Witness’ and a ‘Theology of Joint Witness’ represent contrasting, though not necessarily mutually exclusive, ways of conceiving of mission and
da’wah in contexts of religious plurality. Muslims and Christians who embrace a theology of call have a firm foundation for coexistence. An affirmation of God’s unique call in the life of each person and a deep respect for the activity of God in the life of one’s partner provided couples with an important foundational principle to build a life together. A second foundational and guiding principle for interfaith couples was a sense of being blessed by God and called to be a blessing to others. These two affirmations provided the basis for a missional partnership.
Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages embody a living dialogue between two religious traditions in the most intimate of relationships. This inquiry set out to discover what could be learnt from the experience of Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages in Indonesia and Australia for our understanding of Christian mission and da‘wah. What motivated couples to take the step of embarking on this life-long commitment, what helped them negotiate differences as they build an interfaith family, and what has enabled each to maintain and share their faith has been the focus of this inquiry. In a world characterised by religious diversity as well as interreligious conflict it has become imperative for Muslims and Christians to build respectful relationships and develop theological responses that can underpin efforts to build just and inclusive communities. This concluding chapter summarises the key findings of this inquiry and suggests possible areas for further missiological inquiry before offering some final reflections.

11.1 KEY FINDINGS

This inquiry has:

i. developed a methodology for missiological inquiry and demonstrated the value of making interfaith marriages between Muslims and Christians a lens for missiological study;

ii. provided a comparison of the experiences of interfaith couples in Indonesia and Australia and empirical data about Muslim–Christian families;

iii. examined missional responses to the challenge of living in religiously plural contexts drawing on narratives of Muslim–Christians couples;
iv. developed a *Typology of Missiological Approaches* and highlighted two contrasting theological motifs for mission in religiously plural settings; and

v. identified as the central missiological theme emerging from this inquiry the notion of being ‘blessed and called to be a blessing’;

There is no doubt that the lives of Muslim and Christian respondents in this study were significantly more complicated because of their decision to marry across religious differences. Some faced external factors such as opposition from families, legal and religious hurdles, or societal pressures. Marriages required constant negotiation as both partners sought to forge understanding across religious differences whilst retaining the defining characteristics of their own religious identity. Some couples discovered important foundational understandings that assisted them in building their life together. The testimonies of couples in this study have often demonstrated perseverance, patience, humour, good-will and deep faith. These qualities are reflective of what is needed if Muslims and Christians today are to develop a shared life in community.

The methodology adopted in this inquiry had as its starting point the assumption that stories are central to human experience and narratives accounts of Muslims and Christians who have a ‘living dialogue’ are an important source for missiological reflection. Narrative inquiry enables living testimonies to be heard in a way that is not always possible when using traditional research methods alone.

This inquiry also provided an overview of some of the current trends in missiological thinking and a historical survey of marriage and intermarriage in Islam and Christianity provided the broader contexts to understand the experience of couples in this study. The narratives of couples were located within the social, cultural, legal and religious contexts of Australia and Indonesia, with particular reference to interfaith marriage between Muslims and
Christians. It is expected that combining narrative inquiry with practical theology will prove a useful method for further missiological studies beyond this present study.

While conducting this inquiry the researcher was conscious of the privilege it was to have access to the personal lives of others. This carried with it the responsibility to ‘do justice’ by faithfully recording and carefully handling the information respondents shared in conversations. Their narratives often revealed unexpected turns, tough decisions, complicating factors and surprising grace. Their narratives also revealed reflective and intuitive efforts to reformulate faith and mission perspectives. It has been possible only to include a limited number of narratives within this study however it is hoped that these have provided a glimpse into the rich and complex lives of Muslim and Christian respondents in this inquiry and the dynamic way they go about formulating mission and da’wah understandings. Narratives of meeting and marrying, negotiating differences, raising children, and sharing faith, provided a window to observe the joys and struggles Muslims and Christians face in building a life together. Muslim and Christian respondents in this study revealed creative ways of dealing with opposition, confronting differences, integrating shared understandings and developing a sense of spiritual companionship whilst retaining their distinctive religious identities.

Analysis of narratives led to the observation that Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages adopt a range of missiological approaches in their response to one another and to their revealed traditions. The development of the typology in this inquiry enables a comparison of different ways Muslims and Christians interpret the mission of God in the world and the relationship between the various approaches adopted by respondents and current thinking in the field of Christian mission and da’wah. ‘Five Missiological Approaches’ represents a fresh way to view missiological responses to religious diversity and represents an important practical finding of this study. Figure 10 reproduces the typology described in Chapter Nine adding the two theological motifs: ‘Theology of Respectful Witness’ and ‘Theology of Joint Witness’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Fig. 11 Typology of Five Missiological Approaches’ and Two Theological Motifs</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The ‘Coercional Type’</strong> curtails the partner’s religious freedom and seeks to compel the partner to convert. An absolute assurance of the exclusive truth of one’s own faith and its superior value tends to underpin this approach. A power imbalance creates a situation in which one partner feels the right to dominate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The ‘Invitational Type’</strong> involves respectful witness in an invitational and respectful way. By words and example people seek to point others to the truth contained within their religious tradition believing there must be no compulsion in matters of religion. God takes the initiative in calling people to faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The ‘Connectional Type’</strong> sees a family resemblance in Islam and Christianity. Each partner holds their own religious tradition but there is a sense of spiritual affinity and ‘connecting points’. Muslims and Christians are called to live in peaceful co-existence, mutual learning, dialogue and respectful witness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The ‘Affirmational Type’</strong> affirms the faith of the partner and rejects attempts to convert others. Religious harmony, tolerance, dialogue and mutual enrichment are emphasised. Religious diversity is viewed as a gift from God and mystical traditions point to a sense of unity and oneness despite differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The ‘Actional Type’</strong> expresses faith in actions. The practice of faith is the ‘benchmark’ which demonstrates a life dedicated to God and service to others. Goodness, integrity and deeds of kindness and love are considered the marks of true faith.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A number of observations could be made in relation to the typology developed in this inquiry. The ‘coercional missiological’ approach, identified by respondents as destructive for building a shared life, nevertheless continues to linger on in relationships between Muslims and Christians and in the life of religious communities. Why this is the case and the roots of attitudes, behaviour and practices which deny the religious freedom of others, is a deeply concerning missiological issue that requires further analysis.

This typology highlights the pluriform nature of missional understandings within Islam and Christianity. Within both faiths there exists a diversity of views about what shape mission and da‘wah should take in religiously plural contexts. In seeking to be true to received traditions Muslims and Christians may adopt a variety of perspectives. Instead of arguing which approach is ‘superior’ this inquiry recognises that the four non-coercional missional approaches each have theological and scriptural validity. The invitational, connectional, affirmational and actional mission approaches each provide a framework which can promote the forging of bonds of love and friendship between Muslims and Christians. A theology of call provides a basis for non-coercional mission approaches. Those who adopted the invitational, connectional, affirmational or actional approaches had an understanding of mission that was characterised by ‘respectful witness’ or ‘joint witness’.

Bosch has suggested that differing missional understandings could be viewed as being part of a “a multicoloured mosaic of complementary and mutually enriching as well as mutually challenging frames of reference”.¹ This is a view supported by this inquiry in relation to the four non-coercional mission approaches.

In this study many respondents were of the view that concrete actions are necessary to address the urgent problems facing humanity. The prevalence of conflict between Muslims and Christians in various parts of the world may be another reason why a number believed that our times required an actional

¹ See Bosch, Transforming Mission, 8.
mission approach. In addition, Islam and Christianity both exhibit a concern that faith be put into action and deeds of compassion and justice. Respondents with an actional mission approach tend to conceive of mission as God’s project and something that Muslims and Christians both participate in and contribute to. In this inquiry the ‘actional missional approach’ had the widest appeal and appeared to have the greatest potential in bridging differing missional perspectives.

Some couples negotiated the differences in their marriage more successfully than others. While some struggled to find a sense of spiritual companionship a significant number of respondents provided a living testimony of respectful witness, and of joint witness. Their life together pointed to the possibility of Muslims and Christians discovering creative and positive ways to jointly share in God’s work in the world.

Believing that their marriage represents a blessing from God was a pivotal understanding for a number of couples in this study. God who has called them to a shared life intends blessing for each partner. Their marriage is therefore viewed as being part of God’s plan and purpose for their lives. Having this conviction was an important factor that helped sustain couples when they encountered difficulties. This, along with a deep and abiding love and respect for one another, provided the foundation for their interfaith marriage and enabled respondents to live out of a sense of call and vocation.

The notion of being ‘blessed and called to be a blessing’ was a guiding principle for many couples in this study and represents an important missiological concept to emerge from this inquiry. Building bonds of loving friendship and respect may be a vocation not only for Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages. In formulating new understandings of mission and da’wah the conviction that God calls Muslims and Christians to be a blessing to one another may have wider application. Believing that God intends good not ill to flow from their interaction with one another may be an important starting point for Muslims and Christians in constructing new ways to conceive
of their relationship with one another and conceive of their involvement in God’s mission.

11.2 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

11.2.1 An ongoing search for missional responses to religious pluralism

Missiological formulations are themselves partial and limited. In the ongoing search to be faithful to received traditions and respond to current challenges missiological understandings will undergo change. What has been discovered in this inquiry will need to be tested and adapted to other contexts in which Muslims and Christians live. It is hoped that the missiological findings of this study and the ‘Typology of Five Missiological Approaches’ as a practical outcome of this inquiry might contribute to the ongoing task of re-imagining Christian mission and da‘wah in multifaith settings.

11.2.2 Comparative and contextual understandings of mission and da‘wah

This study set out to examine interreligious marriages in two contexts, Indonesia and Australia. As the research developed the study also became a comparative study of Christian mission and Muslim da‘wah in two settings. Little work has been done to date in developing comparative categories for this purpose. This inquiry provides an example of how new mission/da‘wah categories may emerge from contextual and dialogical studies as people offer their own definitions and understandings from their respective traditions. Further development of comparative and contextual categories relating to mission and da‘wah would be a fruitful area for further study.

11.2.3 Praying together and spirituality of interfaith families

The spiritual life of interfaith couples was not a primary topic for this inquiry but empirical data emerged in the course of interviews which revealed the
importance for couples of developing a sense of spiritual companionship. Some important work has already been done in the field.\(^2\) The missiological underpinnings for shared prayer could be further explored through examining the impact on children of growing up in interfaith families and the spiritual life of Muslim–Christian households.

11.2.4 Conversion and ethical mission practices

This study has highlighted a number of issues relating to conversion and ethical mission practice. Strong objections to coercion in mission practices emerged in this narrative inquiry. An examination of how the principle of religious freedom can be fully integrated into missional practices is necessary and further study on the way ‘coercive practices’ may linger on in the religious life of communities is also required. It is hoped that insights of respondents in this study might contribute to further discussion on the subject of conversion and ethical mission practices.

11.2.5 The concept of ‘friendship’ and ‘blessing’ in missiology and Muslim–Christian relations

The concept of being blessed through deep and loving friendships was a strong theme in this study. ‘Blessing’ represents a rich concept in both Islam and Christianity.\(^3\) It would be useful to explore further as a comparative missiological study an examination of Muslim and Christian understandings of ‘partnership’ and ‘friendship’.

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\(^2\) Some initial work on joint prayer has been undertaken. See for example Cragg (1999); Ariarajah Chapter 3 (1999); Potter and Braybrooke (1997); Dupuis Chapter 10 (2001); D’Costa Chapter 5 (2000); and resources prepared by the Islam in Europe Committee, *Christians and Muslims: Praying together? Reflections and texts* (2003), http://www.ccee.ch/english/fields/PrayerFin_corr_en.rtf (accessed March 20, 2007).

11.2.6 Narratives of interfaith couples as a resource for living in a religiously diverse world

Narrative inquiry highlights the way in which understanding is contextually and historically grounded and linguistically constituted. This inquiry has demonstrated the value of using narrative as a tool for missiological inquiry. There is scope for further use of the missiological inquiry method adopted in this study and further scope for missiological study on the experience of interfaith couples and their families in different contexts towards envisaging ‘mutual flourishing’ in a religiously diverse world.

11.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

A religiously plural world presents many new challenges. Dialogue, reconciliation, and peace-building across religious divides has become a theological and pastoral necessity. This inquiry has made clear the enormous challenges faced by those who forge a loving relationship across religious boundaries. Those who traverse religious boundaries, whose lives represent a living dialogue between two religious traditions, often find themselves altered and transformed by their experience. This study has also discovered that many respondents who make this ‘crossing journey’ speak of being blessed and being a blessing to one another.

Today Indonesia and Australia face a renewed challenge in discerning how to manage diversity and religious plurality. Australia has emerged as a multicultural nation and is making efforts to develop its multicultural life in ways that ensure the inclusion of all, including Muslim–Australians, who now have an integral place in Australian society. In Indonesia there are fears of ‘Kristenisasi’ and ‘Islamisasi’. How the Muslim community understands its relationship with non-Muslims represents a crucial question that will influence

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The evolving nature of Indonesian society. Muslims and Christians in interfaith marriages are a challenging reminder that bonds of deep and intimate friendship are and have been part of Indonesia’s religious heritage.

Theological, social and political trends impact communal relationships and can create an environment which accommodates or stigmatises those in Muslim–Christian marriages. In Indonesia and Australia relations between Muslims and Christians will undergo change and continue to be redefined. The hope is that in both countries, and indeed in other parts of the world, Muslims and Christians will move closer rather than further away from one another.

The testimonies of couples in this inquiry have pointed to the importance of humility, respectful witness and a deep and abiding faith in the activity and power of God to draw people together. Their narratives invite the question of whether Muslims and Christians who have viewed each other as ‘intimidating opponents’ might instead regard each other as fellow pilgrims, and partners in God’s work in the world. What they have learned and the resources they have found within their respective religious and cultural traditions is a resource in the search for missiological understandings that might underpin efforts to build inclusive communities and a more peaceful world. Those who manage to forge bonds of love and friendship across religious differences represent a gift and grace in a world that increasingly fractures along ethnic and religious fault-lines. It is hoped that this inquiry may be incorporated into future missiological developments as Christians and Muslims, bound together in a dialogue of life, give expression to the wideness of God’s hospitality and grapple with the difficulties as well as the richness and promises that a shared life brings.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Copy of the Information Sheet (1a) and Participant Consent Form (1b)

Appendix 2 Semi-structured interview questions

Appendix 3 Overview of respondents interviewed:
   a. Indonesian
   b. Australian sample

Appendix 4 List of adult children interviewed:
   a. Indonesian
   b. Australian sample

Appendix 5 Questionnaire (in English and Indonesian)

Appendix 6 List of religious and leaders consulted:
   a. Indonesian sample
   b. Australian sample

Appendix 7 Missiological Approaches across the two sample groups

Appendix 8 Respondents: Additional Information:
   a. Indonesian sample
   b. Australian sample
Appendix 1a  Copy of the Information Sheet

INFORMATION STATEMENT
(PRINTED ON UNIVERSITY LETTERHEAD)

About the research project
Helen Richmond is a Ph D student with Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, NSW doing a research project relating to the experience of people living in Muslim-Christian marriages in Indonesia and Australia. The purpose of this research project is to see what might be learnt from listening to the experience of those living in such partnerships. The experience of religious leaders and others involved in working with couples entering into such unions is also sought.

What does it involve?
If you agree to participate in the project you first need to fill in a consent form. You will then be invited to participate in a one to one interview lasting approximately 1-2 hours. For those in Muslim-Christian marriages there is a written questionnaire that you are asked to fill in before the interview and there is an additional, optional phase for couples to take part in a group discussion with 2-3 other couples lasting approximately 1-2 hours.

What about confidentiality?
To aid the researcher, the one to one interviews and group discussions will be audio taped. These tape recordings will only be available to the researcher. During the course of the research these tapes and other information of a personal nature will be securely stored and on completion of the research will be disposed of. Information and personal details gathered in the course of the research project are confidential. While detailed information gathered from the interviewing process may be referred to and quoted from, no name of any participant or other identifying information will be used or published in the research.

What if I decide later I don’t want to be part of this project?
It is your choice whether you wish to participate in the research project and you are also free at any time to indicate if you wish to withdraw from the research.

Name of the researcher
Helen Richmond can be contacted at:
3 Summit Close, Marsfield, 2122, NSW, Australia
Tel: (02) 9888 1821  Mob: 0408 674 224
hrichmond@netspace.net.au

Supervisor for the research project
The supervisor of the research project is Dr Dean Drayton at the United Theological College, Masons Drive, North Parramatta, NSW, 2151, Australia
deand@nsw.uca.org.au

NOTE:  Charles Sturt University’s Ethics in Human Research Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Executive Officer:
The Executive Officer
Ethics in Human Research Committee
The Grange
Charles Sturt University
Bathurst NSW 2795
Tel: (02) 6338 4628  Fax: (02) 6338 4194
Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 1a Copy of the Information Sheet (Indonesian)

INFORMASI MENGENAI PROYEK PENELITIAN

MENGENAI PROYEK PENELITIAN
Helen Richmond, mahasiswa di Ph D student di Universitas Charles Sturt, Bathurst, NSW sedang melakukan sebuah proyek penelitian mengenai pengalaman orang yang hidup dalam perkawinan Muslim-Kristen di Indonesia dan Australia. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat apa yang bisa dipelajari dari mereka yang mempunyai pengalaman seperti ini. Pengalaman pemimpin-pemimpin agama dan komuniti yang terlibat dengan mereka yang mau masuk pasangan kawin campur Muslim-Kristen juga akan dicari. Topik proyek penelitiannya adalah “Hidup bersama sebagai sahabat dan partner: Implikasi perkawinan orang Muslim dan orang Kristen di Indonesia dan Australia buat pengertian Misi Kristen dan Da’wah.

KETERLIBATAN SEPERTI APA YANG DIINGINKAN?

BAGAIMANA MENJAGA KERAHASIAN DATA PRIBADI?
Sebagai alat untuk menolong peneliti, wawancara dan diskusi kelompok akan direkam, Rekaman hanya akan dipegang oleh si peneliti. Selama penelitian kaset rekaman dan informasi yang bersifat pribadi akan disimpan secara aman dan kerahasiaan akan dijaga. Waktu menyelaiakan proyek penelitian hasil rekaman dan informasi yang bersifat pribadi akan dimusnahkan. Informasi data yang bersifat pribadi yang muncul adalah ‘confidential’, rahasia. Sekalipun hasil wawancara boleh digunakan dan dikutip dalam penelitian, namun nama-nama orang yang terlibat dalam proyek tidak akan digunakan atau informasi yang lain yang menunjukkan siapa yang diwawancanai akan digunakan atau disebarluaskan dalam penelitian ini.

BAGAIMANA KALAU NANTI SAYA MEMUTUSKAN UNTUK TIDAK MAU DIIKUTSERTAKAN DALAM PENELITIAN PROYEK INI?
Memang keputusan orang masing-masing kalau mereka mau ikut dalam proyek penelitian tersebut dan saudara bebas sewaktu-waktu untuk mengundurkan diri dari proyek penelitian.

NAMA PENELITI
Helen Richmond dapat dihubungi:
3 Summit Close, Marsfield, 2122, NSW, Australia
Tel: (02) 9888 1821 Mobil: 0408 674 224 helenr@netspace.net.au

SUPERVISOR BUAT PROYEK INI
Dr Dean Drayton The United Theological College, Masons Drive, North Parramatta, NSW, 2151, Australia deand@nsw.uca.org.au

NOTE: Charles Sturt University’s Ethics in Human Research Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Executive Officer: The Executive Officer Ethics in Human Research Committee The Grange, Charles Sturt University Bathurst, 2795, NSW, Australia. Tel: (02) 6338 4628 Fax: (02) 6338 4194

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 1b

CONSENT FORM
(PRINTED ON CSU LETTERHEAD)

I have been asked by Helen Richmond, a Ph D student at Charles Sturt University to participate in her research project “Living as friends and partners: Implications of Muslim-Christian Marriages in Indonesia and Australia for our understanding of Christian mission and Da’wah”.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation in the research at any time, and that if I do I will not be subjected to any penalty or discriminatory treatment.

I have read and understood the written explanation given to me.

I understand that any information or personal details gathered in the course of this research are confidential and that neither my name nor any other identifying information will be used or published without my written permission.

Charles Sturt University’s Ethics in Human Research Committee has approved this study.

I understand that if I have any complaints or concerns about this research I can contact:

Executive Officer
Ethics in Human Research Committee
The Grange
Charles Sturt University
Bathurst, NSW 2795

Phone: (02) 6338 4628
Fax: (02) 6338 4194

Signed by: ....................................................

Date: .........................................................
Appendix 1b Consent form (Indonesian)

(PRINTED ON CSU LETTERHEAD)
FORMULIR PERSETUJUAN

Saya diminta oleh Helen Richmond, mahasiswa Ph. D di Universitas Charles Sturt untuk terlibat dalam proyek penelitian “Hidup bersama sebagai sahabat dan partner: Implikasi perkawinan orang Muslim dan orang Kristen di Indonesia dan Australia buat pengertian misi Kristen dan da’wah.

Saya memahami bahwa saya bebas untuk mengundurkan diri dari proyek penelitian ini sewaktu-waktu tanpa ada akibat atau risiko apapun.

Saya sudah membacakan informasi atau data yang bersifat pribadi yang saya berikan selama penelitian ini bersifat ‘confidential’, rahasia, dan nama saya dan informasi yang lain tidak akan dipakai atau disebarluaskan tanpa izin saya secara tertulis.

Universitas Charles Sturt “Komite Etika” sudah memberi izin dan persetujuan buat studi tersebut.

Saya memahami bahwa jika saya ada keluhan atau keprihatinan mengenai proses penelitian ini saya boleh menyampaikan kepada:

Executive Officer
Ethics in Human Research Committee
The Grange
Charles Sturt University
Bathurst NSW 2795

Phone: (02) 6338 4628
Fax: (02) 6338 4194

Tanda Tangan: ........................................................................
Tanggal: ........................................................................
Appendix 2

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. NARRATIVES OF MEETING - BACKGROUND
   (i) Stories about meeting and how the relationship developed
   (ii) Stories about the reaction of family and friends and their religious community
   (iii) Comparative stories about their religious backgrounds and any others they know in interfaith marriages

2. NARRATIVES OF PLANNING THE WEDDING
   (i) Was there any difficulties in deciding how to be married?
   (ii) Describe the marriage ceremony
   (iii) What was the reaction of religious leaders? Any counselling?
   (iv) Any discussion about children’s religious upbringing?

3. NARRATIVES OF JOYS AND STRUGGLES IN THEIR MARRIAGE
   (i) Struggles in their marriage related to their different religious traditions
   (ii) Examples of negotiating differences
   (iii) Sources of joy, satisfaction and happiness in their marriage
   (iv) What /Who has been a source of help and support?
   (v) Would they be able to recommend interfaith marriages to others?
   (vi) What helps make a happy (interfaith) marriage?

4. NARRATIVES OF PASSING ON FAITH TO CHILDREN AND BUILDING AN INTERFAITH FAMILY
   (i) How did they make the decision about the religious education of children
   (ii) How satisfied/ dissatisfied each partner feels with the outcome
   (iii) Stories of family life and religious rituals
   (iv) How they practically practice their respective faiths in the one family
   (v) Are there shared values that are important in their family life?

5. SHARING FAITH, BELIEFS, VALUES, AND SENSE MISSION
   (i) Current religious practices and how they see and express their faith
   (ii) How difficult has it been accepting their partner’s choice to maintain their faith? Have they considered conversion or wished their spouse would convert?
   (iii) How do they each see their partner’s faith and religious community?
   (iv) How important is it to pass on faith to others?
   (v) How do they understand mission and purpose of their faith?
   (vi) How has their religious understanding changed?
   (vii) What have they learnt from living together in an interfaith marriage?
   (viii) Any suggestions for how Muslims and Christians should relate to one other?

ANY OTHER THINGS THE COUPLE WISH TO SHARE?
Other stories, comments observations
# OVERVIEW OF RESPONDENTS IN THE INDONESIAN SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Date of marriage</th>
<th>Type of marriage ceremony</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sudarsono (M/P) and Melati (F/M)</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Muslim (KUA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Muhammad Lubis (M/M)</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Widower, Muslim (KUA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Benny Huta (M/P) and Sri (F/M)</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Muslim (KUA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hartono (M/M) and Mari (F/P)</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Civil and a Muslim (KUA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Muchtar (M/M) and Tuti (F/C)</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Catholic (and civil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hasan Udin (M/M) and Kristiani (F/P)</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Protestant (and civil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Yustina (F/C)</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Widow, Civil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Kadri (M/M) and Rini (F/C)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Civil and Muslim (KUA); Catholic blessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dirman (M/M) and Kustiah (F/P)</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Muslim (KUA) and Protestant blessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Frank (M/P) and Muriani (F/M)</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Civil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Adri (M/M) and Susan (F/Pt)</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Muslim (KUA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Abdul (M/M) and Herawati (F/P)</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Civil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Herman (M/P) and Rima (F/M)</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Civil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Anwar (M/P) and Nana (F/M)</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Civil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Lani (F/P)</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>divorced from Akmal, Muslim (KUA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Ronald (M/C) and Titik (F/M)</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Muslim (KUA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Ketut (M/P) and Kartini (F/M)</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Protestant (and civil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Ibrahim (M/M) and Anita (F/P)</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Muslim (KUA) and Protestant blessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Yono (M/C) and Endang (F/M)</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Muslim (KUA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Tomi (M/P) and Aryati (F/M)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Protestant (and civil) in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Zainal (M/M) and Nini (F/C)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Muslim (KUA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Albert (M/C) and Yuli (F/M)</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Civil (in Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Yudi (M/M) and Lidia (F/P)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Civil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Sumitro (M/C) and Nurila (F/M)</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Muslim (KUA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The gender and religion of the respondents is identified in the brackets. The first letter M or F identifies whether the participant is male or female. The second letter refers to the religion of the respondent. M denotes Muslim; C denotes Catholic; P denotes Protestant; Pt denotes Pentecostal. (M/M) for example refers to a male Muslim; (F/C) a female Christian.
## OVERVIEW OF RESPONDENTS IN THE AUSTRALIAN SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Date of marriage</th>
<th>Type of marriage ceremony</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Munir (M/M) and Tanya (F/P)</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Muslim ceremony (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rahmat (M/M) and Pauline (F/C)</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>A Catholic service and a Muslim ceremony (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hamza (also known as Fred) (M/M) and Evelyn (F/P)</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>A Muslim ceremony and civil ceremony (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Imran (M/M) and Kate (F/P)</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>A church wedding (Australia) and a Muslim ceremony (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ann (F/P)</td>
<td>1973 Divorced 1994</td>
<td>Civil ceremony followed by a Protestant blessing (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ammar (M/M) and Rebecca (F/P)</td>
<td>1974 1989</td>
<td>Civil ceremony (Aust) Muslim ceremony (Aust)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Jamal (M/M) and Jillian (F/C)</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>A Muslim, civil, and Catholic ceremony (UK) &amp; Civil (Middle East)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Hendro (M/P) and Sugiarti (F/M)</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Civil ceremony (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Hanif (M/M) and Hannah (F/P)</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Civil ceremony (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Budi (M/M) and Debby (F/C)</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Catholic service (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Diwan (M/M) and Asti (F/P)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Protestant service (Aust)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Bambang (M/M) and Lastri (F/P)</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Muslim ceremony (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Luzio (M/P) and Azita (F/M)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>A church service followed by a Muslim ceremony in the home (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Nasif (M/M) and Diana (F/C)</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>A Muslim and a Civil marriage (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Yusuf (M/M) and Michelle (F/P)</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Joint service in a church with a Christian minister and Muslim religious leader (Australia)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The gender and religion of the respondents is identified in the brackets. The first letter M or F identifies whether the participant is male or female. The second letter refers to the religion of the respondent. M denotes Muslim; C denotes Catholic; P denotes Protestant; Pt denotes Pentecostal. (M/M) for example refers to a male Muslim; (F/C) a female Christian.
Appendix 4

INTERVIEWS WITH ADULT CHILDREN (names changed)

Interviews in Indonesia took place between December 2006 and January 2007. Australian interviews took place in June 2007. In order to ensure confidentiality names were changed.

INDONESIAN SAMPLE

Daniel, son of Muchtar and Tuti (Couple 5)

Ita and Susi, daughters of Hasan Udin and Kristiani (Couple 6)

Irene, daughter and Bima, son of Kadri and Rini (Couple 8)

Krystal, the daughter of Anwar and Nana (Couple 14)

Miriam, the daughter of Ketut and Kartini (Couple 17)

Matius, son of Abdul and Herawati (Couple 12)

AUSTRALIAN SAMPLE

Tony, the son of Rahmat and Pauline (Couple 2)

Megan the daughter of Munir and Tanya (Couple 1)
Appendix 5

QUESTIONNAIRE OF MUSLIM–CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES/
DAFTAR PERTANYAAN MENGENAI PERKAWINAN MUSLIM-
KRISTEN

(A) BACKGROUND/LATAR BELAKANG

1. Name/Nama:

2. What place were you born? / Tempat lahir:

3. Where did you grow up? / Tempat dibesarkan:

4. What place were you married? / Tempat kawin:

5. How long have you been married? / Sudah kawin berapa lama:

6. Male / Female (circle) / Laki/Perempuan:

7. Do any other members of your extended family have Muslim/Kristen marriages? (please tick appropriate box or boxes)
   □ Yes □ No

   Apakah ada anggota keluarga yang lain yang kawin dengan orang Kristen/Muslim?(lingkari)
   □ Ya □ Tidak

8. Ethnicity/Nationality/Suku atau bangsa:

9. Education/Pendidikan:
   □ Primary □ Junior High School □ Senior High School
   □ University □ PG
   □ SD □ SMP □ SMA □ Univerisitas □ Studi Lanjutan

10. Your age at time of marriage/Umur waktu kawin: .................. …

(B) RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION/KETERLIBATAN DALAMA AGAMA

1. Before marriage your attendance at the church/mosque and your involvement in your Christian/Muslim community could be described as:
   □ (a) □ (b) □ (c) □ (d)

   (a) Very active-attend church/mosque almost once a week and very involved in the Muslim/Christian community
   (b) Often church/mosque weekly and very involved in the Muslim/Christian community
   (c) Occasionally church/mosque weekly and very involved in the Muslim/Christian community
   (d) Inactive
1. Sebelum kawin kehadiran saudara di mesjid/gereja dan keterlibatannya dalam komuniti Kristen/Muslim adalah: □(a) □(b) □(c) □(d)

(a) Aktif sekali-hadir di mesjid/gereja hampir sekali seminggu dan terlibat sekali dalam masyarakat beragama Kristen/Muslim
(b) Sering hadir di mesjid/gereja dan cukup sering terlibat dalam aktivitas masyarakat beragama Kristen/Muslim
(c) Kadang-kadang hadir di mesjid/gereja dan kadang-kadang terlibat dalam aktivitas masyarakat beragama Kristen/Muslim
(d) Tidak aktif

2. Frequency of attendance at church/mosque and your involvement in your faith community now: □(a) □(b) □(c) □(d)

(a) Attend church/mosque weekly and very involved in faith community
(b) Often church/mosque weekly and very involved in faith community
(c) Occasionally church/mosque weekly and very involved in faith community
(d) Inactive

2. Sekarang kehadiran di mesjid/gereja dan keterlibatannya dalam komuniti Kristen/Muslim adalah: □(a) □(b) □(c) □(d)

(a) Aktif sekali-hadir di mesjid/gereja hampir sekali seminggu dan terlibat sekali dalam masyarakat beragama Kristen/Muslim
(b) Sering hadir di mesjid/gereja dan cukup sering terlibat dalam aktivitas masyarakat beragama Kristen/Muslim
(c) Kadang-kadang hadir di mesjid/gereja dan kadang-kadang terlibat dalam aktivitas masyarakat beragama Kristen/Muslim
(d) Tidak aktif

(C) COURTSHIP/WAKTU SEBELUM KAWIN

1. When did you first meet?/Kapan bertemu:

…………………………………………..………………………………

2. Date of marriage/ Tanggal kawin:

…………………………………………..………………………………

3. Before your relationship with your partner what was the possibility of marrying someone from another faith community?/Sebelum kawin apakah kemungkinan kawin dengan seorang yang beragama yang lain

☐ Very unlikely/Almost impossible ☐ Difficult ☐ Not an issue
☐ Kemungkinan kecil ☐ Sulit untuk membayangkan
☐ Bukan masalah

4. Did you consider asking your partner to convert? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Pernah memikir mau mendorong partnermu merubah agamanya?
☐Ya ☐Tidak
6. Did you consider converting yourself? □ Yes □ No

Pernah memikir mau merubah agamamu sendiri? □ Ya □ Tidak

(D) UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHERS’ FAITH/PENGERTIAN MENGENAI AGAMA MASYING-MASYING

1. Prior to knowing your partner your understanding of their faith was (please tick)
   □ Minimal □ Some understanding □ Considerable understanding

1. Sebelum kenal pasanganmu pengertian mengenai iman mereka (lingkari)
   □ Sedikit sekali □ Ada pengertian □ Banyak pengertian

2. Prior to knowing your partner your view of Islam/Christianity was
   □ No interest □ Negative □ Positive

2. Sebelum kenal pasanganmy pandangan terhadap agama (Islam atau Kristen)
   □ Tidak tertarik □ Negatif □ Positif

3. Prior to knowing your partner your experience of Islam/Christianity was
   □ Minimal □ Some experience □ Considerable experience (friends and family)

3. Sebelum kenal pasanganmu pengalaman mengenai iman Muslim/Kristen (lingkari)
   □ Sedikit sekali □ Ada pengalaman □ Banyak pengalaman

4. Currently your understanding of your Islam/Christianity is
   □ Minimal □ Some understanding □ Considerable understanding

4. Pengertian mengenai Islam/Kristen sekarang (lingkari)
   □ Sedikit sekali □ Ada pengertian □ Banyak pengertian

5. Currently your view of Islam/Christianity is
   □ No interest □ Negative □ Positive

5. Pandanganmu terhadap agama Islam/Kristen sekarang
   □ Tidak tertarik □ Negatif □ Positif

6. Your experience of Islam/Christianity (your partner’s faith) now is (circle)
   □ Minimal □ Some experience □ Considerable experience (friends and family)

6. Pengalamanmu mengenai iman Muslim/Kristen sekarang (lingkari)
   □ Sedikit sekali □ Ada pengalaman □ Banyak pengalaman

7. Do you currently attend or participate in religious events/services/ceremonies of your partner?
   □ Never at all □ Occasionally □ Frequently □ Fully involved

7. Apakah saudara sekarang mengikuti upacara/kebaktian/aktivitas agama pasanganmu?
   □ Tidak pernah □ Kadang-kadang □ Sering □ Selalu terlibat
(E) YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE /KEHIDUPAN ROHANI

1. Before your marriage you prayed
☐ Daily  ☐ Often  ☐ Occasionally  ☐ Infrequently

1. Sebelum kawin saudara berdoa
☐ Tiap hari  ☐ Sering  ☐ Kadang-kadang  ☐ Jarang

2. Currently you pray
☐ Daily  ☐ Often  ☐ Occasionally  ☐ Infrequently

2. Sekarang saudara berdoa
☐ Tiap hari  ☐ Sering  ☐ Kadang-kadang  ☐ Jarang

(F) ATTITUDES YOU ENCOUNTERED FROM OTHERS/PANDANGAN DARI ORANG LAIN TERHADAP PERKAWINANMU

1. Your family were (please tick)
☐ Strongly negative  ☐ Negative  ☐ Neutral/It wasn't an issue
☐ Positive/Accepting  ☐ Strongly positive

1. Keluargamu (lingari)
☐ Sangat negatif  ☐ Negatif  ☐ Neutral/Bukan masalah
☐ Positif/Menerima  ☐ Sangat positif

2. From friends or work colleagues were (please tick)
☐ Strongly negative  ☐ Negative  ☐ Neutral/It wasn't an issue
☐ Positive/Accepting  ☐ Strongly positive

2. Kawan dan teman sekerja (lingari)
☐ Sangat negatif  ☐ Negatif  ☐ Neutral/Bukan masalah
☐ Positif/Menerima  ☐ Sangat positif

3. Your religious community was (Please tick)
☐ Strongly negative  ☐ Negative  ☐ Neutral/It wasn't an issue
☐ Positive/Accepting  ☐ Strongly positive

3. Masyarakat Kristen/ Muslimmu (lingari)
☐ Sangat negatif  ☐ Negatif  ☐ Neutral/Bukan masalah
☐ Positif/Menerima  ☐ Sangat positif
(G) MARRIAGE CEREMONY/ UPACARA PERKAWINAN

1. Your wedding was officiated by (Please tick)
   - Muslim religious leader
   - Christian religious leader
   - According to cultural practices
   - In a civil ceremony

1. Perkawinan my dipimpin oleh seorang (lingkari)
   - Iman
   - Pendeta
   - Menurut adat
   - Dalam upacara civil

(H) CHILDREN

1. Do you have children?    □ Yes    □ No

1. Ada anak?    □ Ya    □ Tidak

2. Religious affiliation of children
   - Muslim    □ Christian    □ Religious upbringing in both faiths

2. Agama anakmu
   - Muslim    □ Kristen    □ Dibesarkan pendidikan Islam dan Kristen

(I) EXPERIENCES/PENGALAMAN

Additional experiences to share?    Ada yang anda mau tambah?
Appendix 6a

RELIGIOUS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS CONSULTED
INDONESIAN SAMPLE

Indonesian religious and community leaders were consulted during December 2003 and January 2004 and from December 2006 to January 2007. Interviews with Protestant church leaders from GMIM and GKI who were visiting Australia took place in March 2008.

**Roman Catholic Religious Leaders**

Three Indonesian Catholic leaders were consulted:

**Dr. Piet Go** – Currently retired. At the time of the interview Dr Piet Go was the chief executive of KAWI (Bishops Council of Indonesia).

**Dr. Ismartono** – Executive secretary for KAWI’s Commission on Inter-faith Relations and active in MADIA (Society for Inter-religious Dialogue/Masyarakat Dialog Antar Agama)

**Dr. Al. Purwa Hadiwardoyo** – Lecturer at the Catholic Theological Seminary in Yogyakarta who has written extensively on the subject of Catholic marriage and intermarriage.

**Protestant Religious Leaders**

Protestant ministers from six different mainline Protestant denominations working in congregational ministry were consulted. They represented the following Churches: *Gereja Kristen Jawa* (GKJ); *Gereja Kristen Indonesia* (GKI); *Gereja Kristen Injili Minahasa* (GMIM), *Gereja Kristen Protestan Bali* (GKPB); *Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan* (GKJW) and *Gereja Kristen Protestan Indonesia Barat* (GPIB).

**Rev Sudira Husada** – Current Bishop of the Protestant Church in Bali (GKPB).

**Rev Gunawan** – Christian Education staff person in the GKJW.

**Rev Dr Weinata Sairin** – Working in the Indonesian Fellowship of Churches (PGI) who has written extensively on the Indonesian Marriage Law.

**Rev Dr Rufus Waney** – Moderator of the GPIB Church (2000-2005)

**Rev Dr Sylvana Ranti-Apituley** – Lecturer, Church History and Women’s Studies, Theological College (STT) Jakarta.

**Rev Dr Dr Yayah Wijaya** – Lecturer in Theology, Duta Wacana Christian University, Yogyakarta.
Muslim Leaders
Those consulted included Muslim academics from Islamic State Universities, a Lecturer who has been active in Paramadina Foundation, two leaders of Muslim religious education institutes (Peasantren), a Muslim woman’s advocate and legal expert and a former official who worked in the KUA office (not identified).

Dr Musdah Mulia – Executive Secretary of the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace (ICRP). She is active on gender issues and law reform and led the team that produced the Counter Legal Draft of the Kompilasi Hukum Islam for the Department of Religion, 2004.

Prof Dr H. Imam Suprayogo – Chancellor of Muslim University (STAIN) Malang

Drs Mudja Rahardjo – Lecturer at STAIN, Malang

Dr Hamim Ilyas – Lecturer at the Sate Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga (UIN), Yogykarta whose role has included supervising students who have written dissertations on interfaith marriage.

Kautsar Azari Noer – Lecturer, author and progressive Muslim thinker. At the time of the interview he was active at Yayasan Wakaf Paramadina and was a lecturer at UIN (Universitas Islam Negeri). Along with Zainun Kamal he has been conducting Muslim interfaith marriages.

Mohammad Dian Nafi – Pondok Pesantran Al Muayat near Solo


A former KUA official interviewed (16/1/07). Not identified.

Interfaith Organisations

Rev Elga J Sarapung – Director of Interfidei (Institute for Interfaith Dialogue in Indonesia)

Yolinda Puspita Rini and Ira Wisnuthadie – Staff at ICRP working with interfaith couples.
Appendix 6b

RELGIOUS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS CONSULTED
AUSTRALIAN SAMPLE

A small sample of three Indonesian community leaders and five Australian Christian leaders with experience of interfaith marriages between Muslims and Christians were consulted in October 2006, June 2007 and June 2008.

**Christian Religious Leaders**

Rev. Anneke Oppewal – Uniting Church minister

Rev Ben Susilo – Uniting Church minister

Rev Marilyn Stacy – Uniting Church minister

Father Bob McGuchin – Parramatta Diocese

**Indonesian Community leaders**

Muhammad Sabur – Assisted in establishing the Tempe Indonesian mosque

Aly Zakaria – Chair of Tempe mosque in Sydney

Sumaryono – Indonesian community leader in Sydney
# Appendix 7

**MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACHES ACROSS THE TWO SAMPLE GROUPS**

**KEY:**
- √ Represents the main type of the respondent
- # Indicates some elements of this type were also present.
- ← → Arrows reflect a movement between past approaches and current ones.

The gender and religion of the respondents is identified in the brackets.
The first letter *M* or *F* identifies whether the participant is male or female.
The second letter refers to the religion of the respondent. *M* denotes Muslim; *C* denotes Catholic; *P* denotes Protestant; *Pt* denotes Pentecostal. *(M/M)* for example refers to a male Muslim; *(F/C)* a female Christian.

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<tr>
<th>AUSTRALIAN SAMPLE</th>
<th>Coercional</th>
<th>Invitational</th>
<th>Connectional</th>
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<td>1. a. Munir (M/M)</td>
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<td>b. Tanya (F/P)</td>
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<td>2. a. Rahmat (M/M)</td>
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<td>b. Evelyn (F/P)</td>
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<td>4. a. Ann (F/P)</td>
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<td>5. a. Ammar (M/M)</td>
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<td>b. Rebecca (F/P)</td>
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<td>7. a. Jillian (F/C)</td>
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<td>8. a. Hendro (M/P)</td>
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<td>b. Sugarti (F/M)</td>
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<td>Converted to Christianity</td>
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<td>9. a. Hanif (M/M)</td>
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<td>b. Asti (F/P)</td>
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<td>12. a. Lastri (F/P or F/M)</td>
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<td>Converted to Islam at the time of marriage and straddles both faiths. She is unsure which religious identity she will choose.</td>
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<td>13. a Luzio (M/P)</td>
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<td>b. Azita (F/M)</td>
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<td>14. a Nasif (M/M)</td>
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<td>15. a Michelle (F/P)</td>
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| 1. a. Sudarsono (M/P)  
   b. Melati (F/M) | # | | # | # |
| 2. Muhammad Lubis (M/M) | # | | # | # |
| 3. a. Benny Huta (M/P)  
   b. Sri (F/M) | # | | # | # |
| 4. a. Hartono (M/M)  
   b. Mari (F/P) | ➔ | # | # | # |
| 5. a. Muchtar (M/M)  
   b. Tuti (F/C) | ➔ | # | # | # |
| 6. a. Hasan Udin (M/M)  
   b. Kristiana (F/P) | # ➔ | # | # | # |
| 7. a. Yustina (F/C)  
   Widow | # | # | # | # |
| 8. a. Dirman (M/M)  
   b. Kustiah (F/P) | # | | # | # |
| 9. a. Frank (M/P)  
   b. Muriani (F/M) | # | # | # | # |
| 10. a. Adri (M/M)  
   b. Susan (F/P) | # | # | # | # |
| 11. a. Abdul(M/M)  
   b. Herawati (F/P) | ➔ | # | # | # |
| 12. a. Herman (M/P)  
   b. Rima (F/M) | # | # | # | # |
| 13. a. Anwar (M/P)  
   b. Nana (F/M) | ➔ | # | # | # |
| 14. a. Lani (F/P)  
   Divorced | # | # | # | # |
| 15. a. Ronald (M/C)  
   b. Titik (F/M) | # | # | # | # |
| 16. a. David (M/P)  
   b. Kartini (F/M) to (FC) | # | # | # | # |
| 17. a. Anita (F/P) | # | # | # | # |
| 18. a. Yono (M/C)  
   b. Endang (F/M) | # | # | # | # |
| 19. a. Tomi (M/P)  
   b. Aryati (F/M) | ➔ | ✓ | # | # |
| 20. a. Sumitro (M/C)  
   b. Nurila (F/M) | # | ✓ | # | # |
| 21. a. Nini (F/C) | # | # | # | # |
| 22. a. Albert (M/C)  
   b. Yuli (F/M) | # | # | # | # |
| 23. a. Yudi (M/M)  
   b. Lidia (F/P) | # | # | # | # |
| 24. TOTAL | 6# | 11# | 4# | 8# | 20# |
|             | 1# | 5# | 6# | 12# |
Appendix 8a

RESPONDENTS IN THE INDONESIAN SAMPLE

1. Sudarsono (M/P) and Melati (F/M)  
   Married 1951 in Indonesia  
   Sudarsono is a member of the Javanese Protestant Church (GKJ) and Melati actively practises her Muslim faith. They had an arranged Muslim marriage in 1951. They live in a small town in central Java.

2. Muhammad Lubis (M/M) and Betty (F/P)  
   Married 1962 in Indonesia  
   Muhammad Lubis, now widowed, married Betty in 1962 in a Muslim ceremony. Betty was a member of the Seven Day Adventist church and he assisted in the church building project. Lubis lives in a town in east Java.

3. Benny Huta (M/P) and Sri (F/M)  
   Married 1962 in Indonesia  
   Benny Huta a Batak Protestant spent much of his life in Java except during the years of his imprisonment suspected of being a PKI sympathiser. Benny and Sri were married in 1962 in a Muslim ceremony. They live in a village in central Java.

4. Hartono (M/M) and Mari (F/P)  
   Married 1964 in Indonesia  
   Hartono is a Javanese Muslim and Mari has a Javanese Dutch heritage. They were married in 1964 in a civil ceremony and a Muslim ceremony. Hartono has been highly regarded in his profession in the health services.

5. Muchtar (M/M) and Tuti (F/C)  
   Married 1964 in Indonesia  
   Tuti comes from a devout Catholic family whose father was martyred by the Japanese. Muchtar retired from the armed forces. They were married in 1964 in a Catholic ceremony. They live in Jakarta. One of their sons is a Catholic priest.

6. Hasan Udin (M/M) and Kristiani (F/P)  
   Married 1965 in Indonesia  
   Kristiani and Hasan Udin married in 1965 in a Protestant ceremony after Hasan Udin attended catechism classes and converted to Christianity. He later reverted to his Muslim faith and became active in an organisation that supports new Muslim converts. Hasan Udin and Kristiani live in a city in central Java. Two of their adult daughters were also interviewed.

7. Yustina (F/C)  
   Married 1966 in Indonesia  
   Yustina married Yusuf in 1966 and was widowed in 1984. Yustina’s parents were also in mixed marriage. Yustina lives in a town in central Java with her daughter Nini, who is in an interfaith marriage, and grandson.
8. **Kadri (M/M) and Rini (F/C)**

Married 1970 in Indonesia

Kadri, a Muslim and Rini, a Catholic married in a Muslim and civil ceremony. They later also had a Catholic blessing. Kadri and Rini live in Jakarta. Two of their adult children were also interviewed.

9. **Dirman (M/M) and Kustiah (F/I)**

Married 1974 in Indonesia

Kustiah is a Chinese Indonesian Protestant and active member of the Protestant Church of Indonesia (GKI). Dirman and Kustiah married in 1974 in a Muslim ceremony followed by a Protestant blessing. Both are highly educated health professionals living in east Java.

10. **Frank (M/P) and Muriani (F/M)**

Married 1975 in Indonesia

Frank, a Protestant Batak worked in the armed forces until his retirement. Muriani is a Javanese Muslim woman who works as a lecturer. They were married 1975 in a civil ceremony.

11. **Adri (M/M) and Susan (F/Pt)**

Married 1976 in Indonesia

Adri is a Muslim whose roots are in traditional Javanese (Kejawen) beliefs. Susan is an active member of Pentecostal church (Bethany). They were married 1976 in a Muslim ceremony and live in a city in East Java.

12. **Abdul (M/M) and Herawati (F/P)**

Married 1978 in Indonesia

Abdul is a Muslim and Herawati is an active member of the Javanese Protestant Church (GKJ). They had a civil marriage in 1978. They live in a village in central Java.

13. **Herman (M/P) and Rima (F/M)**

Married 1978 in Indonesia

Herman is a member of the Protestant Church and Rima is a Muslim. They were married in 1978 in a civil ceremony and live in a city in East Java.

14. **Anwar (M/P) and Nana (F/M)**

Married 1979 in Indonesia

Nana is a Muslim and Anwar a Protestant. They are both musicians and live in a city in east Java. They were married in 1979 in a civil ceremony. One of their daughters was also interviewed.

15. **Hasan (M/M) and Lani (F/P)**

Married 1983 in Indonesia

Lani is a single mother (Protestant) who married to Hasan in 1983. They divorced in 1995.

16. **Ronald (M/C) and Titik (F/M)**

Married 1984 in Indonesia

Ronald is a Protestant with Chinese and Dutch heritage. Titik is a Javanese Muslim. They were married in 1984 in a Muslim ceremony after Ronald converted. He later reverted to Catholicism. They live in east Java.
17. **David (M/P) and Kartini (F/M)  Married 1985 in Indonesia**
David is a Balinese Protestant and Kartini came from a devout Muslim family in Sumatra. She converted to Christianity before their marriage in 1985 but continues to experience difficulties in terms of her religious self-identity. One of their daughters, Miriam recently converted to Islam and was also interviewed. David and Kartini live in a Bali.

18. **Ibrahim (M/M) and Anita (F/P)  Married 1987 in Indonesia**
Anita, a committed Protestant believer married Ibrahim in 1987 (he was not able to be interviewed). They are both professional people living in Jakarta.

19. **Yono (M/C) and Endang (F/M)  Married 1995 in Indonesia**
Yono is a divorced Catholic and Endang is a Muslim divorcee with two children from her previous marriage. They were married in 1995 and live in Jakarta.

20. **Tomi (M/P) and Aryati (F/M)  Married 1998 in Australia**
Albert is Protestant and Aryati is Muslim. They were married in Australia in 1998 in a Protestant ceremony and live in Jakarta.

21. **Zainal (M/M) and Nini (F/C)  Married 1999 in Indonesia**
Nini is a Catholic (her husband Zainal was not able to be interviewed). They were married in a Muslim ceremony in 1999 and were having a trial separation at the time of the interview.

22. **Albert (M/C) and Yuli (F/M)  Married 2000 in Australia**
Albert is a Catholic divorcee and Yuli a Muslim. They have a considerable age difference. They were married in a civil ceremony in Australia in 2000 and live in Jakarta.

23. **Lidia (F/P) and Yudi (M/M)  Married 2001 in Indonesia**
Lidia is a member of a Protestant Church and Yudi is a Muslim. Lidia has a brother who is a minister of a Protestant Church which does not permit mixed marriages. They married in a civil ceremony in 2001 with assistance of a friend who worked in the Civil Registry Office (KCS).

24. **Sumitro (M/C) and Nurila (F/M)**
Nurila, a Javanese Muslim is the daughter of a Muslim leader. Sumitro was formerly a candidate for the Catholic priesthood. They were married in 2002 in a Muslim marriage ceremony. They have both been actively involved in interfaith networks. They live in a village close to an urban city in central Java.
Appendix 8b

RESPONDENTS IN THE AUSTRALIAN SAMPLE

1. Munir (M/M) and Tanya (F/P) Married 1954 in Indonesia
Munir is an Indonesian Muslim and Tanya is an Anglo-celtic Australian with a Methodist heritage. They married in Indonesia in 1954. One of their daughters was also interviewed.

2. Rahmat (M/M) and Pauline (F/C) Married 1969 in Australia
Rahmat is an Indonesia Muslim from a strongly practicing family. He met Pauline in Australia in 1969 when they were both studying at University. Pauline comes from a strongly practicing Catholic family from a regional centre in NSW. Their son was also interviewed.

3. Hamza (M/M) and Evelyn (F/post-Christian) Married 1972 in Australia
Hamza is originally from Indonesia and Muslim and Evelyn is an Australian of Anglo-celtic background. They married in Australia in 1972 in a Muslim ceremony. Evelyn sees herself as post-Christian with a deep interest in alternative spirituality. Hamza occasionally attends the mosque.

4. Imran (M/M) and Kate (F/P) Married 1973 in Australia and 1974 in Indonesia
Imran, an Indonesian Muslim, and Kate an Anglo-celtic Australian married in Australia in a Christian ceremony 1973 and later had a Muslim ceremony in Indonesia. Both were from religiously devout homes. In 2007 Imran and Kate began the process of separation.

5. Hariz (M/M) and Ann (F/P) Married 1973 Divorced 1995
Hariz, a Muslim from the Middle East and Ann, an Anglo-celtic Australian married in Australia in a civil ceremony followed by a church blessing in 1973 only six months after meeting. They divorced in 1995.

6. Ammar (M/M) and Rebecca (F/P) Married 1974 in Australia
Ammar is a Palestinian Australian born in Lebanon. Rebecca is an Anglo-celtic Australian born in India. They married in Australia in 1972 in a civil ceremony. They also had a Muslim ceremony in 1989.

7. Jamal (M/M) and Jillian (F/C) Married 1975 in the UK
Jamal, a Muslim from the Middle East married Jillian in England in 1975 in a Catholic nuptial mass and civil marriage, and also a Muslim ceremony when Jamal was studying in the UK. They migrated to Australian in 1991 with their two adopted children are being raised as Muslims.

8. Hendro (M/P) and Sugiarti (F/M converted F/P 2007) Married 1979 in Australia
Hendro, a Christian and Sugiarti a Muslim, both originally from Indonesia, married in 1979 in a civil ceremony in Australia. Sugiarti converted to Christianity in 2007 after 28 years of marriage.
9. **Hanif (M/M) and Hannah (F/P)**

   Married 1981 in Australia

   Hanif, a Muslim Indonesian married Hannah, an Anglo-celtic Australian
   Hannah in a civil ceremony in Australia in 1981 living first in Indonesia and
   more recently in Australia.

10. **Budi (M/M) and Debby (F/C)**

    Married 1994 in Indonesia

    Budi is a Javanese Muslim shaped by Javanese traditional beliefs and Debby
    is a Chinese Catholic who grew up in Buddhist family. They married in
    1994 in a Catholic ceremony (after two mosques informed them that they
    were unable to conduct the wedding). Budi migrated to Australian in 2007
    with his oldest daughter and Debby followed in 2008.

11. **Diwan (M/M) and Asti (F/P)**

    Married 1999 in Australia

    Asti came to Australia in 1998 as a missionary to serve in an Indonesian
    congregation. She met Indonesian Muslim, Diwan and they married in 1999
    in a Protestant ceremony. Asti is currently active in Christian lay ministry.

12. **Bambang (M/M) and Lastri (F/P)**

    Married 2002 in Indonesia

    Lastri is a second generation Indonesian Australian. She met Bambang, a
    Muslim while visiting Indonesia. They married a few months later in 2002
    in a Muslim ceremony (without informing Lastri’s parents). They live in
    Australia but spend Lebaran each year in Indonesia.

13. **Luzio (M/P) and Azita (F/M)**

    Married 2005 in Australia

    Luzio and Azita both grew up in Australia. Luzio has Italian ancestry and
    Azita’s parents migrated from the Middle East. They were married in 2005
    in a Protestant ceremony followed by a Muslim ceremony.

14. **Nasif (M/M) and Diana (F/C)**

    Married 2006 in Australia

    Nasif is an Indonesian Muslim (divorced), married Diana, a Catholic Anglo-
    celtic Australian Muslim in a Muslim (and civil) ceremony. Nasif, now
    retired, has had an influential role in the Indonesian Australian community.

15. **Yusuf (M/M) and Michelle (F/P)**

    Married 2006 in Australia

    Yusuf’s family moved from the Middle East to Australia when he was a
    child and Michelle is an Anglo-celtic Australian. They were married in a
    joint Muslim-Christian ceremony in a church in a ceremony co-led by a
    Muslim *imam* and a minister.