

**A sociological approach to Christian-Muslim relations:
British Evangelicals, Muslims and the public sphere**

**Submitted by Richard John McCallum
to the University of Exeter
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ABSTRACT

The increasingly politicized presence of Muslim communities in Britain today is raising issues not only for society in general but for other faith communities as well. Among these the Evangelical constituency, including the members of various Christian diasporas, is struggling to find a coherent response which is true to its Bible-based, activist roots.

This thesis discusses the relationship of religion to the theoretical notion of the public sphere. Specifically it hypothesizes an *Evangelical micro public sphere* as the framework for an empirical exploration of the responses of British Evangelicals to Muslims since the events of 11th September 2001. It describes the formation, composition and discourse of this sphere drawing on data gathered from books, articles, lectures and interviews with key participants. The data reveal a marked tension, indeed a polarization, amongst Evangelicals, with an increasingly sharp disagreement between 'confrontationalists' and 'conciliators'.

A detailed analysis of the interaction of this sphere with Muslims, the national media and church leaders follows, leading to a concluding discussion of the future trajectory of the British Evangelical movement. Whilst it is still too early to say whether Evangelicalism will be strengthened or weakened, its encounter with Islam is likely to be an increasingly significant factor in British public life for the foreseeable future.

DEDICATION

In a time of turmoil and transition

I dedicate this thesis to Muhammad, Khadija and their family,
to my colleagues at the *Institut Bourguiba des langues en Tunisie*
and to all our friends who all made us feel so welcome in Tunisia.

الرب يبارككم و يعطيكم السلام

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Most of all a huge thank you to my longsuffering family, my wife Heather (who spent many hours typing the transcripts of all the interviews) and daughter Katie, for all their love and support during the long hours I have been in my cave. It's time for a holiday!

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NOTES AND ACCOMPANYING MATERIAL

It should be noted that throughout the thesis “participants” refers to those who participate in the discussions and debates of the Evangelical public sphere rather than just those who participated in the study by agreeing to be interviewed. These latter are referred to as “interviewees”.

Some may question the capitalization of the word “Evangelical”. I have chosen to do so as it better balances the capitalization of the word “Muslim”. Both are used to refer primarily to a person as a member of a faith community. As I have generally not inserted the word “Christian” after Evangelical the capital letter serves to remind of this parallel.

Throughout the text I have used the § symbol to represent chapter and section. Thus §4.3.c represents *chapter 4, section 3, sub-section c*.

The full transcribed texts of the interviews are available should the examiners require them but are not included here in the public copy of this thesis for reasons of confidentiality. The number references that I have used in the data section refer to the paragraph number of the interview transcription as assigned by the MaxQDA software program.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBC – British Broadcasting Company

BCC – British Council of Churches

BMC – Black majority church

CCFON – Christian Concern for Our Nation

CMF – Christian-Muslim Forum

CNN – Cable News Network

COM – Council of Mosques

CPA – Christian People’s Alliance

CRPOF - Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths

EA – Evangelical Alliance of the UK

EFBP – Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in Britain Project

EPS – Evangelical public sphere

HT – Hizb ut-Tahrir

ISIC – Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity

LST – London School of Theology

MCB – Muslim Council of Britain

UK – United Kingdom

USA – United States of America

WCC – World Council of Churches

LIST OF ARABIC TERMS

The following is a list of Arabic words used which are italicized in the text to indicate their non-English origin. I have chosen to retain this convention even where a word such as *halal* is now in common usage. The word is listed in its Anglicized transliteration as it appears in the text and is then given in Arabic script. Note that the transliteration has here been marked to indicate the presence of a long vowel (ā, ī, ū) to aid pronunciation. The only attempt to Arabicize the transliteration in the text itself, however, is the presence of the right facing apostrophe (') to show the presence of the letter *ʿayn* (ع - e.g. *shariʿa*) and the left facing apostrophe (') to show the presence of the letter *hamza* (ء - e.g. *Qurʿan*). In the text I have also chosen to use Anglicized plurals instead of the correct Arabic plurals to prevent confusion (*fatwās* not *fatāwā*, *madrasas* not *madāris* and so on). Likewise I have used the more commonly understood Anglicized form *Shiʿite* in place of *Shiʿi*.

Adhān (أذان) – the call to prayer

Allah (الله) – the word used for God by Muslims and Arab Christians

Asbab al-nuzūl (اسباب النزول) – the occasions or causes of revelation

Daʿwa (دعوة) – invitation, missionary activity

Dhimmi (ذمّي) – a free non-Muslim subject living in a Muslim country

Din wa dawla (دين و دولة) – religion and state

Fatwā (فتوى) – a formal legal opinion

Fiqh (فقه) – Islamic jurisprudence

Halāl (حلال) – permitted, lawful

Harām (حرام) – forbidden, unlawful

Hijra (هجرة) – migration, especially the migration of the first Muslims in 622 AD

I'dād (أعداد) – preparation

'Izzat (عزة) – honour

Jihād (جهاد) – fight, battle, holy war - from root meaning to strive or to exert

Jizya (جزية) – the poll tax to be paid by a non-Muslim living under the shari'a

Khilāfa (خلافة) – caliphate

Kitmān (كتمان) – secrecy, concealment

Madrasa (مدرسة) – Islamic school

Mihna (محنة) – inquisition, ordeal, tribulation

Murtid (مرتد) – apostate, someone who leaves Islam

Mufti (مفت) – someone who delivers a legal opinion

al-Nāsikh wal-mansūkh (الناسخ و المنسوخ) – the abrogating and the abrogated (verses)

Ridda (ردة) – apostasy, leaving Islam

Salafiyya (السلفية) – salafism, reform movement – from root meaning ancestors, predecessors

Sharī'a (شريعة) – the way, the path to a water hole, commonly understood to mean Islamic law

Tablighi Jama'at (جماعة التبليغ) – the preaching group, a South Asia revivalist movement (Anglicized here in its more usual Urdu form)

Taqiyya (تقية) – fear, caution, dissimulation of one's religion

'Ulamā (علماء) – religious scholars (sing. *'ālim* (عالم))

Wahhābi (وهَّابي) – adjective for a follower of the teaching of Muhammad ibn 'Abd-al-Wahhab, an eighteenth century Islamic reformer in the Arabian Peninsula

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SETTING THE SCENE

In the big top at a large gathering of Evangelical¹ Christians the speaker is receiving a standing ovation. His talk has covered not just the basics of Islam but also the glories of the British Empire and the dangers of political Islam. Christians need to be aware that there is a Muslim conspiracy in the UK able to subvert the political system. They are taking over. A vicar from a multiethnic neighbourhood in Birmingham rises to ask a question about the dangers of stirring racial tension. Members of the middle class Christian audience of over a thousand start booing and telling the questioner to sit down. This is an extraordinary scene for an Evangelical audience. Fear is out of the bag. “The Muslims are coming to get us. We have to mobilize and prepare to fight back”.

A few weeks later in another much smaller conference of mainly older Evangelical Anglicans a lady is questioning the speaker. She has read a book predicting that Britain will become a Muslim country within the next 15 years and is fearful (Pawson, 2003). “I know I should love them but if I’m honest I’m afraid of them. What should I do?” Another lady joins the conversation. She agrees and feels not just fear but anger. “It’s not right what is happening. Should we just let them get away with it? This is our country isn’t it?”

In a TV documentary, Stephen Green, the director of *Christian Voice*, a “prophetic ministry” campaigning on issues of concern to Christians², says:

you don’t have to be a prophet to predict that there is going to be war in this land within perhaps 30 to 40 years. If the Islamic population in this country continues to increase, they will assume power and that could be the point at which people here begin to feel they have to take up arms people will not want to live under the yoke of Islam.³

¹ The word “Evangelical” is capitalized throughout the thesis to balance the capitalization of the word “Muslim”. Both are used to refer primarily to a person as a member of a faith community. As I have generally not inserted the word “Christian” after Evangelical the capital letter serves to remind of this parallel.

² See <http://www.christianvoice.org.uk>. The strap line on the website is: “The enemies of God are having their say! It’s time to hear the Christian Voice.”

³ ‘In God’s Name’ (Modell, 2008b).

This dire prediction fictionally comes to fruition in the archaeological detective drama *BoneKickers* in an episode called *Army of God*.⁴ Brother Laygass, a TV evangelist and head of a “philanthropic, right wing Christian alliance”, declares that Britain is "at war for its Christian soul the day is coming when St Paul's Cathedral will be the grand mosque of London ... we have the true faith in Jesus but we don't stand up for it and that is where the Muslims and others have us over a barrel". Inspired by his rhetoric, James, a mentally unstable devotee of Laygass, dresses as a crusader knight, goes out and is shown in gruesome clarity using a broadsword to decapitate a Muslim who tries to reason with him. War has arrived.

These stories paint a picture of a rising fear of Islam and an anger towards Muslims within the British Evangelical Christian community which resonate with the talk of a “clash of civilizations” proposed by Huntington (1996). For some Islam is on an inevitable collision course with western liberal democracy. But is it necessarily such a bleak prospect of doom? Is the West, including the British Evangelical church, on an unavoidable path towards conflict with Muslims? There are more hopeful stories.

At another Evangelical conference a man relates how, when his church in Birmingham was struggling to find the resources to finish its new building, it was the local Muslims who helped financially. There are also Evangelicals involved in the *Christian-Muslim Forum* (CMF) set up in 2006 which exists to “create a space where Christians and Muslims meet, learn about and understand each other, so that we can live faithfully with difference, and work together to heal Christian-Muslim relationships”.⁵ And in an article in an Emirati newspaper a Muslim comments on his encounter with Evangelicals:

they were religious people; they weren't interested in diluting their faith. And in that, a type of sincerity emerged combined with a healthy respect for each other as people who believed in a loving God and loving one's neighbour (Hellyer, 2008).

These are some of the more positive stories.

⁴ Broadcast on BBC 1, 8 July, 2008

⁵ http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/images/uploads/CD6_Strategy_Outline_Final.pdf (accessed 25 January 2011).

1.2 ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

Despite predictions to the contrary, “religions are here to stay playing important public roles in the ongoing construction of the modern world” (Casanova, 1994). In particular Berger has highlighted Islam and Evangelical Protestantism as evidence of the global resurgence of religion and sees them as “reactive counter-formations” which in different ways challenge the secularizing tendencies of modernity (Berger, 1992, 32). Indeed, in some parts of the world they seem set on a collision course both with liberal democracy and with one another. This makes this research into their recent encounters all the more significant.

It is also these two faiths that have formed the backdrop to my own adult life and in many ways I am “at home” as an insider in Evangelicalism but yet am also “at home” as a guest within Islam. I feel a strong sense of empathy with both communities and see much to admire, and yet also much to critique, in both. I was brought up in a Christian home and have attended Evangelical churches all my life. At university I studied natural sciences but later completed an MA in applied linguistics whilst teaching English at the *Université de Tunis*. During ten years working in Tunisia the majority of my colleagues were Muslims, many of my friends were Muslims and my family and I lived amongst Muslim neighbours.

We returned to Britain in 2002 in the aftermath of the cataclysmic events of 11th September 2001 (henceforth 9/11) and the extraordinary tensions were tangible: a Muslim community trying to come to terms with extremist violence in its midst, struggling to establish its own sense of identity, wanting to integrate into British society and yet appalled at the moral decadence and lack of sensitivity to the transcendent in the wider community; an Evangelical community frustrated with its sense of powerlessness in the face of moral decline, juridical reversal and antagonistic secular hegemony, anticipating a “revival” and yet fearful of the encroachment of a religious Other – Islam – into its own space; both communities angry at political correctness and exclusion from a secularized public sphere which could make no sense of allegiance to comprehensive truths and wanted to neutralize religious discourse by suborning and domesticating it.

It was in this maelstrom that the idea of doing doctoral research developed through hearing the concerns and questions of Evangelicals, reading Christian books about Islam and listening to Christian speakers. The fear and concern were evident. So too was the diversity of response and

often the ignorance. But rarely apathy. Everyone was interested. Everyone wanted to know. Some speakers focused on the threat of Islam, others majored on the need to build bridges with Muslims. Some engendered fear, others respect. Some were sensationalist, others more measured. There were those who ignored difficult issues, whilst others faced them head on.

My wife and I were occasionally asked to speak on Islam at various churches and conferences and I wanted to do a piece of research that would both help me personally to reflect on these issues and would also help the British Evangelical community take stock of its responses to Islam and Muslims. So this thesis looks at how the increased presence of Islam and Muslims in British public life is raising issues not just for society in general but for the Evangelical Christian community in particular, including its many diaspora groups. It explores how these often diverse groups are struggling to find a coherent response which is at the same time true to its Bible-based, activist roots.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE THESIS

1.3.A THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The re-emergence of religion into the public arena, which has alternatively been described as the “deprivatization” of religion (Casanova, 1994, 5) or the “re-publicization” of religion (Herbert and Fras, 2009), has been greatly influenced by the increased global interaction between Islam and the West, including within Britain itself, through the growth of Muslim diaspora communities mainly from South Asia. Islam is a public religion and the question is not so much *whether* Muslims should bring their beliefs and practices into the public domain but *how* they should do that – particularly in a modern state where they are the minority (Sachedina, 2003). As Muslims, policy planners and politicians seek to answer this question, it inevitably parallels, and maybe even catalyzes, the same discussion in other faith communities, including amongst Evangelical Christians.

As these debates are public rather than private, a framework for considering discussion and the public exchange of ideas is needed. The debate surrounding Habermas’ concept of the public sphere provides such a framework. Whilst Habermas’ initial concept of a unitary bourgeois public sphere is not a suitable tool in itself for this thesis, later conceptualizations of multiple post-

bourgeois public spheres developed by others are useful for positioning Evangelicals within the larger religious, secular and political discourses. The participants in this public sphere may not be meeting in coffee houses (although they sometimes do!), but they have formed a definitive network that utilizes various media in thinking, writing, discussing and occasionally meeting together for the purpose of developing a distinctive Evangelical response to Islam. The identification and description of such a religious “micro-public sphere” in Britain will be one of the first tasks of this project.

1.3.B BRITISH EVANGELICALS

The thesis focuses on the British context. Clearly it could be extended to consider the global interaction of Evangelicals and Muslims as both are global communities experiencing rapid growth, and occasionally uncomfortable confrontation, in many parts of the world. In an increasingly interconnected world it is inevitable that the boundaries of the project are somewhat porous and influence from outside of Britain has to be considered. However, the need to limit the scope of the project, and also my own geographical location and experience, dictate that it is largely British Evangelicals and their particular interaction with Islam and Muslims that are considered.

There are several reasons for focusing on Evangelicals as opposed to other Christian traditions. First, they are the largest and fastest growing section of the Christian church worldwide and this has also been true in Britain. In the last two decades of the twentieth century they were effectively the only part of the British church to be growing and showing signs of vitality. Today, although growth has slowed, there are more than 1.25 million Evangelicals in England (Brierley, 2006) and maybe 2 million in Britain as a whole (Ashworth and Farthing, 2007). This number is commensurate with the Muslim community in Britain which since the 2001 census will have grown to at least 2 million although it must be remembered that this community is hugely diverse and would not all be active in their faith.

A second reason for choosing this group is the uncompromising commitment of Evangelicals to their understanding of revealed truth. This in many ways mirrors the similar conviction of

orthodox Muslims, who often respect Christians who strongly hold to their traditional faith.⁶ Add to this that both Evangelicals and Muslims share a commitment to proselytism – evangelism and *da'wa* (invitation) respectively – and it could be expected that these two faith communities may find coexistence challenging. Does the resulting competition create a more vigorous religious market in Britain or does the increase of diversity cause a decline in belief? The interaction gives an opportunity to explore some key themes in the sociology of religion.

A third reason for choosing Evangelicals is that very little research has been done on interaction between Evangelicals and Muslims. There is a large literature on Christian-Muslim relations in general yet little of specific application to Evangelicals. For instance, a recent edited volume entitled *Christian Responses to Islam* looked at the response of Anglicans, Catholics, Orthodox and other groups but had no chapter specifically on Evangelicals (O'Mahony and Loosley, 2008). There has been some work on Evangelicals and Muslims in America where there is generally rather more interest among sociologists in this section of the church. For instance Cimino (2005) and Hoover (2004) both wrote short papers and Kidd recently published *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Global Terrorism* (2009). However, these all focus on the North American situation. So this thesis looks to fill a lacuna in the British context.

Finally, Evangelical Christianity is my own social and faith background. In some cases the people that I have interviewed or discussed are friends or acquaintances. In other cases we at least share mutual friends. This enabled ease of access but does not imply that I necessarily agree or sympathize with all or any of their views. Indeed in a few cases my own views may have closed doors to me, even though I tried as far as possible to embark on this research in a nonpartisan manner. The issue of my positionality and the benefits and challenges which it throws up are taken up at greater length in Chapter 8.

1.3.c MUSLIMS

Muslims feature in this research due to the remarkable re-emergence of Islam onto the world stage over the last 30 years and especially since the catastrophic events of 9/11. Many observers see the role of Islam and its place in global politics as being pivotal in the twenty-first century

⁶ Note Hellyer's comment above (§1.1).

(Hefner, 1998). Today worldwide Muslims form the second largest religious population bloc after Christians and, with identity becoming increasingly important, “it may not be too much to claim that the future of our world will depend on how we deal with identity and difference” (Volf, 1996). This is certainly likely to be true of the interaction between Christians and Muslims. As Said points out, for Christians historically “Islam came to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians a lasting trauma” (Said, 1978, 59). Sometimes it seems that little has changed.

Yet essentializing, monolithic narratives which create dualist certainties are dangerous. There are many different types of Islam just as there are many different types of Christianity and shades of liberal secularism. These variations and nuances must always be borne in mind.

So in a sense this study is somewhat asymmetrical in that it looks at the reaction of a specific subset of the Christian community and yet compares its reaction not to another subset but to the entire panoply of Islam and Muslim sects. However, this is not an exercise in essentialism. It simply recognizes that “Muslims en masse” often serve as “the Other” for Evangelical discourse. This is not a practice that is condoned in this thesis but is utilized as it reflects what so often happens in real life.

1.3.D THE POST 9/11 WORLD

Evangelical debate surrounding Islam has never been more polarized than since the events of 2001. Whilst there was discussion of Islam within the Evangelical community prior to that date, and particularly following the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the Salman Rushdie affair in 1989, 9/11 gave the debate renewed urgency. There is obviously a rich history of Christian-Muslim relations prior to this date stretching back to the early years of Islam, and a study of this would certainly be of interest. However, whilst brief mention will be made of this history, the focus here is on the twenty-first century encounter and a comparison of pre- and post-9/11 Evangelical literature is beyond the scope of this research except for some contextual references.

1.4 PRINCIPAL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of this thesis is to answer four questions relating to Evangelical responses to Islam and Muslims since 9/11:

1. What is the nature of the Evangelical public sphere which has formed around the subject of Islam and Muslims in Britain and how is it mediated within British churches?
2. What are the patterns of responses to Islam and Muslims exhibited within this public sphere?
3. How will these responses affect community relationships amongst Evangelicals, Muslims and government?
4. What are the likely trajectories of British Evangelicalism in the light of the Muslim presence?

1.5 A MAP OF THE THESIS

In a thesis of this nature it is usual to set out the contextual material before moving on to a discussion of theoretical concepts. In this case, however, I have felt it more natural to reverse this order. The reason is that my description of the context is dependent on my conceptualizing of the public sphere which only becomes clear in the discussion of the related theory. For that reason **Part I** is a theoretical and historical exploration of religion and the public sphere. This has the drawback that on occasion mention is made of concepts the context of which only becomes clear later in Part II. I have tried to ameliorate this with brief explanations and cross references wherever possible.

Chapter 2 develops the concept of a topical micro-public sphere. It starts by considering Habermas' (1989) description of a bourgeois public sphere and the various criticisms that his work attracted due to his failure to account for, amongst other things, gender, class and religion. From these critiques develop ideas of subaltern counterpublics (N. Fraser, 1992), multiple modernities

(Eisenstadt, 1999), transnationalism (N. Fraser, 2007) and various other understandings of the public sphere (for instance Keane, 1998). The work of Hauser (1999) and Warner (2005) is then used to develop the concept of the reticulate public sphere as the framework for this thesis.

Chapter 3 examines the place of religion within the public sphere with particular reference to the histories of Christianity and Islam. It finds that both communities at various times have hosted public spheres and have exhibited different reactions to temporal, political power. However, whilst the Muslim public sphere has attracted significant recent academic attention (Eickelman and Anderson, 1999, Hoexter et al., 2002, Salvatore and Eickelman, 2004), no comparable research has yet been done into a corresponding Christian public sphere. Following a brief survey of theoretical approaches to religion and society, and particularly Habermas' (2006) own increased openness to the role of religion in a modern liberal democracy, the chapter concludes with a thematic discussion of the relationships between religion, multiculturalism, social cohesion and the establishment of the church in Britain.

Whilst Chapters 2 and 3 provide the dominant theoretical framework for the thesis, **Chapter 4** begins the transition from theory to context. As the majority of empirical research into Evangelicals has taken place in the USA, it is the American context which is frequently to the fore in this chapter. Theory developed in North America, however, has to be carefully tested in the British context, as is stressed in Parts II and IV. The chapter reflects on what happens when religious groups meet in a pluralized context. It discusses various theories regarding how they maintain their identities through a shared *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1999), social imaginary (C. Taylor, 2004) or sacred canopy (Berger, 1967, C. Smith, 1998). This enables them to maintain their religious strength, despite the predictions of some versions of the secularization thesis (Casanova, 1994). Competition results between different groups of faith (and none) which Stark and Finke (2000) liken to a religious marketplace and others (Kaplan, 1960, Wilson, 2002) see as a form of evolutionary competition. The chapter closes by considering various typologies for such competition (Bennett, 2008, Race, 1983, Lochhead, 1988, C. Smith, 2002) before describing some of the possible futures envisaged for faith groups in a modern plural society: isolation (Berger, 1992), accommodation (Hunter, 1987), or engaged orthodoxy (C. Smith, 1998, Guest, 2007) and continued strength (Berger, 2010).

Part II provides the context for this thesis. **Chapter 5** paints an overview of Evangelicalism and pays particular attention to the issues of definition and global variety. A brief history of British Evangelicalism leads into a discussion of the contemporary situation and an account of the Evangelical public sphere in Britain.

Chapter 6 follows by painting a parallel picture of Islam and Muslims in Britain. A statistical profile and a brief history of immigration are followed by a sketch of the Muslim public sphere and the issues which concern it.

Chapter 7 brings these themes together and briefly looks at the interaction between Evangelicalism and Islam since the Reformation, particularly highlighting work done in both the United States and in Britain. The chapter concludes with a description of the contemporary micro-public sphere that has formed within the Evangelical community to debate the presence of Islam in Britain. This sphere provides the framework for the empirical work that is to follow.

Chapter 8 outlines the methodology used for the research which included textual analysis and semi-structured interviews, initially at a national level and then later in a cross-sectional study of church leaders in London. It explains the rationale for the choice of people and churches as informants and recounts some of the difficulties and sensitivities experienced in gaining access to them. It also discusses my own position vis-à-vis Evangelicalism and those whom I interviewed.

The data presented in **Part III** are arranged thematically moving from the abstract, through the socio-political to the relational. At every stage it is clear that there is considerable variety and even disagreement in how the Evangelicals in this survey view Islam. **Chapter 9** looks at the internal discourse of this public sphere and considers how British Evangelicals conceptualize Islam. It examines how they describe Islam and the various ways they explain its origin. This has not just theological implications but also informs the way Evangelicals view Islam as an ideology. The chapter closes with an important discussion of how different Evangelicals understand Islam's relation to violence.

Chapter 10 assesses the reactions within the Evangelical public sphere to the socio-political implications of the presence of Islam in Britain. It begins by exploring how the Evangelical

participants view the relationship between church and state and the British expression of multiculturalism. This provides the backdrop to their concerns about what some see as the creeping Islamization of Britain and of particular note is the discussion of whether Muslims can be trusted in the light of how some Evangelicals understand the Islamic doctrine of *taqiyya*.⁷ The chapter concludes by listening to various Evangelical predictions about the future of Islam in this country.

Chapter 11 draws the data presentation to a close and forms a bridge to the analysis of Part IV by examining how the British Evangelical public sphere interacts with other public spheres in the light of the approaches to Islam set out above. There is clearly a significant interaction with the Muslim public sphere. However, the interaction with the wider British public sphere is also considered as is the interaction with the Evangelical grassroots. The latter is highlighted by the presentation of the data from interviews with 14 church leaders in London. The final section of the chapter explores the internal relationships and considerable tension within the current Evangelical public sphere.

Part IV concludes the thesis with an analysis of the empirical material. **Chapter 12** brings the data and the theory together and seeks to answer the questions raised in the introduction. The first part focuses on the nature of the micro-public sphere itself, the evident existence of an Evangelical micro-public sphere and the usefulness of this concept for the sociological study of religion. The second part maps out the Evangelical approaches to Islam and proposes a typology to describe the various responses. There is a brief discussion of the implications of these responses for community relations before the final part discusses likely futures for British Evangelicalism in the light of the Muslim presence.

Chapter 13 concludes the thesis by looking at some of the strengths and weaknesses of the research, suggesting topics for future exploration and discussing how the findings may benefit various groups within the community. It ends by imagining how the Evangelical gathering mentioned in the opening paragraph above could have adopted a more pragmatic approach, which balanced both confrontation and conciliation, truth and grace.

⁷ Meaning dissimulation regarding one's religion. Arabic terms throughout are presented in italics and can be found in the 'Glossary of Arabic terms' at the front of the thesis (p27).

PART I – THE PUBLIC SPHERE, RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS GROUP

STRENGTH: THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

CHAPTER 2 THE PUBLIC SPHERE

A colourful book; an open letter on a website; a sermon from a pulpit; a book review on a blog site; a circulated email; a seminar at a conference; an article in a magazine; a meeting of academics. All of these examples and many more could be part of the response of Evangelical Christians to Islam and Muslims. Each in some way represents an expression or communication of ideas and attitudes. But what connects these events together? How are we to make sense of them?

As these public rather than private expressions form the focus of this thesis, a framework for analyzing the Evangelical discourse and exchange of ideas is required. The debate surrounding Jürgen Habermas' formulation of the public sphere provides a starting point.

This chapter develops the concept of the public sphere and starts by defining terms and vocabulary. The second section traces the rise of what Habermas calls the *bourgeois public sphere* and his postulation of an ideal type of public opinion formation in a liberal democratic society. Various criticisms of this theory are then discussed, along with the perceived fall of the bourgeois public sphere and the development of new models by other authors. The chapter finishes with a clear definition of the type of discursive micro-public sphere that becomes the theoretical frame for what follows.

2.1 THE PUBLIC SPHERE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Before commencing, it is necessary to say a word about terminology, as several different labels and definitions are used with respect to the public sphere. Firstly, it is important to note that the phrase “public sphere” should be used with a degree of technical precision. In sociological

thought it is not a generic term for just “anything that happens in public”, but is carefully defined.⁸ Secondly, several other terms are frequently collocated with the word “public” but to different effect. “Domain”, “arena” and “realm” are all broad terms which carry a wider, less technical, connotation and lack the specificity of “sphere”. Public “space” is also commonly used as a synonym but strictly carries a physical or geographical meaning.⁹ The closest to a synonym is probably the public “square” which carries echoes of the Athenian *agora* (market place) as a place of public debate.

It is also necessary to differentiate the *public sphere* from *civil society*. As both are situated within what Habermas calls the *lifeworld* as opposed to the *system* (Habermas, 1987), there is often a good deal of confusion surrounding these two concepts and they “tend to be coupled, overlapped, almost conflated, often without any clear distinction between them” (Eisenstadt, 2002, 140). Even Habermas himself admits that “a search for clear definitions in the relevant publications is in vain” (Habermas, 1992, 453).

The key factor here is that, whereas civil society is associational, the public sphere is discursive. Taylor sees the public sphere as a subset or “dimension of civil society” and describes it as:

a common space in which the members of society are deemed to meet through a variety of media: print, electronic, and also face-to-face encounters; to discuss matters of common interest; and thus to be able to form a common mind about these (C. Taylor, 2007, 185).

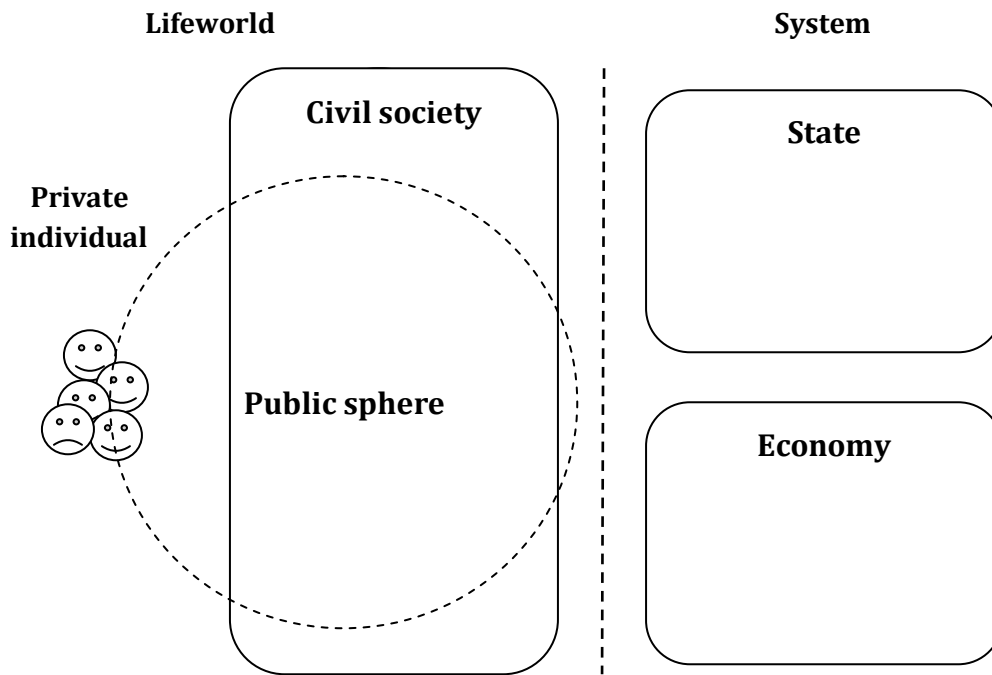
For Crossley and Roberts it is “a zone of mediation between the state and the private individual” concerned with discourse, debate and negotiation for the purpose of public opinion formation (2004, 2). So for the purposes of this thesis all the churches, mosques, charities, groups and societies considered are part of civil society. The debates that are generated by individuals within these associations form the public sphere. This could be pictured graphically as in Figure 2.1.¹⁰

⁸ Note that ‘public sphere’ is used to translate the German word *Öffentlichkeit*, which can mean public, public sphere or publicity see Translator’s Note in Habermas (1989, xv).

⁹ See Crawford (1995) for an example of the collocation of ‘realm’, ‘space’ and ‘sphere’ correctly used and contrasted. (Crawford, 1995)

¹⁰ The other major realm not considered here is the economic market which Habermas considers to be part of the system world but private and separate to the state.

Figure 2.1 – The public sphere



Reetz gives a succinct summary of the difference between the two concepts:

Because of its perceived autonomy from the state and private life, the 'public sphere' concept at times appeared to be close to the 'civil society' approach. While Habermas focused on critical public debate, civil society came to describe the associational life of society. Today they are used to offer different perspectives on public life. *Where the public sphere concept emphasizes the publicness of debate and activity, civil society looks at the level and quality of self-organization* (Reetz, 2006, 15 italics added).

Thus the two concepts perform different functions. "Civil society organizations channel private opinion into the public sphere, they do not constitute the latter" (Herbert, 2003, 75). So with these preliminary definitions in mind it is possible to move on to consider the genesis of the concept of the public sphere.

2.2 HABERMAS AND THE RISE OF THE BOURGEOIS PUBLIC SPHERE

Habermas is both a political philosopher and sociologist in the tradition of the Frankfurt School; his work has been highly influential in recent thinking about the philosophical basis of political democracy. His early thinking on the public sphere appeared in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* which was published in German in 1962 but was not translated into English until 1989.

The book is subtitled *An Investigation of a Category of Bourgeois Society* and traces the rise of the middle class in eighteenth century Europe with the aim of deriving an “ideal type” of the public sphere (Habermas, 1992, 422). Habermas starts by considering the Greek idea of the *polis* (city or public), as opposed to the *oikos* (home or private), which met representatively in the *agora* (marketplace) as an *ekklesia* (gathering of citizen).¹¹ He then traces these concepts through the period of Roman law and into the feudal Middle Ages. It was the rise of trade and the development of printing from the thirteenth through to the sixteenth century, culminating in the appearance of daily journals in the seventeenth century, that provided “the elements of a new social order” (Habermas, 1989, 14). According to Habermas the eighteenth century then witnessed the emergence of social circles of men, mainly from the bourgeois mercantile class, who began to gather together to discuss trade and labour. These circles were centred on the *salons* in France, the *Tischgesellschaften* (table societies¹²) in Germany, and the new coffee houses in Britain, of which by this time there were some 3000 in London alone (ibid 30, 32). At the same time newsletters and journals began to circulate, focused on trades and guilds, which quickly evolved to include opinion and comment and were disseminated, uncensored by the state authorities. Titles such as *The Tatler* and later *The Spectator* and *The Guardian* were “intimately interwoven with the life of the coffee houses” and formed the basis of discussion and public opinion forming (ibid 42). Other “social nodes” were centred on libraries, reading rooms and

¹¹ Interestingly the same Greek word that the New Testament uses to describe the gathering of God’s people, that is “the church”.

¹² It is interesting to note that in the 1990s an Evangelical grouping called *Building Together* launched ‘kitchen tables’ the idea of which was “to bring together key people in a region or city to meet informally with the purpose of praying for their region/town, and strategising for the re-evangelization of said region/town” (quoted from a personal email).

reading societies as books also became more widely available and accessible to the general public thus breaking the monopoly of the state and church on learning (ibid 36).

According to Habermas there was a common thread between all these nodes: they were all based on social intercourse; they problematized new issues of public concern; and they were inclusive and accessible to all. Above all it was a *reasoning* public which could debate the main issues of the day to form a public opinion. In fact, taken as a totality, Habermas saw them forming a “universalized public sphere” (Hauser, 1999, 55) which represented *the* public opinion of the people.

2.3 CRITICISMS OF HABERMAS’ IDEAL TYPE

In this description Habermas was doing more than present a historical backdrop to western liberal democracy. He was searching for “the ideal type of the bourgeois public sphere” which would be both a model and litmus test for modern democracies (Habermas, 1992, 422) and which would “mediate between society and state by holding the state accountable to society via public opinion” (N. Fraser, 1992, 112). However, his idealizing of the eighteenth century public sphere has not been without its critics who are quick to point out its shortcomings, both in terms of *legitimacy*, that is whether the bourgeois public sphere was truly representative, and *efficacy*, that is whether it was effective in overcoming systemic obstacles to influence political decision making (N. Fraser, 2007). Of particular relevance to this thesis are its exclusiveness based on class and gender, its lack of recognition of other competing public spheres and most significantly its failure to recognize a salient role for religion.¹³

Firstly, despite Habermas’ claims for universality, it is not clear that there was equal access to this public sphere for all citizens. It was a privileged group of bourgeois businessmen, artisans and academics who, according to Fraser, far from championing the cause of the disenfranchized, wanted to displace the aristocratic elite and to rule the plebeian strata themselves (1992, 114). The movement was essentially a “public sphere in the world of letters” (Habermas, 1989, 30) to

¹³ For a fuller discussion of all the various criticisms see Calhoun (1992a) which contains a collection of critical essays emerging from a seminal conference on Habermas and the public sphere in 1989.

which, almost by definition, only the educated could belong, effectively excluding the working classes. In other words the bourgeois public sphere "was oriented not just toward defence of civil society against the state but also toward the maintenance of a system of domination within civil society" (Calhoun, 1992b, 39). Such overt classism is clearly unwarranted for an ideal type of public sphere in a modern democracy. This sets a marker for our consideration of an Evangelical public sphere (henceforth EPS) around issues of Islam signalling that issues of class, education and race must all be considered.¹⁴

Secondly, the bourgeois public sphere was almost exclusively male, a point highlighted by feminist academics (N. Fraser, 1992, 114). This is a criticism now accepted by Habermas who later reflected that "the exclusion of women from this world dominated by men now looks different than it appeared to me at the time"(Habermas, 1992, 427). This is all the more remarkable as he was clearly aware of this gender exclusivity when in his original work he made specific reference to "abandoned women (who) waged a vigorous but vain struggle against the new institution" (Habermas, 1989, 33). Against a wider backdrop of the discourse on gender equality it will be necessary to investigate whether women have equal access to the EPS and if they do whether their involvement brings distinctive perspectives.

Thirdly, Habermas has been criticized for ignoring other public spheres which existed at the time in order to argue that the bourgeois public sphere was *the* universal public sphere. Fraser points out that not only were there competing public spheres centred around nationalists, peasants, elite women, and the working class but that the bourgeois public sphere also "deliberately sought to block broader participation" (N. Fraser, 1992, 116). Again this is a criticism which Habermas now accepts acknowledging that "it is wrong to speak of one single public" and admitting the existence of a parallel plebeian public sphere "interlocked" with the bourgeois public sphere (Habermas, 1992, 424). This for him, however, does not invalidate the concept of an ideal public sphere even if the likelihood of realizing a singular universal sphere is remote. Of course participants within the public sphere are sometimes themselves oblivious to the existence of other equally legitimate, sometimes competing, public spheres. A question to ask will be to what extent the EPS is aware

¹⁴ For the first use of the phrase "Evangelical Christian public sphere" see Ken Plummer, "The Square of Intimate Citizenship: Some Preliminary Proposals," *Citizenship Studies* 5.3 (2001), where the author suggests in passing that it is one possible example of "multiple, hierarchically layered and contested public spheres" (243).

and accepting of other religious public spheres. Historically the Evangelical church has been somewhat myopic and has failed to appreciate debates within Catholic and Orthodox communities let alone within other faith groups.

The final criticism to mention at this stage is rather more fundamental to this thesis and will be commented on at length later in this chapter. In his early work on the public sphere Habermas – a liberal, “methodological atheist” (Harrington, 2007)¹⁵ – entirely neglected the role of religion, which Calhoun calls “his blind spot” (1992b, 36). This is a position that Habermas has now publicly amended as will be seen in §3.3. It is the contention of this thesis that religion cannot be ignored in the formation of public opinion and that the existence of faith-based public spheres should be recognized and admitted to the wider public sphere.

2.4 THE RISE OF THE MEDIA, THE FALL OF THE BOURGEOIS PUBLIC SPHERE, AND NEW MODELS

For Habermas the bourgeois public sphere was short-lived and the second half of *The Structural Transformation* deals with its decline and fall. It is clearly a demise that Habermas himself regrets and Cohen and Arato feel that his assessment reflects his “negative philosophy of history” inherited from the Frankfurt School (1992, 242). This sense of loss pervades his thinking on modern democracy and the public sphere today which is but a “pale imitation of these (bourgeois) ideals” (Crossley and Roberts, 2004, 2).

Amongst the reasons Habermas gives for this decline were the blurring of the separation between the state and the public sphere, and the polarization of the private and public realms. In the former the state began to intervene in and “colonize” civil society, particularly as it became the provider of services and social security. This changed the attitude of individuals towards the state from that of participants to that of consumers and rendered them dependent, “unpolitical and indifferent” (Habermas, 1989, 211). In the latter case, as the “world of work” became a more public realm to be differentiated from “leisure time” which was private to the individual, opportunity for public debate was stifled as time was divided between the private family, personal leisure and public work (ibid 154).

¹⁵ See Harrington (2007) and Adams (2006) for a discussion of Habermas’ interaction with theology. (Harrington, 2007) (Adams, 2006)

Habermas' sharpest lament is kept for the rise of the mass media which have "transmogrified" the public sphere into nothing but a "pseudo-public or sham-private world of culture consumption" (Habermas, 1989, 160, 162). The newspapers, which started out as a means of disseminating information and opinion, became, in the nineteenth century, commercial interests concerned with profit and the agendas of their powerful owners. Even worse, mass media television and radio turned debate into entertainment and "critical publicity (was) supplanted by manipulative publicity" (ibid 178) as the media became a tool for state management of the politics "stage show" (Crossley and Roberts, 2004, 5). Such is the strength of Habermas' criticism of today's mass media that Goode accuses him of "technophobia" and a "logocentric antipathy towards the audio-visual media" (2005, 20). According to Habermas, however, this whole decline has served to turn :

"a culture-debating public into a culture-consuming public The sounding board of an educated stratum tutored in the public use of reason has been shattered; the public is split apart into minorities of specialists who put their reason to use nonpublicly and the great mass of consumers whose receptiveness is public but uncritical" (Habermas, 1989, 175).

Such antipathy has led to criticism that Habermas fails to take adequate account of the media in the public sphere today. For some such as Garnham, whilst Habermas' work is a good starting point for a consideration of the role of the media in a democracy, it is underdeveloped (Garnham, 1992). As Goode observes "it is necessary for any serious investigation of the public sphere to foreground the issue of mediation" {, 2005 #197@89}. At various stages, therefore, this thesis gives careful consideration to the role and influence of media, both Christian and mainstream, in influencing particularly the Evangelical grassroots.

Despite the above criticisms and Habermas' own pessimism about its political efficacy today, theorists persist in engaging with the concept of the public sphere as a tool for theorizing about democracy, in a belief that it still promises to "contribute to struggles for emancipation" and a fairer society (N. Fraser, 2007, 66). Not all of the many models developed can be described here, but those most pertinent to this thesis are set out below with the aim of creating an ideal type for the British EPS that has coalesced around the discussion of Islam and Muslims. In particular the work of Fraser introduces the concept of *multiple counterpublics* (1992) and the *transnational public sphere* (2007), and Eisenstadt (1999) proposes the concepts of both *multiple modernities*.

The concept of size and scope is further developed in the work of Keane (1998), which provides a measure for public spheres, and Hauser (1999), which describes the *catalyst* for a public sphere and highlights its *rhetorical* and *reticulate* nature. Finally, Warner (2005) helps to clarify the necessary elements and conditions for a public sphere.

2.4.A FRASER AND SUBALTERN COUNTERPUBLICS

In her critique of Habermas' single, elite bourgeois public sphere Fraser proposes a multiplicity of publics, not as a threat to democracy but rather as a positive benefit in establishing participatory parity between different groups (1992, 121-8). She terms these publics *subaltern counterpublics* and sees them as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (ibid 123). In a stratified society multiple publics ensure that marginal voices are not lost and indeed a multicultural society entails such multiplicity by definition. Nonetheless, at the same time there needs to be a larger public sphere that draws people together from different cultures for a reasoned debate on matters of universal concern.

In addition Fraser introduces two other pairs of descriptors both of which are useful. Firstly, public spheres may either be *weak* or *strong*. A weak sphere is one that has no decision or implementing power and is merely a forum for debate. Conversely a strong sphere is one which has a degree of self-governance, decision making power or influence with the state. Secondly, the terms *intrapublic* and *interpublic* distinguish between communication internal to a public sphere and communication between different public spheres respectively.

2.4.B EISENSTADT, MULTIPLE IDENTITIES AND THE NON-WESTERN WORLD

Habermas' failure to take into account developments in the non-western world has been seen as another major weakness of his work (Reetz, 2006, 16). Viewing the West as normative can lead to a restricted view of the public sphere and its relations to other realms. Eisenstadt (1999) points out that, whilst modernity has affected all societies, it has developed differently in each society under the various influences of existing institutions, culture, social movements and religion. This is certainly true of "the different configurations of civil society and public spheres" which have developed (ibid 291). In a later work Eisenstadt goes on to point out that these different public spheres should not be evaluated against a European "evaluative yardstick" (2002, 159). This is

particularly the case in the Muslim world where historically “a very vibrant and autonomous public sphere crystallized that was of crucial importance in shaping the dynamics of Muslim societies” (ibid 147) (§3.2). The important thing to note here is that not all public spheres are culturally alike, thus their interpublic interactions will be affected by their various contexts and worldviews. This is certainly the case in interaction between a mainly western EPS and a Muslim public sphere significantly influenced by Islamic values and historical models.

2.4.C FRASER – AGAIN – AND THE TRANSNATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERE

This global factor resurfaces in another way when we think about the “process of deterritorialization of public life” (Keane, 1998, 186). This is a concept that emerges in the discussion of globalization, migration, transnational solidarities and global identities and has profound implications for public sphere theory (see for example Benhabib et al., 2007). Fraser in her article *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere* (2007) points out that Habermas and all of his critics, including herself, had prior to the millennium seen the public sphere entirely within a Westphalian nation-state framework. However, transnationalization cannot be ignored and throws both the legitimacy and the efficacy of the public sphere into question. International media, the internet and migration all enable discursive interaction across national boundaries. A public sphere which transcends national boundaries will therefore include “interlocutors who do not constitute a *demos* or political citizenry” (ibid 54). In which case to whom does the public opinion belong and to whom is it addressed? Moreover, in what way can that public opinion ever be efficacious in a world where sovereign states are no longer independent of transnational institutions and are powerless to enact laws that can solve transnational problems? These are just some of the many questions Fraser raises and all of them point towards “yet another ‘structural transformation of the public sphere’” (ibid 54) in the light of the new global order.

The crucial point in this study is that religious public spheres in Britain are clearly not isolated from their global, transnational counterparts. As will be seen, key participants in Evangelical discussions on Islam may be resident on other continents; and this will also be true of Muslim public spheres where Muslims find their identity in the worldwide *umma*. So, although this thesis focuses on the United Kingdom, the transnational connectedness of these publics should not be forgotten.

2.4.D KEANE AND THE SIZE OF PUBLIC SPHERES

This line of thinking also raises the issue of scale. Just how big is a public sphere? It is clear from the earlier discussion that Habermas saw it as a large scale sphere, albeit made up of small groups meeting in coffee houses, which could accurately represent the public opinion of a whole nation. The discussion above of the transnational public sphere suggests that this is unduly confining. At the same time, however, once the rationale for subaltern counterpublics is accepted then there is no limit on how small a public can be. Indeed Hauser, maybe with a passing nod to Jesus' comment in Matthew 18.20, is happy to suggest that "a public sphere is created whenever two or more individuals converse about a public matter (as) some portion of the public sphere is made manifest in their conversation" (Hauser, 1999, 62, 64).

In order to better label the potential variation in size and scope of public spheres John Keane (1998) proposes a useful classification. He suggests:

Micro-public spheres - "bottom-up, small scale" public spheres consisting of maybe "dozens, hundreds or thousands" of people (ibid 170). This would seem to correspond most closely to the idea of an EPS in Britain.

Meso-public spheres - medium sized spheres that are "mainly coextensive with territorial boundaries" (ibid 174). They involve millions of people, often sharing a common language, interacting with the same media on a huge variety of topics of mutual concern leading Taylor to label this the "metatopical public sphere" (C. Taylor, 2007, 187). In this thesis *the* British public sphere is considered to be a metatopical meso-public sphere made up of many micro-public spheres and a host of media.

Macro-public spheres – transnational public spheres involving hundreds of millions of people regionally or globally which are a "consequence of the international concentration of mass media firms previously owned and operated at the territorial nation-state level" and also crucially the internet (ibid 176-181). However, to what extent this can be said to be a meaningful public sphere is unclear. Whilst media can clearly influence millions of people

simultaneously, for a public sphere to exist there has to be rational debate suggesting discursive interaction between participants in the sphere. It is not clear how this could happen on the macro scale. Nonetheless it is impossible to ignore such supranational influences.¹⁶

2.4.E HAUSER AND THE RHETORICAL RETICULATE PUBLIC SPHERE

Before moving to a working definition of a public sphere, it will be helpful to consider the work of Hauser in his *Vernacular Voices* (1999). He imagines a “montage of publics” (ibid 35) and his preliminary definition of a public sphere is “a discursive space in which individuals and groups associate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgement about them” (ibid 61). It is not confined to specialist language used within formal institutions but rather is the talk among a public's members, a “vernacular discourse” (ibid 109). He goes on to emphasize the rhetorical nature of the public sphere which focuses on particular issues about which participants may have conflicting interests. In other words public spheres coalesce around issues rather than around static groups of individuals (ibid 63). As will be seen this is certainly true of the EPS which has developed around the debate on Muslims and Islam in Britain.

Secondly, Hauser applies the term reticulate to the public sphere meaning that it is networked together as a “lattice of spheres” (1999, 55, see especially chapter 3). Reminiscent of Habermas’ use of the word “nodes” to describe the different sites of public discourse, Hauser’s public sphere has many “nested spheres” linked together at various nodes.

Each of these individualized, local associative spaces is potentially included in larger, more polyphonous exchanges. When the outcome is public opinion, what starts as a dialogue becomes part of the multilogue of voices along the range of individuals and groups engaged by a public question (Hauser, 1999, 62).

This model allows for a wealth of diversity and complexity in the overarching meso-public sphere, admitting the contributions of the maximum possible number of discursive communities, groups,

¹⁶ For a discussion of the role of the internet in the public sphere see Bohman (2004) and Ch.4 “Mediations: from the Coffee House to the Internet Café” in Goode (2005).

movements and circles whilst at the same time allowing the possibility that these various groups may also intersect and interact with one another. As Hauser puts it:

public opinions are imbedded in the ongoing dialogue in which classes, races, religions, genders, generations, regions, and a host of other significant discriminators rub against each other, problematize one another's assumptions about meaning, create discursive spaces in which new interpretations may emerge, and lead to intersections that provide collective expressions of shared sentiments (Hauser, 1999, 110).

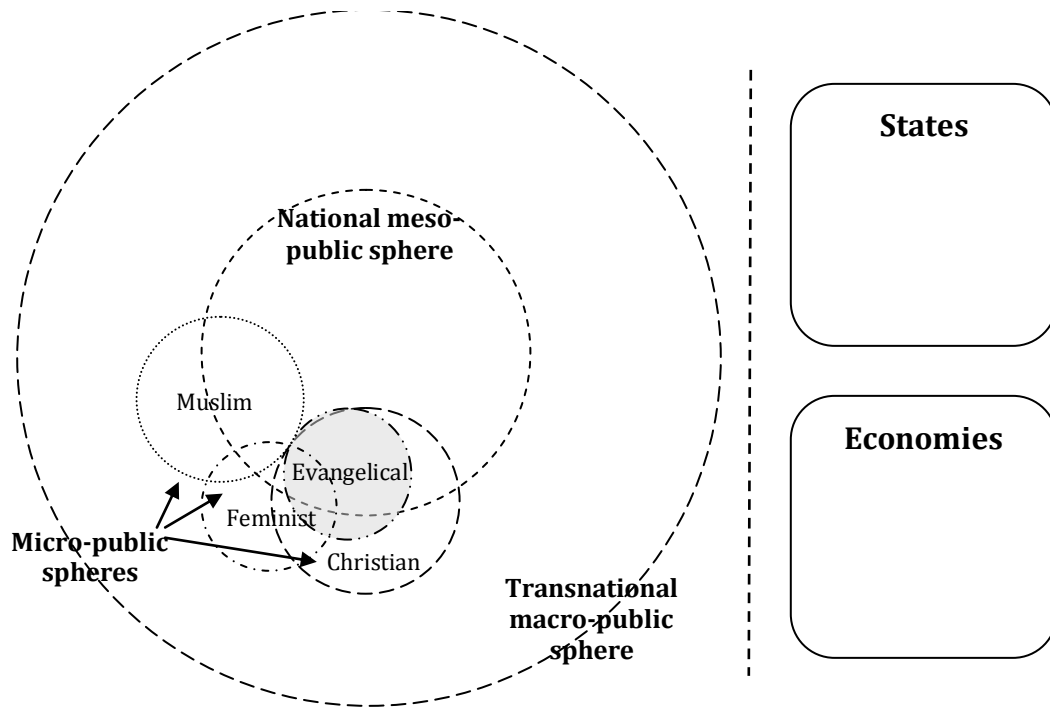
2.5 DEFINING A MICRO-PUBLIC SPHERE

Drawing on all of these models I now propose a working understanding of the public sphere for this thesis. It should be clear that there is a degree of ambiguity in talking about *the* public sphere with the definite article and that a more careful definition is required. It should also be clear that it is possible to talk about a multiplicity of micro-public spheres. So developing Hauser's definition this thesis will consider micro-public spheres to be:

public discursive spaces of variable size in which individuals and groups coalesce around matters of mutual interest or concern to form an opinion through rational debate, and which together are subordinate nodes of a larger network of public spheres notionally making up the meso-public sphere in a particular society or nation.

This is represented diagrammatically in Figure 2.2. It should be noted that some micro-public spheres will be subsets of other larger spheres. Such is the relationship between the Evangelical micro-public sphere and the larger Christian sphere. Other micro-public spheres, like the feminist and Christian spheres in the diagram, may overlap due to shared membership and interests. Others may not overlap but may be in contact with each other whilst having mutually exclusive memberships as do the Muslim and Christian spheres. Other spheres may have very little or no interaction at all. All of these spheres together create a reticulate national meso-public sphere and of course may also be part of larger transnational public spheres.

Figure 2.2 – Micro-, meso- and macro-public spheres



2.6 THE FORMATION OF MICRO-PUBLIC SPHERES

The work of Warner suggests that such an understanding of micro-public spheres may be a useful analytical tool for understanding the various debates taking place within communities:

publics are essentially intertextual, frameworks for understanding texts against an organized background of the circulation of other texts, all interwoven not just by citational references but by the incorporation of a reflexive circulatory field in the mode of address and consumption (Warner, 2005, 16).

Drawing on Warner's work and also that of Hauser I suggest that there are three critical elements for the creation of a micro-public sphere: an issue of common concern, texts and participants.

Firstly, the formation of a public sphere is contingent on the emergence of a topic or matter of public concern around which the participants coalesce with the purpose of influencing public opinion (Hauser, 1999, 64). This could be as local as a campaign to re-open a public footpath or as national as a law to ban fox hunting, but without such a catalyst the interlocutors in the sphere would never come together and would not constitute a public. However, this means that public spheres should be seen as evanescent, forming and dissolving as the context and issues change (Keane, 1998, 184).

Secondly, a public sphere is discursive and “comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation” (Warner, 2005, 66). This has been greatly facilitated by developments in modern media, and contemporary micro-public spheres utilize the full range of media from traditional publishing to web-based audio-visual. The circulation of texts, however, is not in itself sufficient to create a public sphere. It is the reflexive interaction with the texts and “the concatenation of texts through time” which facilitate the development of public opinion (Warner, 2005, 90). Language is also critical to the dissemination of texts. If the participants do not share a common language, then they have to utilize an international language, such as English, or allow for the facility of translation. Beyond this, however, the use of technical language can also be exclusive. Hauser, with no seeming hint of irony, observes that “institutional powers and epistemic elites often preempt the possibilities for vernacular exchange by substituting technical language as coin of the rhetorical realm” (1999, 78). He makes vernacular language a criterion for the existence of a public sphere.

Finally, a public sphere requires participants and an audience which is alert and active. Warner insists that to be truly public these should both be strangers and self-organized. There is no external coercion or framework bringing them together. To fulfill the requirement of publicness Hauser also observes that a public sphere should have “permeable boundaries” (Hauser, 1999, 77). Whilst it may have a primary membership, its discourse and opinions must also be accessible to the wider public. This creates the possibility that spheres can interact and even be interconnected.

By way of example Warner’s work focuses on public spheres which coalesce around issues of gender and transsexuality. Interestingly he also mentions examples of religious micro-public

spheres such as those that formed historically at the time of the Great Awakening in America and also more recently the debate generated around the *Promise Keepers* movement and Christian fundamentalism. It is this concept of a religious micro-public sphere that I use as the analytical framework for this thesis.

2.7 CONCLUSION

I have argued that, despite its detractors, Habermas' concept of the public sphere has continued validity, if not as a normative construct for the formation of public opinion in a democracy then at least as an analytical tool for observing the discourse amongst networks of individuals within society. Having clearly established the image of a micro-public sphere I now relate this to religious communities paying particular attention to the Christian and Muslim cases.

CHAPTER 3 RELIGION AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

In the previous chapter I noted that Habermas failed to take religion into account in his original conceptualizing of the public sphere. Contrary to many people's expectations, however, religion has re-emerged into western public consciousness at the beginning of the twenty-first century.¹⁷ Even Habermas himself has had to recognize this and include the religious factor in his thinking. In this chapter I locate the concept of the religious public sphere in both the Christian and Muslim historical narratives and return again to the thinking of Habermas and others as they reflect on the role of religion in a liberal democracy. The chapter concludes by looking at some pertinent themes for faith groups interacting in contemporary British society: multiculturalism, social capital, social cohesion, and the establishment of the Church of England.

3.1 THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Two questions are of importance in considering the history of Christianity, Islam and the public sphere. Firstly, *what was the general relationship between religion, state institutions and wider society in each era?* Secondly, *what evidence is there of early religious discursive public spheres?* McDonough (1995) suggests two dispositions for religion in society – “protesting” and “ordering” – as a simple typology which she applies to both Christian and Muslim histories. Protesting reflects a period of political weakness and struggle against injustice, whilst ordering represents a period when religion is in a position of power, creating structures and institutions. Of course these two conditions may exist at the same time for different expressions of the same religion and are obviously only ideal types. It should also be noted that there is a close correlation between these types and the contrast between what Casanova (following Weber) terms “religious communities” and “community cults” (Casanova, 1994, 45). In the former, membership of a religious community is voluntary and signifies some sort of conversion or “salvation” experience. It may well be costly in terms of increasing tension with the rest of society (see §4.2). In the latter a religious identity is closely associated with a political community and a person is unwittingly born into it. In fact leaving the community may well cause tension. The implications of these patterns with respect to

¹⁷ We could note, for example, the title of the controversial book *God is Back* (Micklethwait and Wooldridge, 2009).

Christianity and Islam are drawn out below in what is the briefest and most skeletal of accounts touching on only the most salient episodes of religious history.

3.1.A CHRISTIAN PROTEST: THE EARLY CHURCH

Both Christianity and Islam trace their roots back to a rationalizing Jewish monotheism (Berger, 1967). In its early days Judaism was a theocratic, and later monarchic, community cult in which religion was intensely public but left no room for public dissent, although occasionally individuals dared to speak a critical prophetic word.¹⁸ God's revealed law – as interpreted by scholars and jurists - was absolute. This is crucial background for both Muslims and some Christians in thinking about society and law today.

By the time of Jesus Judea was under Roman occupation and, whilst religion still played an important role in politics and public life, there was a double repression from hegemonic religious law and the occupying political power. Despite his very public ministry and charismatic leadership, Jesus ultimately refused the path of political power and submitted to the humiliation of crucifixion. Nonetheless, what Weber termed Jesus' "indifference" to the world (Weber, 1965, 273) was not a denial of any political aspect to God's kingdom, because seeking justice – a central theme of that kingdom – in itself has political implications. Rather it was a refusal to be co-opted or to impose God's kingdom on the world by political or military force.

Following Jesus' example the early church had no political power. The first three centuries were in McDonough's terms a time of protest. Small clandestine meetings in houses, arrests and often martyrdom were the order of the day. Their loyalty to King Jesus was seen as a threat to Caesar's empire. It was a religious community of salvation, very different to the earlier Jewish community cult. Yet in many ways these early Christians, despite their limited media options, created a micro-public sphere with their meetings, public witness and letter writing, which often dealt with political issues.¹⁹ Despite, or in fact because of, this protest and powerlessness many Evangelicals look back on this period as normative for their faith – an idea that Muslims often find strange.

¹⁸ See Brueggemann (2001) for a discussion of the conflict between the prophets and the royal court. (Brueggemann, 2001)

¹⁹ The epistles of Paul and Peter and the writings of the Early Fathers were widely circulated amongst the churches and gave instructions, for instance, about attitudes towards the authorities, obeying the law and suffering in time of persecution. The later Patristic writings of Tertullian, Justin, Irenaeus etc

3.1.B CHRISTIAN ORDER: THE RISE OF CHRISTENDOM

The fourth century saw a marked change in the public standing of Christianity under Constantine's reign leading to a shift to the ordering mode. The Christian "salvation religion" metamorphosed from being a "religious community" into being a "community cult" which was "adopted by the Roman Empire" (Casanova, 1994, 47). Christendom was to last for fifteen centuries (O'Donovan, 1996, 195) during which period the Christian church in its various manifestations became intertwined with the state, political and civil arenas in both the western and eastern parts of the empire. Popes crowned emperors, theologians influenced lawmakers and the church began to acquire wealth, land and buildings. Religious hegemony was established by the rule of law and, drawing much of its inspiration from the Jewish scriptures (Murray, 2004), Christianity became a religion of empire.

This did not go uncontested. Not all Christians welcomed the newfound temporal power of the church, and the history of Christendom is punctuated with the formation of dissenting religious communities protesting against lack of religious freedom, ecclesial corruption and perceived theological error.²⁰ Like the early Christians these groups often formed networks akin to micro-public spheres and were anathematized and persecuted for their pains, this time by the institutional church.

This history is significant today amongst British Evangelicals.²¹ There is fierce debate about which history is normative. Should the church be a prophetic community on the margins of society or should it be more akin to a community cult at the centre of political power? Should it demand special privilege due to history or should it expect to suffer? The answers to these questions have a significant bearing on how Christians react towards other faith groups and nowhere more so

often addressed emperors or other public figures and dealt with issues of religion in public life. See O'Donovan (1999).

²⁰ Donatists (C4th-C5th), Cathars (C11th-C12th), Waldensians (C12th-C16th), Anabaptists (C16th-) are just a few of the examples.

²¹ It should be noted that this is a Eurocentric narrative. From the time of the seventeenth century Puritan migration, Protestantism and Evangelicalism developed a rather different story in North America.

than in the encounter with Islam, which, as will be seen (§3.2), is a religious system tending towards the ordering mode.

3.1.C RETURN TO PROTEST: THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION AND DECLINE OF CHRISTENDOM

For many the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation marks the beginning of the decline of religion in Europe. Casanova calls it the “corrosive solvent” which “destroyed the system of Western Christendom” (1994, 21), as it undermined the monopolistic authority of the Roman Catholic Church in the West. The Christian reformers returned to a protesting mode, although it was now a protest against not only political power but also the ecclesial power of the institutionalized Roman Church. The reformers created a plurality of new denominations; people began to read the Bible for themselves; the recently invented printing press made possible the mass distribution of pamphlets; and a nascent Protestant public sphere emerged (Leth, 1994).²² Although sometimes suborned by the state for its own purposes (see for example Lake and Questier, 2000, 625), this public sphere has continued in various forms to the present day, remembering that most Evangelicals consider their roots to lie in the Protestant Reformation (§5.3). It has been concerned not only with theology and ecclesiology but also political and socio-economic goals, not least during the reforming work of Wilberforce and Shaftesbury in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

However, almost immediately following the Reformation, Europe descended into what are frequently referred to as the European Wars of Religion, although they had more to do with political power and the acquisition of territory than with religion itself (D'Costa, 2009, 76). Following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and the emergence of the “modern” nation-state, the writings of political theorists such as Hobbes, Locke and later Rousseau laid the foundations for tolerance and liberal democracy but also firmly subordinated religion and the church to the all-powerful state. Significantly transnational religious allegiances were challenged and Locke particularly questioned the loyalty of both Roman Catholics and “Mahometans” (Muslims) as they owed fealty to “another prince” and were in danger of becoming “soldiers against (their) own Government” (Locke, 1689). Although what came to be known as the Enlightenment was not a

²² See Ozment (1992) and also Brockmann (1998) who details the contents of 562 German Protestant pamphlets written during the conciliar affairs of the C16th. For a defence of the idea of a “post-Reformation public sphere” in England and a detailing of its trajectory during the Elizabethan period see Lake and Pincus (2006).

uniform process and was by no means always antithetical to religion, it was not just political thinkers that laid siege to the public role of faith; scientists too challenged the traditional teachings of the church.²³ By the time of Marx, Weber and Durkheim, secularization was believed to be the inevitable corollary of modernization and social science was anticipating – and at times seemingly celebrating – the increasing marginalization of religion. During the second half of the twentieth century, however, it became clear that such predictions had been premature. Religion had not disappeared, and indeed in places was flourishing, leading sociologists to seek an explanation.

Martin (1978), one of the first sociologists to challenge the secularization theory, links contemporary religious trends to the different historical patterns that emerged under the post-Reformation principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* (lit. whose realm, his religion). He observes that: Catholic monopolies were more prone to later radical secularism, such as French laïcité; Catholic-Protestant duopolies like Germany and the Netherlands developed a mixed pattern with Christian political parties; whilst pluralist nations like America enshrined a complete separation of church and state. Britain, however, developed only a partial separation with a Protestant “state church confronted by varieties of Protestant dissent and a Catholic form of dissidence” (Martin, 1978, 20). This state church is “allied to an elite culture” and dissenting groups are found “particularly amongst the ‘respectable’ working class” (ibid 117). These dissenting groups have today flourished into a large number of diverse denominations and sects and it is this complex religious heritage that forms the backdrop for the current interaction of Evangelicals and Muslims in Britain.

3.2 THE HISTORY OF ISLAM AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

3.2.A ISLAMIC ORDER: FROM MECCA TO MEDINA

Whilst there are some interesting points of comparison, Islam developed over a rather different trajectory to Christianity and exhibits some important differences. During his early ministry Muhammad lived in Mecca and experienced significant opposition particularly from the mercantile community, leading McDonough (1995) to label this as a period of protest. However, it was short-lived as in 622 AD (the year of *hijra*) Muhammad was invited to Yathrib (later called Medina) and

²³ See Sorkin (2008) for a discussion of different “Enlightenments” in various European contexts. (Sorkin, 2008)

there set up what was to become the first Islamic community. This very quickly became a time of political ordering with the writing of the *Constitution of Medina* and treaties with various Arab and Jewish tribes. This community continued after the death of Muhammad, under the leadership of the caliphs and Islam soon took on many of the characteristics of a community cult.²⁴ Within a hundred years Islam had conquered not just Arabia but the whole of the Middle East, North Africa and parts of Asia, and had entered on its *Golden Age* of political, intellectual and cultural success, which contrasted starkly with the so-called *Dark Ages* of Europe.

Whilst there is debate about whether the protesting or ordering period of history is normative for Christianity, Islam's rapid rise to power left little doubt as to its preferred mode.²⁵ It has also contributed to the widespread assumption that *din wa dawla* (religion and the state) are inseparable in Islam. For instance Gellner claims there is no church-state dualism in Islam because "it was the state from the start" (1992, 9 emphasis in original).²⁶ Whilst non-Muslims were tolerated as *dhimmis* dependent on them paying a poll tax,²⁷ the Muslim rulers were expected to implement the *shari'a* and those that rebelled or left Islam were viewed as *murtids* (apostates) and traitors to be punished by death.²⁸

However, whilst such political and religious control might be an aspiration for many Muslims, it has not always been the historical reality and often there has been a "de facto separation between the rulers and the religious establishment" (Eisenstadt, 2002, 150). Brown (2001) argues that Islam has normally been politically quietest and that the *'ulama* (religious teachers) have been largely

²⁴ Although it should be noted that outside of the Arabian Peninsula Jewish and Christian groups maintained their identities for a long time before in some cases being Islamized.

²⁵ Although note Taha's (1987) argument for the normativity of the Meccan period of Muhammad's ministry, a stance which cost him his life. Taha's disciple An-Na'im (2008) argues that the Qur'an says nothing about an Islamic state and believes that a secular state is preferable in Islam.

²⁶ The concept of *din wa dawla* has been particularly associated with the *Muslim Brotherhood*. Qutb wrote that "wherever an Islamic community exists which is a concrete example of the Divinely-ordained system of life, it has a God-given right to step forward and take control of the political authority so that it may establish the Divine system on earth" (Qutb, 1964, 76).

²⁷ A *dhimmi* was protected by the Muslim authorities in return for paying the *jizya* poll tax but did not have the right to build churches and had other restrictions on their property and freedom. See Rippin (2000, 96).

²⁸ Doi confirms that historically "the punishment by death in the case of apostacy has been unanimously agreed upon by all the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence" (Doi, 1984, 266). It should be noted, however, that this is an issue of contemporary debate within the Muslim community.

independent of the ruling elite. Of course Islam has also had its dissenting movements,²⁹ which occasionally formed religious communities within the larger community, although not on the scale seen within Christianity. Some authors have detected in such discord the beginnings of a Muslim public sphere. For instance, the *mihna* (inquisition) and rebellion against the Caliph, Al-Ma'mun, of the ninth century is an example of public opinion prevailing and forcing the ruler to change his mind (Hurvitz, 2002).

3.2.B RETURN TO PROTEST: THE DECLINE OF ISLAM

After its Golden Age, Islam went into a period of decline that reached its nadir in the nineteenth century with the encroachment of European colonialism. The Mughal Empire was displaced by Britain and the Ottoman Empire was eaten away as Muslim lands came under European influence. As Islam entered an unfamiliar period of powerlessness and protest the nascent Muslim public sphere expanded. For instance, Kirli (2004) traces the formation of public opinion in the illiterate culture of nineteenth century Ottoman coffeehouses; Frierson (2004) looks at the rise of printed material for the masses in the same period; and Van der Veer (2004) examines the religious public sphere that was formed in opposition to the colonial power in India.³⁰ The colonial period created a deep sense of confusion, loss and injustice that did not necessarily end with post-war independence from the European powers. Even today there is a sense of struggle and protest against western hegemony which exhibits itself most acerbically in various forms of Islamist political extremism. These frequently highlight the controversial concept of *jihad* (§9.4.b). There are Islamists today who see *jihad* as the obligation on Muslims to strive against – violently if necessary - both the West and the regimes which they deem to be un-Islamic in the Muslim world.³¹

With the increase in global political tensions, which partially arise from this history, a number of social scientists have turned to the concept of the Muslim public sphere hoping to assuage fears of the incompatibility of Islam with pluralism and liberal democracy. Several volumes have been

²⁹ The *Kharijites* were the earliest example and are often imitated by contemporary reactionary movements.

³⁰ All these articles were published in Salvatore and Eickelman (2004) (Salvatore and Eickelman, 2004)

³¹ See for instance Ch. 4 'Jihad in the cause of *Allah*' in Qutb (1964).

published outlining both the historical and contemporary existence of a Muslim public sphere.³² Whilst the pluralism of modernity represents a challenge for Islam (Esposito, 2003, 94), the work of Hefner (2005) amongst others finds no inherent contradiction between Islam and democracy. Lynch, however, warns that “the popularization of the public sphere does not inevitably translate into liberal pluralism” (2005, 236).

The concept of the Muslim public sphere will be picked up again below (§6.3), but it is interesting to note that so far there has been no parallel interest in a Christian public sphere as distinct from the general western liberal democratic public sphere. Apart from the brief references to the Protestant and post-Reformation public spheres cited above, there seems to be little interest in research into any other religious public sphere. Presumably this is due to the less political nature of most Christianity and a relative lack of concern about likely extremist or anti-democratic threats. I hope that this thesis will in some small way contribute to an awareness of a Christian public sphere that is distinct from and often in opposition to the western liberal public sphere.

3.3 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Today both Christianity and Islam are increasingly in the public spotlight and both form public spheres consisting of many micro-public spheres. Casanova traces this “re-entry” of religion into the public sphere to the various international upheavals of the 1980s which resulted in what he terms “the ‘deprivatization’ of religion in the modern world” by which he means that “religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal status which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularization had reserved for them” (1994, 5). In similar vein Berger believes that it is particularly the “reactive counter-formations” of both Islam and Evangelical Christianity, especially in its Pentecostal form, which are contesting the secularizing tendencies of modernity (1992, 33). These movements are especially prevalent in parts of the world where religion was never in fact privatized in the first place, suggesting that “re-publicization” may be a better term than deprivatization (Herbert and Fras, 2009). Whatever term one uses, religion is visibly back in the public domain.

³² See Salvatore and LeVine (2005), Hoexter, Eisenstadt and Levtzion (2002) and Eickelman and Anderson (1999) (Salvatore and LeVine, 2005) (Hoexter, Eisenstadt and Levtzion, 2002) (Eickelman and Anderson, 1999)

However one explains the trends in religious data, it is necessary to consider how liberal democratic states react to this shift. In this respect one of the most influential political theorists of recent years has been John Rawls, whose views recently have been challenged somewhat surprisingly by Habermas, who has had a change of mind with respect to religion in the public sphere.

3.3.A RAWLS, HABERMAS AND RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

As noted earlier, Habermas' early work ignored the role of religion in the public sphere, which reflected his secular approach to political philosophy. However, as Harrington notes, his more recent work "offers a considerably more sympathetic engagement with the arguments of theologians and, at least on the surface, a dramatic self-distancing from his earlier secularist advocacy" (2007, 45). For example, in a post-9/11 lecture on embryology, religion was a major theme. He suggested that secularization should not be regarded as being "a kind of zero-sum game between the capitalistically unfettered productive forces of science and technology on the one hand, and the conservative forces of religion and the Church on the other"(Habermas, 2001).

In 2004 Habermas engaged in a public discussion with the then Cardinal Ratzinger in which he stated his view that:

the neutrality of state power vis-à-vis different worldviews, which guarantees equal individual liberties for all citizens, is incompatible with the political generalization of a secularized worldview. Secular citizens, in their role as citizens, may neither deny that religious worldviews are in principle capable of truth nor question the right of their devout fellow-citizens to couch their contributions to public discussions in religious language (Habermas, 2008).

This nuanced approach was developed in his much-quoted article on *Religion in the Public Sphere* (Habermas, 2006)³³ in which he responded to Rawls' political theory of religion. Rawls (1973) had developed a comprehensive liberal doctrine based on fairness, which he presumed would be embraced by all members of society. His later work (1993) acknowledged that this kind of society was impossible and introduced his pragmatic concept of *public reason* which was an outworking of

³³ Note that this article along with his comments to Ratzinger appeared in *Zwischen Naturalismus und Religion* (2005) the English translation of which was published as *Between Naturalism and Religion* (2008) – a rather heterogeneous collection of several of his recent essays.

what he called a citizen's *duty of civility* (1997), that is the duty, particularly of those in public life, to explain the reasons for their political positions including those inspired by their religious convictions. According to Rawls, these reasons have to be couched in a way accessible to all and so religious language is necessarily excluded. Religious communities may hold their own comprehensive doctrines of truth, but only as "long as those doctrines are consistent with a democratic polity" (1997, 807), and they "translate" all their public communication into non-religious language.

Habermas accepts much of Rawls' thinking on the use of public reason but suggests that requiring faith communities to translate all their communication places an unfair burden on them that might exclude them from the political process – an undesirable outcome. He feels that a liberal democracy *needs* the input of, not just one but, multiple religious voices. Indeed they may contain "key resources", "moral intuitions" and even "possible truth content" which could benefit the whole community (2006). This includes the debates in the many different religious micro-public spheres. Habermas fears that Rawls is in danger of setting the bar too high and losing these benefits and so places a burden of reasonableness on secular citizens too if they are to avoid "a narrow secularist consciousness" and presumably the zero-sum game mentioned above:

the insight by secular citizens that they live in a post-secular society that is epistemically adjusted to the continued existence of religious communities first requires a change in mentality that is no less cognitively exacting than the adaptation of religious awareness to the challenges of an ever more secularized environment. the secular citizens must grasp their conflict with religious opinions as a reasonably expected disagreement (Habermas, 2006, 15).

This adjustment needs to lead to "complementary learning". Both sides need to be prepared to listen and learn from each other, which requires the willingness of not just religious citizens to adjust and translate for a secular audience, but also the willingness of secular minded citizens to admit that their doctrine too may not be as comprehensive as they thought it was.

Habermas, however, does draw a strict separation between the informal public sphere and the institutionalized proceedings of the state. He insists on an "institutional threshold" beyond which no religious language is permitted to pass and even suggests that religious statements in a parliament should be "expunged from the minutes" if they have not been "translated" in the "pre-parliamentarian domain" (2006, 10).

3.3.B CRITIQUES OF HABERMAS

Is this fair, however? Why should religious language be barred at the institutional threshold? Trigg points out "an institutional threshold barring religion privileges the non-religious (and anti-religious) over the religious" (2007, 42). If Habermas insists that we live in a post-secular society in which secularists should accept that religious opinions may contain ideas that are at least worth considering, then why should the state not also benefit?

Trigg feels that "religious voices must be heard in the public life of every country" (2007, 236). This is not just so that society can benefit from any available intrinsic truth but because it is also better for religion to be out in the open. "Suggesting that reasons grounded in religion should not be advanced on the public stage merely protects religion, and the public behaviour inevitably flowing from it, from public scrutiny and rational debate" (Trigg, 2007, 235). In other words religious voices need to be included in public debate in order to prevent the darker side of religions from developing unchallenged. As will be seen, this is a point made forcibly by some within the EPS concerning Islam.

Other academics are also open to a re-evaluation of the role of religion in public life. Martin, for instance, sees religion – or at least Christianity - as being "a mode of rational thinking" and therefore admissible in the political arena (2008, 167). He argues for "openness to the transcendent rather than dogmatic closure" (ibid 173). Casanova has also identified a shift in his own stance. Whilst his preference is still to restrict religion to the public sphere within civil society, he is no longer certain that "the secular separation of religion from political society or even from the state are universalizable maxims" particularly when one considers the lack of democratic values in some totalitarian secular states (Casanova, 2006, 21).

3.4 SOME TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY THEMES

In the British context these discussions are brought into sharp focus in three contemporary debates: the first surrounds multiculturalism; the second social capital and community cohesion; and the third the establishment of the Church of England. Each debate has a vast literature and

only the briefest survey can be given here, with the aim of providing a context for the discussion of religious public spheres and the more detailed data that will subsequently be presented.

3.4.A MULTICULTURALISM

Following the postwar immigration of large numbers of workers from Afro-Caribbean and Asian backgrounds, Britain began to pursue an official policy of multiculturalism as opposed to French-style assimilation. In 1966 Roy Jenkins, the then Labour Home Secretary, defined the British government policy on integration as “not a flattening process of assimilation but (as) equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance” (Sivanandan, 2006). The term coined to describe this policy was *multiculturalism*, which Modood defines as “the political accommodation of minorities formed by immigration to western countries from outside the prosperous west” (2007, 5). Whilst it has developed in a liberal democratic context, however, there is no consensus amongst either academics or politicians about how the various theories surrounding multiculturalism should be translated into practice. Indeed more than 40 years later it is by no means obvious that this process has been successful. Recent debate suggests that politicians are still struggling to determine exactly what constitutes being British. Do new arrivals have to conform to any standards? Is there a test of Britishness?³⁴ The answers to such questions are clearly of major importance when considering Christian-Muslim relations in the UK.

Early debates about immigration centred largely around the issue of race which, together with gender and sexuality, became part of the more general “rights discourse” built on the earlier socialist discourse about class. Little thought was given, however, to the issue of religion amongst minority communities (Modood, 2008, 87). Whilst multiculturalism has major ramifications for law, social planning, education and a host of other issues, it is the emergence of religion as a significant factor which is of interest here as it has brought multiculturalism into sharp conflict with liberalism.

³⁴ See <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/2007/10/insearchofbritishvalues1> for an example of a public discussion about the nature of ‘British values’. Note also the appearance of then prime minister Gordon Brown on BBC Newsnight, *Brown seeks out ‘British values’*, broadcast 14 March 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/4347369.stm> (accessed 5 April 2011).

Opinions on the nature and desirability of multiculturalism as well as the place of religion within it vary greatly. There are those who oppose taking any account of religion in society. In this respect Joppke highlights the “retreat of multiculturalism”, attributing it to a lack of public support, the shortcomings of public policies that have failed to address socio-economic marginalization, and a new liberal assertiveness (Joppke, 2004). Perhaps this liberal assertiveness manifests itself in its most extreme form in the advertisements placed on the side of buses by the *British Humanist Association* (Butt, 2008) and a string of popular books by Dawkins (2006), Harris (2006) and Hitchens (2007) which “preach” a form of fundamentalist atheism. Casanova points out that this sort of secular reaction to the re-emergence of religion in the public sphere illustrates that not just Christianity or even Islam but “religiousness itself” has become “the Other of European secularity” and gives some credence to Furbey’s suggestion that there may be “a capacity for oppression in a secular liberal public realm” - despite all its talk of liberty (Furbey, 2009).

Then there are those who are not against religion as such but are strongly critical of multiculturalism on the grounds that it compromises liberal democratic principles. For instance, Barry is concerned that the term tends to conflate its descriptive and prescriptive modes and results in inconsistent policy decisions based on special pleading and exemptions for some minorities but not others (2001). Whilst he is not entirely negative about Christianity, he is particularly suspicious of Islam and points out that “no polity with a Muslim majority has ever given rise to a stable liberal democratic state” and even Turkey’s failing attempt required a “cultural revolution” away from Islam (ibid 27).

Others support limited accommodation of religion within multiculturalism. Kymlicka, for example, who has been a prominent theorist of multiculturalism and minority rights, advocates recognition for minorities and encourages their participation in politics and public life. However, he sees religion as a personal choice and so only advocates limited provision and exemption for faith communities (Kymlicka, 1995). He also sees the restrictions on non-Muslim proselytism and apostasy in the Muslim world as antithetical to the development of liberal society (Kymlicka, 1995, 82).

This position has been criticized by Modood (2007) who accuses Kymlicka of “secularist bias” and not treating religion seriously enough. To be neutral or even “difference blind” is not enough

(2007, 84). Modood wants respect and inclusion for religion. He too observes a recent retreat from multiculturalism in Britain exacerbated by concerns over the integration of Muslims into British society following 9/11 and 7/7. Rather than a retreat, he advocates “the inclusion of Islam as an organized religion and of Muslim identity as a public identity necessary to integrate Muslims and to pursue religious equality”. This emphasis on Muslim concerns within the multicultural debate is a feature of Modood’s work and despite the generic titles much of his recent work could be seen as advocacy for Islam in public life (Modood, 2007, Levey and Modood, 2008).

The issues surrounding multiculturalism are clearly of concern to both the Evangelical and Muslim communities. Muslims are keen for official recognition and inclusion in the political process. For some Evangelicals, however, there is a double sense of threat. Not only is there the direct menace they perceive from Islam but also the backlash against all religion from secular elements in society – often fuelled by the visible presence of Islam.

3.4.B FAITH COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND COHESION

The challenges of multicultural pluralism raise questions about community cohesion in Britain today in which religion plays a key role. Putnam’s (2000) influential work on social capital highlights the key role that faith communities, alongside other voluntary organizations, play in building democratic societies. Three types of social capital, which may be defined as “a collective asset made up of social networks based on shared norms and trust and mutuality” (Gilchrist, 2004), are commonly distinguished: bonding, bridging and linking (Furbey et al., 2006). *Bonding capital* consists of intra-communal relationships and is what holds the group together. All groups need this but there is also always the danger of isolationism and an inward turn that leads to a less than civil outcome for wider society (Hefner, 2005). *Bridging capital* is formed by horizontal relationships external to the group, especially where interests overlap with the interests of other groups. This may take some form of dialogue, co-operation or even co-belligerence. Finally *linking capital* consists of vertical relationships “with those of a different ‘knowledge’ and other resources, including government” (Furbey et al., 2006, 7).

With the increased profile of religion in public life, the government has shown a new concern to harness the social capital within faith communities and to involve them in programmes designed

to build community cohesion. The Home Office now has a *Cohesion and Faiths Unit*³⁵; reports are commissioned³⁶; funds and grants are made available³⁷; and consultation groups are formed.³⁸

Community and faith voluntary organizations are regarded as often playing a crucial role in fostering community cohesion and initiating and delivering effective work” not least because “faith organizations are also ideally placed to tackle cohesion since they have usually an existing leadership structure that can be used, as well as a membership that is already engaged (Ipsos-MORI, 2007, 49-50).

Government departments are even encouraged to “pursue ‘faith literacy’ and participate in internal faith awareness training” (Home Office Faith Communities Unit, 2004, 1).

Bretherton, however, counsels caution and suggests that the church should “exercise a degree of scepticism about how open the state is to becoming religiously literate” as it may be “simply another chapter in the subversion of the church by the state” (Bretherton, 2006b, 390). In particular he worries that “receiving money from the state forces the church to mimic the state in its forms and practices” (ibid 389).

3.4.C THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

This renewed interest of government in the church and faith groups raises the question of exactly what the relationship between state and church should be. In 1994 Prince Charles controversially acknowledged the plural nature of religion in Britain when he claimed that at his coronation he wanted to be known as the “Defender of Faith” rather than the “Defender of the Faith” as the sovereign has been known since the reign of Henry VIII (Hoggart, 1994). In this way he would move away from seeing Britain as a Christian nation and would promise to defend all religions

³⁵ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/racecohesionfaith> (accessed 9 October 2008).

³⁶ e.g. The *Commission on Integration and Cohesion* report “Our Shared Future” (2007); the *Home Office Faith Communities Unit* working paper “Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities” (2004); and the *Department for Communities and Local Government* report “What Works in Community Cohesion?” (2007).

³⁷ e.g. The *Community Development Foundation’s* Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, http://www.cdf.org.uk/POOLED/articles/bf_techart/view.asp?Q=bf_techart_176308 (accessed 9 October 2008).

³⁸ The *Faith Communities Consultative Council* (FCCC) which replaced the *Inner Cities Religious Council* in 2004; see also the government’s controversial 2006 launch of the Sufi Muslim Council <http://www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/sufi-muslim-council> (accessed 9 October 2008).

equally. This, amongst other issues has caused heated debate. Is it appropriate for there to be an established church in England at all in a plural society? Should faith groups receive financial support from the state? To what extent should laws be influenced by religious belief – past and present – and to what degree should religious groups be exempt from certain laws? The following paragraphs capture the salient points of this debate.

As Trigg points out:

it is very difficult to disentangle the religious heritage of the country from the rest of its history. The repudiation of one can involve the repudiation of the other. Issues about the position of the Church of England can then become bound up with questions about the identity of the English (Trigg, 2007, 21).

The debate is complex and does not fall into neat categories of those who favour continued establishment and those who favour disestablishment. Arguments for and against are presented both on ideological and pragmatic grounds and Figure 3.1 presents a simplified typology of positions with regard to state-church relations taking these factors into account.³⁹

Figure 3.1 – Views on church-state relationship

		Preferred Church-State relationship	
		Establishment	Disestablishment
Motivation	Ideology	<i>Ideological Establishmentarian</i> “This is a ‘Christian country’ and should remain so”	<i>Ideological Disestablishmentarian</i> “What does the church have to do with the state?”
	Pragmatism	<i>Pragmatic Establishmentarian</i> “If it ain’t broke It’s better than established secularism”	<i>Pragmatic Disestablishmentarian</i> “If it is disadvantaging anyone ...”

Ideological establishmentarians include those who believe that in some way Britain is a “Christian country” and should remain so. Some maintain this on theological grounds, others on historical grounds. For instance Birnie, talking about Christian “defeatism”, feels that “the alternative to

³⁹ I have adapted this typology from one developed for the American situation by Jelen and Wilcox (1997). (Jelen and Wilcox, 1997)

Christian triumphalism is often the triumph of atheism” and advocates the retention of laws based on Old Testament principles (2000). Clearly many Evangelicals would share this position although some would moderate it somewhat. For instance, O’Donovan sees it as the result of “successful mission” but is concerned that a proper dialectic is maintained between church and state (Bretherton, 2006b, 388).

Others, however, would not see Britain as a “Christian country” and could be described as being *ideological disestablishmentarians*. These Christians would echo the cry of the North African schismatic bishop Donatus in the fourth century who exclaimed, “*quid est imperatori cum ecclesia?*” (what has the emperor to do with the church? - reported by Optatus in, *Against the Donatists* 3.3). Some non-conformists, particularly those in the Anabaptist tradition such as Murray (2004), would still hold this view very strongly. This is not at all because they do not see that Christianity has a public role but because they believe that role should be performed from the margins of society and not from a privileged position of power. Ironically they would be joined in this by ideological secularists of the *laïque* tradition who do not see that religion has a public role at all but then go further and want not just to decouple church and state but also to eradicate religion from the public realm altogether (see for instance A. Phillips, 1997).

Pragmatic disestablishmentarians would favour the removal of privilege from a “tyrannical majority” where minority rights were at risk (Casanova, 2006). For some of these there is a sense of the inevitable. Fergusson (2004) reflects a resigned acceptance that Britain is in the “twilight of establishment”. There are dangers in both directions. “The danger of assimilation is the loss of Evangelical and Catholic identity whereas the danger of withdrawal is the absence of any contribution to the common good” (ibid 194). However, “ecclesiologically, (the church’s) future resides in recognizing the primacy of voluntary, congregational and gathered communities” rather than the privileges of establishment (ibid).

The final group are *pragmatic establishmentarians*. These include many Christians who feel that there is more to lose than there is to gain by disestablishment. Hastings sees establishment as preserving a “healthy dualism” where the state is not totally supreme, and humorously observes that “establishment seems to be little more than retaining a chair upon which to stand as one tries to shout from the edge of the crowd. It would be silly to throw it away” (Hastings, 1997, 41).

Trigg also sounds a note of caution pointing out that it would be "dangerous to depart from centuries of tradition, because of current fashion" (Trigg, 2007, 26). Interestingly, this is the view of many multiculturalists and those from other faith communities who see the *Church of England* in some way as the guarantor of a religious space in the public arena and on occasion as a champion of minority rights. Parekh, who has been an influential advocate of multiculturalism in Britain, supports this view and wants to "both accept the privileged status of Christianity and to give public recognition to other religions" (Parekh, 1997, 20). There is a fear that disestablishment would lead to "the establishment of the secular which prohibits the intrusion of religious convictions in public debate" (Fergusson, 2004, 187). For this reason, according to Rosser-Owen most Muslims support continued establishment although they do want the *Church of England* to speak out more strongly on Muslim issues and to "rethink the traditional attitude (of the church) towards Islam and the Prophet Muhammad" (Rosser-Owen, 1997, 87).

3.5 CONCLUSION

It should be clear that Christianity and Islam have gone through different although not entirely dissimilar processes with regard to their insertion into public life and their formation of public spheres. And in both cases it is not possible for western societies, policy makers or the academics who inform them to ignore the role of religion in the twenty-first century. However, both faith communities are facing significant challenges in making their voices heard. In many Muslim majority nations civil society is not developed enough to host public debate of sensitive issues and the public sphere is at times suppressed. On the other hand in the West, despite the greater freedom of expression, some Muslim groups still feel marginalized and discriminated against. Yet in those same western nations many Christians feel that their opinion too is either unwelcome or ignored. And as will be seen, a few even perceive that certain Muslim voices are heard more loudly in public life than Christian voices. What implications does this have for the ongoing strength of both groups? Are Christians and Muslim indeed in competition with one another? Or are they in fact together in competition against an increasingly secularized society? The interaction of such faith groups is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 THE PUBLIC INTERACTION OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS

The collisions of faiths, or the collisions of peoples of faith, are among the most threatening conflicts around the world in the new millennium. They grow more ominous and even lethal every season. Lulled as many in the West are when their neighbours and fellow citizens appear to be religiously indifferent and genially tolerant, they overlook trends that threaten the fabric of serene life everywhere (Marty, 2005, 1).

This ominous warning reflects the particular perplexity that many in the West, not least Evangelicals, feel as they consider the presence of Islam in public life. Many see it as a development of historic proportions and Lewis, for instance, believes that "the new Muslim presence in Britain and western Europe is, arguably, the most significant religious development since the Reformation". He goes on to say that "how we learn to co-exist creatively should be a national concern" (Lewis, 2001a, 1042).

Chapters 2 and 3 developed the idea of a religious micro-public sphere as the dominant theoretical framework for this thesis. The present chapter provides additional theoretical insights into the interaction between religious groups in general and Evangelicals and Muslims in particular. In this way it forms a bridge to the discussion in Part II which describes more fully these two faith groups and their encounter in the British context.

Before proceeding, however, a brief explanation of Evangelicalism is needed. Whilst a more complete definition is developed in §5.1, suffice to say at this stage that Evangelical Christians are "gospel people" (Guinness, 2010) who distinguish themselves from nominal or cultural Christians by the degree of their commitment and belief.⁴⁰ They are neither a specific sect nor a denomination but, according to Bebbington (1989), are voluntarists and activists found within many different Christian traditions. Although present in Europe and particularly in Britain, they are arguably at their most visible in the North American context, where a significant body of sociological research has focused on them (see for instance Hunter (1987), Noll (2000) and Smith (1998, 2002)). For that reason much of the theory and research in this chapter emanates from the USA. Less sociological work has been done in Britain (see Guest (2007)), although some have written on British Evangelicals from a theological or historical perspective (see Tidball (1994),

⁴⁰ See Brierley (2000, 13) for a discussion of nominality.

McGrath (1994), Bebbington (1989, 2009). Whilst the American literature is of great interest, care must be taken in applying it to the British context as made clear throughout Part II.

This chapter begins by exploring how religious groups form and maintain their identity and strength. Some of the major themes in the sociology of religion are then discussed in order to throw light on the encounter between groups of different faiths (and none). The chapter closes by outlining a number of typologies that have been developed to describe such encounters. Whilst such typologies are generic to interfaith relations, specific links will be made to the Evangelical-Muslim encounter although application to the British context is deferred until Part II.

4.1 RELIGIOUS IDENTITY FORMATION

4.1.A THE SOCIAL IMAGINARY: A COMMON NARRATIVE

Hunter suggests that it is theology that lies at the heart of the Evangelical identity (1987, 158). This theology creates a shared epistemology which is akin to what Bourdieu calls a “habitus” or what Taylor calls a “social imaginary”. A habitus is “embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history” but which “produces individual and collective practices” (Bourdieu, 1999, 56, 54). It shapes the way people “imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations”(C. Taylor, 2007, 171). It is carried in symbols and stories and is shared by large groups of people, sometimes even the whole society. So how do Evangelicals imagine the world? What is the shared historical narrative that shapes their community?

For an Evangelical there is a transcendent God who has created both the natural universe and also a supernatural realm, and who has chosen to reveal himself to mankind both through creation but more specifically through his own incarnation. This event which climaxed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is *the* normative event of history which is attested to by the written scriptures and by the church of faithful believers throughout history.

Evangelicals hold that to become such a believer requires a specific voluntary act of conversion involving confession and commitment, and that it is these believers, indwelt and empowered by God's Holy Spirit, who together form the "body of Christ" on earth. Those outside this body are "lost" and need to be "saved" which is the mission of the church as it passes on the "good news". This is Evangelical orthodoxy which claims to be ultimate truth (Hunter, 1987). Beyond this broad metanarrative, however, Evangelicals differ greatly in their particular doctrines and praxis (§5.1), as do Muslims who also have their own historically rooted social imaginary.

4.1.B THE SACRED UMBRELLA: A SHARED WORLDVIEW

This social imaginary creates what sociologists refer to as a "plausibility structure". Durkheim's classic definition of religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices ... that unite its adherents in a single moral community called a church" stresses the significance of religion for social groups (Durkheim, 2001, 46). In pre-modern societies these sorts of beliefs were often held in common by whole communities and formed what Berger called a "sacred canopy" (1967) protecting the whole of society from chaos and unbelief. The rise of pluralism and liberal democracy, however, is seen to have eroded this canopy rendering it less universal, at least in Europe, thus contributing to the process of secularization.

This European secularization may, however, be the exception rather than the rule (Davie, 2002). Clearly religion has not disappeared. In Muslim societies the canopy is more intact than in most western societies and still tends to bind society together in shared belief and practice, although even in majority Muslim societies it is becoming increasingly vulnerable to pluralism. In western societies whilst the canopy may not be as wide as it used to be, different religious groups, including Evangelicals, still find shelter under what Smith aptly calls their own "sacred umbrella". Umbrellas after all are small and portable "like the faith-sustaining religious worlds that modern people construct for themselves" (C. Smith, 1998, 106). They are easy to construct and move around, and new sects "create their own plausibility structures" (A. Walker, 1996, 192). Anyone who wants to start a new church can "put up an umbrella". Muslims also have their sacred umbrellas, although for many of them this is a newer and stranger phenomenon, especially for those used to a larger sacred canopy in their country of origin. This is a source of great tension for Muslims in diaspora today.

For Evangelicals a social imaginary such as that described above leads to the formation of what Woodhead and Heelas call “congregations of difference” – as opposed to “congregations of humanity”. That is in their worldview they stress “the difference between God and humanity, creator and creation, and the necessary subordination of the latter to the former” (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005, 17). The Gospel message provides a bridge across this gulf and God’s will, as revealed in sacred scripture, forms an external source of authority by which group membership and behaviour can be regulated. Evangelicals come together around a shared belief in, and dependence on, this external authority.

For some, however, there is more than just the authority of a written text. Charismatic Evangelicals form “congregations of experiential difference” meaning that whilst still maintaining the same stress on the difference between the human and the divine they “believe that God can enter directly into subjective experience as the Holy Spirit” (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005, 19). This seemingly subjective experience can often be considered as “guidance” and be authoritative in a believer’s life. The shared experience of such divine encounter then binds believers together into the family of the congregation.

Both of these types “make a powerful appeal to people who feel their lives are not working, by offering to heal their brokenness and restore joy, contentment, calm, hope and security in the Lord” (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005, 19). In other words Evangelicals are offering certainty to people amidst the confusion and uncertainty of modernity. As Guest puts it, drawing on the work of Bauman, they are offering safety from disintegrating boundaries and anomie (Guest, 2007, 6). They claim to make sense of the world and offer hope and a pattern to live by.

This shared ideology and experience is the basis of what Soper calls the “social movement theory” of group formation. Sociologically it is “the shared religious and cultural beliefs” of Evangelicals that provide cohesion for the movement (Soper, 1994, 2). This ideology can transcend boundaries of denomination, class and race and provide the glue to enable Evangelicals to define themselves, identify one another and at times to cooperate together, although as Soper points out political action has been rather more successful in America than it has in Britain (see Lindsay, 2007, for an American account). All of this is quite in keeping with the role played by Berger’s original “canopy”, even if it is now rather altered in nature.

4.1.C THE RELIGIOUS TRIBE: A SECURE BOUNDARY

The social imaginary also provides a sense of security by drawing boundaries between the group and the world outside. As the group shelters under its “umbrella” it must quickly become aware that there are others who are not under its umbrella but are under quite different forms of canopies. Thus these “umbrellas” also describe the boundaries which religious groups draw between one another. Such boundaries keep the faithful within and the Other without. In that sense they are like the geographical boundaries drawn by a tribe marking out its territory. Straying outside of the boundaries is unwise and potentially dangerous as it may involve an encounter with the members of other tribes who may be hostile. In their turn trespassers are likely to be challenged and should enter only by invitation. This is certainly true of Evangelicalism which “appears to construct and maintain its collective identity largely by its members drawing symbolic boundaries that create distinction between themselves and relevant outgroups” (C. Smith, 1998, 143). This “outgroup intolerance” is the “evolutionary and cognitive flip side of ingroup commitment” and in fact the greater the cohesion and strength of the group the greater the degree of intolerance displayed towards outgroups (Atran, 2002, 120). For Evangelicals these outgroups may consist of other Christians who differ from them, for instance Roman Catholics, theological liberals or “nominal” Christians. Or they may be those of other faiths such as Muslims, as is the contention of this thesis. Of course Muslims too have their outgroups both within Islam, such as the *Sunni*, *Shi'ites* and various other sects, and those outside Islam. Significantly for both Evangelicals and Muslims secular liberals represent one of the most challenging outgroups.

For Evangelicals, the idea of voluntary “conversion” forms “a boundary between those who have experienced this life-changing event and those who have not” (Soper, 1994, 41). Those in Evangelical congregations are normally those who have a story to tell of how they came to a personal faith in Jesus Christ. Those who do not share this experience are welcome but may well not feel part of “the group”. This was born out by Heelas *et al* in the Kendal project where they found that “the testimony narrative” played a very important part in the life of an Evangelical “congregation of difference” (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005, 19). Thus someone from an outgroup, even from a Muslim background, could be accepted into the community if they had a story of conversion to tell.

Other Evangelical characteristics mentioned earlier also serve as boundaries for groups and any one particular group would have other values or beliefs which produce boundaries be they theological, ecclesiological, social or political. One key demarcation for charismatic Evangelicals would be whether a person was deemed to have been “filled” or “baptized” with the Holy Spirit. This would be especially true in Pentecostal congregations and, whilst a lack in this regard may not prohibit membership, such an experience would actively be sought, maybe accompanied by the sign of speaking in tongues, in order for the believer to be truly initiated and inducted into the group or “body”.

Cultural markers such as ethnicity, class and even age also frequently form boundaries between groups. Although these are formally absent they are often visibly obvious. People feel comfortable among their own kind and so whilst two Evangelicals may hold similar theological positions, they may choose the local congregation they attend on grounds other than theological correctness. On visiting a large church in East London recently I felt very conspicuous as the only white person present, whilst in another church in the city later that day I saw only one black person amongst a congregation of white Anglo-Saxons with some Asians. Visiting a New Church meeting in a London theatre on another occasion I felt very old amongst a large congregation of mainly young people.

4.2 THEORIES OF RELIGIOUS GROUP STRENGTH

The key question at this point is to consider how, once they have formed and established their identity boundaries, such religious groups maintain their strength and interact with one another, especially considering the pluralized nature of modernity and multiculturalism. In order to explore this further I look at two of the major themes of current sociological thinking about religion; secularization theory, and the religious market. To this is added a brief discussion of evolutionary theory as applied to religion.

4.2.A THE SECULARIZATION THESIS

As already noted (§3.1.c) from the early days of sociology it has been widely expected that religion would not maintain its strength but would decline in significance as modernity advanced. However, global events have given pause for thought. Perhaps the most high profile rethinking of

the secularization thesis has been undertaken by Berger, a former proponent who now openly, but controversially, discusses the “desecularization of the world” (1999).⁴¹ Others have followed suit. Casanova, for example, re-examined the secularization thesis and suggested that whilst “differentiation and emancipation of the secular spheres from religious institutions ... remains the valid core of the theory of secularization” this does not necessarily mean that there is a decline in belief or practice and he points out that we are in fact witnessing “the deprivatization of modern religion”(Casanova, 1994, 212, 215). Moreover, he suggests that:

those religions which early on accept and embrace the modern principle of differentiation will also tend to accept the modern denominational principle of voluntarism and will be in a better position both to survive the modern process of differentiation and to adopt some form of evangelical revivalism as a successful method of religious self-reproduction in a free religious market (Casanova, 1994, 214).

On this reckoning Evangelicalism should be in a much better place to survive in western societies than Islam, which tends to be more resistant to both differentiation and voluntarism. However, it is by no means certain, given the levels of concern expressed, that Evangelicals are thinking in these terms.

4.2.B RELIGIOUS MARKETS

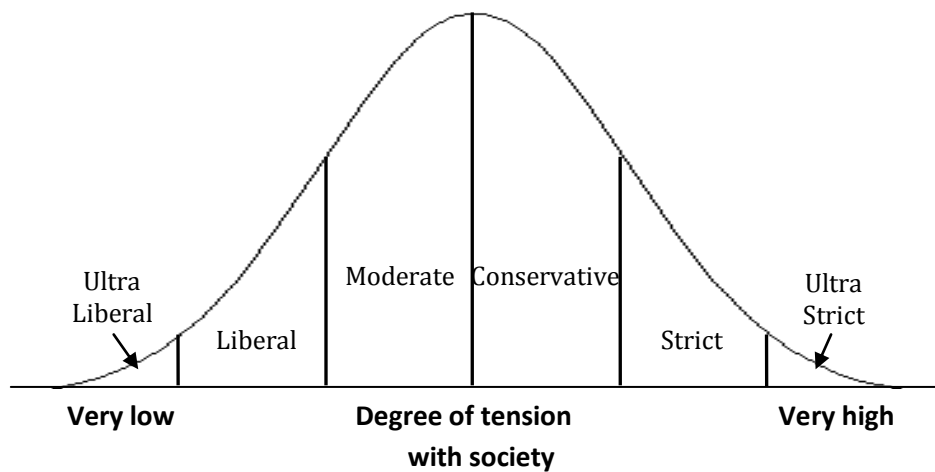
The discussion of “religious markets” has been a particular interest of sociologists working in the North American context. In order to explain the persistent religious strength observed by Berger and Casanova some have drawn on rational choice theory and economic models. For instance Stark and Finke (2000) describe society as a religious market place and build a series of hypotheses based on the balance between supply and demand. Their contention is that demand for religion remains essentially constant within a society but that it is the supply side that changes. Where there is a plentiful and diverse supply, religion thrives. Thus Evangelicalism is just one more religious supplier competing for clients in the economic jungle. This model has mostly been used in the USA to explain competition and vibrancy within the context of *Christian* competitors allowing for the presence of other types of spirituality in the form of New Religious Movements. It is then argued that in Europe the monopolistic models of established or state churches (§3.1.c Martin (1978)) has constricted the supply thus failing to stimulate the market.

⁴¹ See Bruce 2001 for a trenchant rebuttal of Berger’s “unnecessary recantation”. (Bruce, 2001)

Increasingly, however, in plural contexts other religions, such as Islam, and also non-religious movements and political trends have to be factored into this theory. This is a point highlighted by Gorski in his formulation of what he calls a “socio-political conflict model” which pictures the competition as being not just religious but “between different worldviews, both religious and secular, (including) socialism, liberalism, nationalism and fascism” (2003, 116). This multiple interaction forms the backdrop for this thesis as the interaction of Christians and Muslims cannot be viewed in isolation from wider social attitudes, political movements and government policy.

In the cases of Evangelicalism and Islam, or more accurately some expressions of Islam, there is a similarity in how they fit into this market model. Stark and Finke picture the demand for religion in society as a normal distribution curve (Figure 4.1) consisting of a spectrum of “religious niches” which they believe remain constant over time (2000, 197). These niches reflect a preference for a greater or lesser “degree of tension” between the religious group and society. Those niches that are at a higher degree of tension demand a greater cost but, so it is argued, offer a greater reward or benefit. The converse is true of those at lower tension. Building on the work of Weber they suggest that the greatest part of any society tends to prefer a moderate amount of tension and therefore settle for a moderate cost in return for a moderate reward.

Figure 4.1 – Normal distribution of religious niches (reproduced from Stark & Finke 2000,197)



Lesslie Newbigin, an Evangelical missionary-theologian, suggested that the Evangelical Church tends to a higher degree of tension with society than mainstream or more liberal Christian groups as it “inhabits a plausibility structure which is at variance with, and which calls into question, those that govern all human cultures without exception. The tension which this challenge creates has been present throughout the history of Western civilization” (1989, 9). Martin describes this tension between a religious group and society as the “angle of eschatological tension” (1997, 120). The rule that Martin sees in operation is that “the original 'charter' (of the group) will undergo distortion, and the degree of that distortion will be related in the most complex manner to the angle of eschatological tension” (ibid 120). In other words, the greater the degree of tension or the sharper the boundaries between groups, the greater will be the pressure to change. This is also the case with many expressions of Islam in the West. There is often a sharp tension and a high cost to being a Muslim and maintaining traditional practices in the current socio-political context. This is a price that many Muslims, and indeed whole communities, are willing to pay and clearly they see rewards and benefits in doing so. This is something that Evangelical Christians should have little difficulty in understanding and indeed respecting.

None of this is to say that all Muslims or all Evangelicals occupy the ultra-strict extreme of the distribution. The numbers expected at these extremes are relatively small in both communities (Figure 4.1). It does, however, mean that both Evangelicals and Muslims today are more likely to be to the right of the median in their degree of tensions with society. Whether or not this results in partnership with one another or whether it results in conflict will be one of the major questions to be addressed in the later analysis of the data.

The angle of eschatological tension is particularly acute at the start of new sects. For instance, in the early days of Methodism or Pentecostalism the newly formed groups were clearly in a higher tension with society than their present day denominational equivalents, which have moved towards the centre of this distribution according to the theory of sect-church movement (Neibuhr, 1929). This theory predicts that, in an effort to decrease tension with surrounding groups and society, religious groups will tend to liberalize their views and accommodate to those of others, a process which Hunter (1987) believes is happening amongst American Evangelicals. Bruce also observes this amongst British Evangelicals as they move to “the softer, less dogmatic, charismatic ‘new churches’” thus becoming more liberal (2003, 61). He sees no possibility of a shift back to

strict sectarian conservatism and predicts that by 2030 Britain will be a “secular society” and “Christianity in Britain will have largely disappeared” with church attendance below 5% (ibid 61-2).

Stark and Finke, however, presuming that religious demand does not decline, suggest that as sects move away from the higher tension end of the spectrum to take up a more denominational, moderate position, so a gap is created in the market for a new sect to form. “This gives rise to an endless cycle of birth, transformation and rebirth of sect movements” (Stark and Finke, 2000, 203) which maybe explains something of the fissiparous nature of the Evangelical movement (§5.3). As Percy puts it “New Wine, rather like New Labour, can only be “new” for a while. Eventually it becomes part of the establishment: subversion gives way to maturity and participation” (Percy, 2003, 99). A new sect inevitably results, a process from which Islam is not immune. Islam today is witnessing very similar processes with the rise of, for instance, *Wahhabi* teaching from Saudi Arabia which demands an acute angle of tension with society in the West and so tends to inspire the creation of radical groups.

4.2.C CULTURAL EVOLUTION

Another way of picturing this competitive market has been developed by cultural evolutionists. Kaplan has postulated what he calls “the law of cultural dominance” which considers how one culture develops at “the expense of other less effective systems” (1960, 75). Wilson has also applied the theory of “group-level adaptation” to the development of religious groups (2002, 7). Evolution and religion are often seen as antithetical but Wilson’s evolutionary application, unlike Atran’s (2002), is sympathetic and not dismissive. He views the religious group as an organism competing for survival against other groups or “species”. His model is tentative and complex but his discussion of “multi-level selection”, which describes natural selection happening at both individual and group level, and both within groups and among groups, clearly has parallels with the market theory developed by Stark and Finke. Only the strongest survive.

Taking various examples from the animal kingdom, Wilson points out that it is a combination of individual *and* group benefit that ensures that a religious group thrives. The cost and benefit to the individual cannot on its own ensure the survival of the group. In the long term the group has to act and develop in such a way as benefits the longevity of the group as such and not just its members. Otherwise another predator group will gain the ascendancy.

Maintaining this sort of imagery, outgroups can be seen as either predators, protectors or prey (Atran, 2002, 78). This is particularly poignant in a multicultural society. For an Evangelical “organism”, for example, this means assessing the other organisms around. Is another faith group like Islam a predator moving on to “their patch” threatening their resources? Are groups from other Christian traditions potential prey – sources of new converts (or “transfer growth”)? Should Muslims also be seen as potential new recruits? Conversely are there groups that can be seen as protectors? Will they protect against other predatory groups? Are the government, the local authorities or the legal community protectors – or are they really secular predators dressed in sheep’s clothing ready to stifle the free expression of religious opinion and to enforce a politically correct agenda?

4.3 MODES OF INTERACTION

Given the competitive nature of such models the following section explores some of the typologies that emerge from the literature to describe the interaction of religious groups, and introduces some of the terms and concepts that will be significant in the later empirical enquiry. Bennett (2008) contributes a simple, binary typology which becomes important in the later analysis. Race’s soteriological model (1983) is elaborated on by Lochhead (1988), whom I discuss at greater length. Finally, I draw on the work of Christian Smith (1998, 2002) in the American context to suggest some possible trajectories of Evangelicalism as it encounters both Islam and modernity.

Hunter points out that in such interaction “the extremes almost always define the terms of reflection and debate” (2010, 34). This is certainly the case in the polarization of the encounter between the West and Islam, Christians and Muslims. Such a binary approach is illustrated by Bennett’s observation of “confrontational” and “conciliatory” approaches to interfaith relations, the former being characterized by “polemic, diatribe and debate”, the latter by “dialogue” (2008, 9). He reflects that in the Christian-Muslim case, “although conciliation has a long history, confrontation has dominated both sides” (ibid). Of course conceiving of these poles as positive and negative is problematic. There are times in any relationship when conciliatory peacemaking is

required. There are also times when there needs to be the freedom to challenge, critique and respectfully disagree.

The picture, however, as Gorski (2003) (§4.2.b) reminds us, is more complex than this. The situation is not quite so straightforward as two opposing groups of “fundamentalist” believers. Both communities are highly heterogeneous and nuanced in their positions as becomes clear in Part II. Furthermore there are others in a society who hold strong views on both groups but from a non-religious stance. There are those that insist that all faiths should be considered equally true, and those who are equally adamant that all faiths should be dismissed from public life – a position which itself comes close to being a matter of faith.

Such pluralism in a society pits “relativism” against “fundamentalism”, a polarization which has recently been explored in a collection of essays emphasizing the importance of finding the religious “middle ground” (Berger, 2010). Berger argues that both extremes are “bad for civility” and “make civil discourse impossible” – fundamentalism because it “produces irresolvable conflict” and relativism because it “precludes the moral condemnation of virtually anything at all” (ibid 1). So a more nuanced typology is required that makes provision for a middle ground.

An example which attempts to identify such a middle ground theologically is that developed by Race (1983) who labels religionists as *exclusivist*, *inclusivist* or *pluralist*. The basis of his categorization is soteriological. “Exclusivists” hold that there is no eschatological salvation outside of their own religious community. This is clearly the belief of many conservative Evangelicals today, although according to D’Costa “no major systematic theologian” holds this position (2005, 630). At the other extreme, “pluralists” take a relativist stance and see all religions as being equally true and therefore all as equally valid paths to salvation. It was Hick who first proposed a “Copernican revolution” in the Christian approach to other religions which would remove Christ from the centre and picture all the world’s religions turning around a deeper, ultimate truth (1980). This view is, of course, anathema to Evangelical Christians, as it is to many Muslims, and Goddard suggests that “exclusivism is the dominant view among Evangelical Protestant Christians” (2000, 150). That said, an increasing number of Evangelicals would now adopt a middle “inclusivist” position which holds to the objective truth of Christianity and yet admits that God may in some mysterious way work salvation outside of the Christian Church. The Catholic

theologian Rahner was maybe the best-known proponent of this standpoint with his concept of the “anonymous Christian”, which greatly influenced the writing of the Second Vatican Council document *Lumen Gentium* (meaning “light of the nations”) (D’Costa, 2005, 631). Although Race’s typology has been severely criticized by some and modified by others (see for example D’Costa, 2009), it remains a useful and widely recognized formulation and features in the later analysis.

Lochhead, a Canadian theologian, extends Race’s model by taking a more sociological approach and looking at “kinds of exclusivity” and “kinds of inclusivity” (Lochhead, 1988, 28) which he summarizes as ideologies of isolation, hostility, competition and partnership.

4.3.A ISOLATION

Iprgrave (2008) has commented at length on aspects of Lochhead’s typology. Only a brief overview is given here which includes some of the terms frequently used in such discussions. The *ideology of isolation*, characterized by ignorance and disinterest, was the dominant European mode of interaction with Islam for over a thousand years.⁴² Due to globalization and the breaking down of geographical boundaries, it is no longer as commonplace as it once was. However, Lochhead suggests that it is still seen in the ghettos formed by powerless minorities to protect themselves from the dominant culture. Iprgrave also sees evidence of this ideology amongst Christians in “remnants of a 'Christendom' model” which assumes that “Britain is to be identified as a Christian country in a way that means other faiths can be safely ignored” (ibid 6). Besides, struggling Christian churches may not have the “interest, motivation, energy or confidence” to engage with others (ibid).

4.3.B HOSTILITY AND POLEMICAL DEBATE

When boundaries begin to break down, however, communities often experience the Other as a threat leading to the development of an *ideology of hostility*. Liechty and Clegg (2001), through their work amongst religious groups in Northern Ireland, have developed what they call a measure of “conflictual temperature” that illustrates how such hostile thought patterns develop:

⁴² Spain, Sicily and later the Balkans were of course notable exceptions.

1. We are different, we behave differently
2. We are right
3. We are right and you are wrong
4. You are a less adequate version of what we are
5. You are not what you say you are
6. We are in fact what you say you are
7. What you are doing is evil
8. You are so wrong that you forfeit ordinary rights
9. You are less than human
10. You are evil
11. You are demonic

It would certainly be possible to locate Christian responses to Muslims on such a scale. Lochhead echoes this process and cites the anti-Papist writings of Luther (§7.1.a) and the more contemporary speeches of Ian Paisley as examples of hostility. He also includes the premillennial fundamentalism of some major American TV evangelists which, given its Zionist support for Israel, is quick to see Islam, and Arabs in particular, as the enemies of God's purposes. Religious believers who espouse such hostility often engage in polemical debate, with its connotation of being aggressive and warlike (from the Greek πόλεμος meaning "war"), tending to focus on attacking the negative character of the Other.

4.3.C COMPETITION, EVANGELISM AND APOLOGETICS

Lochhead's third type is the *ideology of competition* which, whilst acknowledging that the two sides are "in the same business" and therefore share similarities, still stresses differences (1988, 18). This could apply as much to different denominations within the same religion as between different religions. A group espousing this ideology still believes that it alone possesses the total truth but concedes that others may have some partial truth. It stresses the weak points of the Other and sees the groups as being in a battle. Such competition is most clearly exhibited in the desire of the group to win converts, which for the Christian means mission or evangelism (passing

on the good news) and for the Muslim *da'wa*.⁴³ Such engagement inevitably involves apologetics (from the Greek *απολογία*, to speak in defence). This may extend beyond intellectual argument to a concern for reciprocity and the equal treatment of co-religionists in other parts of the world. For example, a lack of freedom for Christian minorities in Muslim countries, the persecution of apostates from Islam and a ban on the building of churches in countries such as Saudi Arabia are major concerns for many Evangelicals.

4.3.D PARTNERSHIP, TOLERANCE AND HOSPITALITY

The final type is the *ideology of partnership* in which similarities are more important than differences. It can take different forms ranging from an assumption of the essential unity of all religions, through a total avoidance of the religious question “as long as people are 'nice'” (Lochhead, 1988, 24), to a common concern for cohesion and contributing to the common good (Ipgrave, 2008, 10). Respect and tolerance are often words associated with such a position (see Kraft and Basinger, 2008). Marty, however, is critical of the concept of tolerance (2005). He suggests that tolerance is weak and condescending and has “no muscle” of its own but rather attempts to “remake ‘the Other’ into some manageable image” (ibid 126-7). In the place of tolerance Marty advocates “counter-intolerance”, or what he calls “risky hospitality”, during which:

we greet, eat, gesture, listen, speak differently because of the presence of the Other, become sensitive to the changes we must make in our own outlook and community, and emerge as different beings than we were before the possibly tense but often enjoyable experience of mutual hospitality (Marty, 2005, 130).

This is reminiscent of the work of Bretherton who talks of “hospitality as holiness” (2006a) and also Barnes who pictures God as both host and guest in mankind’s encounter with the divine (2002).

Hospitality, however, is also open to criticism. Derrida (2000) discusses Kant’s account of hospitality as the stranger’s right but suggests that what often takes place is, in fact, what he

⁴³ It should be noted that *da'wa* for the Muslim has two emphases: “an invitation to non-Muslims to convert to Islam and the call to those born Muslim to be better Muslims” Esposito (2002, 53).

terms "hostipitality". In this sense offering hospitality subtly becomes "a reaffirmation of mastery and being oneself in one's own home" which implies a conditionality to the hospitality offered that can be coercive and verge on hostility (ibid 14). Sacks (2007) makes a similar point in discussing contemporary British multiculturalism. He presents three metaphors for the way in which a society might seek to integrate newcomers. The first, which tends to hostipitality, is when travellers are invited into a country manor as guests by the squire but never feel at home because the house belongs to someone else. The second is a hotel that is inhabited by guests but owned by none of them, including the original inhabitants. The third is Sacks' preferred model of "the home that we build together". He pictures villagers giving land to new arrivals and helping them to build houses; in other words an action partnership where hosts and newcomers help to build society together.

Notwithstanding such positive aspirations, Ipgrave points out that with an ideology of partnership "there is a danger of shutting out from the relationship precisely those distinctive affirmations of our respective faiths which mark out our identity and commitment" as faithful believers (Ipgrave, 2008, 12). This paradigm should, therefore, be seen as a dynamic collaboration between heterogeneous partners and not as an insipid compromise between those who do not value their faith.

In summary Lochhead is careful to point out that these types rarely exist in pure form. They almost always overlap and indeed may all be present at the same time. Lest this sound like a contradiction he points out that a group often "depicts the followers of other traditions as innocent victims of the duplicity of their leaders. Thus ignorance and hostility can be attributed to the same tradition without necessarily involving the apologist in contradiction" (Lochhead, 1988, 29). Lochhead also highlights the ambiguous causal relationship between theology and ideology. Sometimes theology is driven by social context but the reverse may also be true. This is one reason why he sees a "dialogical imperative" and stresses the need for dialogue as "a distinct and preferable type of relationship" (ibid 29). Interfaith dialogue, however, can all too easily become the preserve of an academic elite and Ipgrave suggests that whilst there is a need for "academically rigorous dialogue between Christian and Muslim theologians" there is also a need for "neighbourhood-level cooperation between Christian and Muslim communities (which holds) together competition and partnership models" (2008, 16).

Lochhead's theoretically constructed typology is useful but needs to be tested empirically. Interestingly Smith's study of Evangelical Christians in America produced a similar but not identical spectrum of responses (2002). Whilst not specifically about Christian reaction to Muslims, the survey sought to explore the attitudes of Evangelicals to "social and cultural pluralism" and found four broad categories (ibid 61): opposition, ambivalence, realistic acceptance and enthusiastic tolerance.

Significantly he found that enthusiastic tolerance was the dominant response. He noted that this did not mean that Evangelicals abandoned their convictions but rather they rejected the use of force to control others. This is maybe unsurprising as Berger suggests that most human beings "gravitate toward a more reasonable middle ground, though usually without being able to justify or even articulate why they believe and act as they do" (2010, 2). Again it has to be emphasized that the American context is very different to the British and Smith's study is not a piece of empirical research that has been done amongst Evangelicals in Britain. Whilst this thesis is not a wide scale piece of quantitative research, it is hoped that it will give some indication of the relevance to the British case of both Lochhead's theoretical and Smith's more pragmatic categories.

4.4 LIKELY TRAJECTORIES

The final question to consider is the likely future trajectory of Evangelicals as they encounter other groups, and Muslims in particular, in an increasingly pluralized context. Through his empirical work in the American context Smith has concluded that despite being "embattled" Evangelicals are not in retreat but in fact are "thriving" (1998). Cimino (2005) in the American context and Guest (2007) in the British both draw on Smith's work and contrast it with that of Berger and Hunter. Berger in his earlier work suggested that for a religious group to maintain its strength it had to "retrench" in the face of pluralization (1992). This retrenchment could be defensive in which the group retreats into a "sheltered enclave" (C. Smith, 1998) or what Guest calls a "counter-community" embarking on a "project of resistance" (2007, 7). On the other hand the retrenchment could be offensive in which case it becomes a crusade (Berger, 1992). If it does not retrench then Berger argued that the group would inevitably enter into what he called "cognitive

bargaining” with surrounding groups leading to “cognitive surrender” and capitulation to ideological pluralism. Hunter concludes in his work that this is indeed what is happening amongst Evangelicals in America (1987). Others, however, have observed the reverse. For instance, Lindsay finds American Evangelicalism to be “a durable faith” (2007, 226) and describes how what he calls “the elasticity of Evangelicals’ orthodoxy” is not in fact “a softening of conviction or a blurring of the lines that make Christianity distinctive” (ibid 217). Rather it enables them to engage with other groups.

This is exactly what Smith argues in proposing “an alternative theoretical perspective on the viability of traditional religions in modernity” (1998, 89). He rejects not only the *sheltered enclave theory* above but also other theories put forward to explain the continued strength of Evangelicals in America. For example, he discounts *status discontent* theory (Wald et al., 1989). This theory, based on Weber’s idea of “status groups” which lay claim to “social honour and prestige”, suggests that religious groups will mobilize to reassert their privilege if they feel undermined (ibid 1). Whilst such mobilization clearly takes place, including in this study, Smith argues that in the American case Evangelicals are neither economically nor socially discontent (1998, 69, 83). Likewise he dismisses *strictness* theory (see for example Kelley, 1978, Iannaccone, 1994) on the basis that the stricter American Fundamentalist Christians are not doing as well as Evangelicals (C. Smith, 1998, 71, 84). Rather he believes that it is the *competitive market theory* outlined above (§4.2.b) that best fits the data that he gathered. American Evangelicals are neither totally isolated from pluralist culture nor do they totally accommodate to that culture. Rather they compete and occupy the middle ground, a point accepted more recently by Berger (2010) concerning religion generally. This moderate practice is what Smith calls “engaged orthodoxy” (1998, 151).

From his empirical work Smith develops two theories. Firstly, his *subcultural identity theory of religious persistence* states that:

religion survives and can thrive in pluralistic, modern society by embedding itself in subcultures that offer satisfying morally orienting collective identities which provide adherents meaning and belonging (C. Smith, 1998, 118).

However, as he points out, American Evangelicalism is not just persisting it is thriving. So his second theory, which he calls the *subcultural identity theory of religious strength*, goes on to say that:

in a pluralistic society, those religious groups will be relatively stronger which better possess and employ the cultural tools needed to create both clear distinction from and significant engagement and tension with other relevant outgroups short of becoming genuinely countercultural. (C. Smith, 1998, 118)

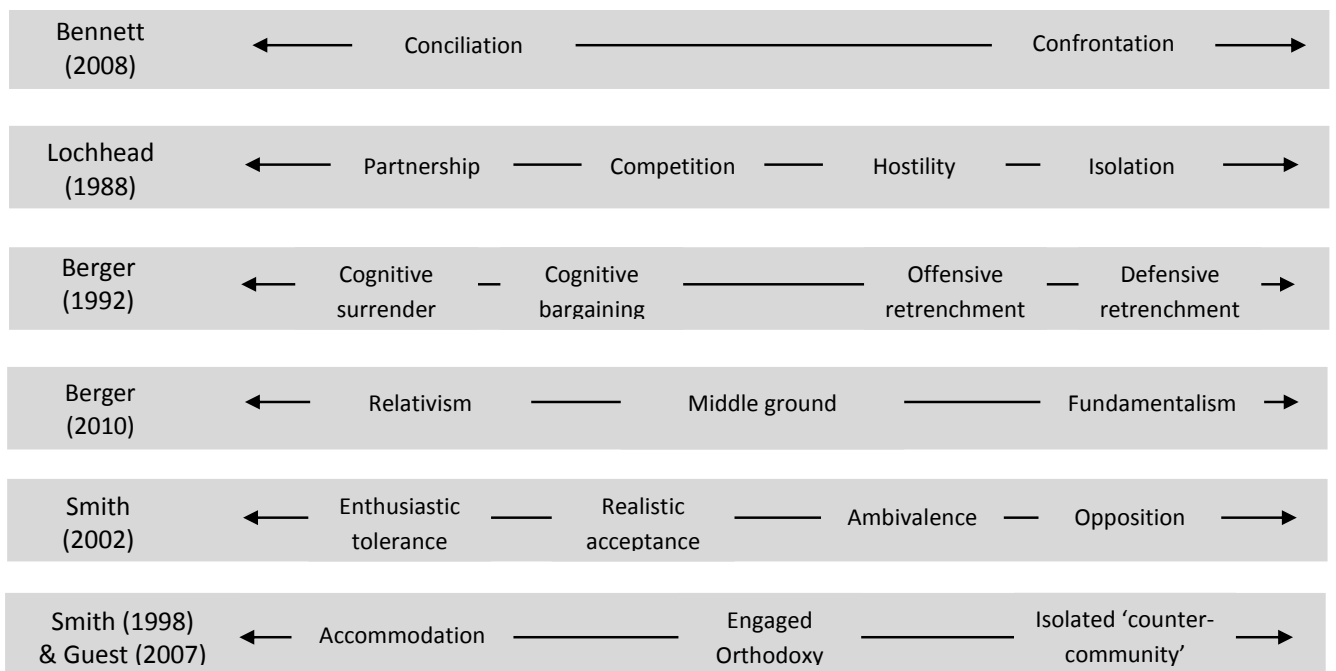
Smith goes on to discuss what he calls the “cultural tools” that Evangelicals use to “socially construct reality” and handle distinction, engagement and conflict (ibid 123). These are really a set of attitudes and reactions some of which have already been seen (§4.1) and include a sense of:

- Strong boundaries with the non-Evangelical world;
- Possessing the ultimate truth;
- Practical moral superiority;
- Lifestyle and values distinctiveness;
- Evangelistic and social mission;
- Displaced heritage which laments the loss of an imagined Christian nation;
- Being marginalized second-class citizens;
- Being under threat or engaged in “spiritual warfare”.

Of course it is by no means clear that Smith’s hypothesis is applicable or valid in the British context. Firstly, there is controversy, even in the American context, over the different definitions of Evangelical used by Smith and Hunter. Hackett and Lindsay have demonstrated that the research findings of both are “contingent upon how the subject under investigation is operationalized” casting doubt on the usefulness of the comparative analysis (2008, 511). Secondly, the quantitative study of the connection between pluralism and religious group strength is itself contested (see Voas et al., 2002, for a discussion). Further, the British and American contexts are extremely different. Despite historical transatlantic links Evangelicalism has developed differently in the two nations and in particular there has been a relative absence in Britain of the type of reactionary fundamentalism found in America, an issue which the

Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in Britain Project (EFBP) has been seeking to explore.⁴⁴ As Guest says “if there is a struggle on this side of the Atlantic, then it is far quieter and draws in far fewer participants” than in America (2007, 2) (see §5.2 for a brief comparison). Finally, no comparable quantitative research has been carried out amongst British Evangelicals, a point made clear at an EFBP conference.⁴⁵ Until this sort of quantitative work is done, comparisons will continue to be difficult to draw and theories of American Evangelical strength can only be tentative pointers awaiting further empirical investigation in the British context. In the meantime this thesis offers some pointers and tests whether the Evangelical elite are utilizing the tools highlighted by Smith.

Figure 4.2 – Comparison of typologies



⁴⁴ See <http://www.eauk.org/efb/index.cfm> for more information (accessed 22 December 2009).

⁴⁵ Christian Fundamentalism and British Evangelicalism; Exploring the Relationship, King’s College, London, 15 December 2009.

The various theories and typologies discussed above are represented diagrammatically in Figure 4.2 for ease of reference. With the exception of Bennett's they have all been developed in the generic context of interaction between different faith groups and the interaction between faith groups and a pluralized society often antagonistic toward faith. Whilst Berger's and Lochhead's typologies have been developed in a theoretical context, Smith's are largely based on empirical work in America. The following chapters in Part II explore the specific context of British Evangelicalism and its encounter with Islam but these typologies are all revisited in Part IV in the light of my own empirical findings.

PART II – EVANGELICALS AND MUSLIMS: THE BRITISH CONTEXT

CHAPTER 5 EVANGELICALS IN BRITAIN

“Evangelicals are declining less rapidly than the non-Evangelicals,
and are thus becoming a larger proportion of the whole.”

(Brierley, 2006, 247)

+ + + +

The previous three chapters have discussed the concept of the public sphere and the role of religion and religious groups within it. It is now necessary to consider in more detail Evangelical Christians as the particular focus of this thesis. The aim of this chapter is to develop an understanding of who the British Evangelicals are and how they form public spheres. The first two sections of the chapter attempt to clarify exactly what is meant by the term Evangelical by looking at some issues of definition and the global variation of the movement paying particular attention to the contrast between the British and American contexts. A brief historical overview then highlights the fissiparous nature of the movement and paints a picture of the contemporary Evangelical community in Britain. The final section returns to the concept of the public sphere and describes the extent and character of the modern EPS.

5.1 WHAT IS AN EVANGELICAL?

The word *Evangelical* does not denote a denomination or any one particular church; rather it represents a family of churches, organizations and individuals held together by a core ethos comprised of theological, historical and cultural elements. The etymological roots of the word lie in the Greek word *euangelion* (ευαγγελιον) meaning the “gospel” or “good news”, which is not so much contained in the sacred text of the Bible as in the person of Jesus Christ, who is believed to be the incarnate “Word of God”. Simply put Evangelicals are “gospel people” (Guinness, 2010).

Stated in theological terms the traditional definition, described for instance on the *Evangelical Alliance* (EA) website, foregrounds the three great “truths” of the Protestant Reformation: *sola scriptura* (by scripture alone), *sola gratia* (by grace alone) and *sola fide* (by faith alone).⁴⁶ For the purposes of this thesis, however, a rather more sociological description is required. The one most commonly cited – for instance on the EA website – which combines both sociological and theological elements, is proposed by Bebbington (1989). He suggests that there are four key characteristics common to all Evangelicals: *conversionism* emphasizes the need for the individual to make a voluntary commitment; *activism* is the imperative to social action and evangelism; *crucicentrism* places salvation and the cross of Christ at the core of Evangelical doctrine; finally, *Biblicism* means that all doctrine is based explicitly on the Bible over and above Church tradition.

Whilst this “quadrilateral” definition is widely used, it is not unproblematic. For instance, Larsen points out that it would be quite possible for St Francis of Assisi to be considered an Evangelical using this measure and clearly “a definition of Evangelicalism that would include mediaeval Roman Catholic saints would not be serviceable for delineating the scope of scholarly projects” (Larsen, 2007a, 2). He proposes a “pentagon” which in addition to an emphasis on the Bible and the cross includes: the work of the Holy Spirit; the necessity of being an orthodox Protestant; and an affinity to the “global Christian networks arising from the eighteenth century revival movements” of Wesley and Whitefield (ibid).

5.2 VARIATIONS WITHIN GLOBAL EVANGELICALISM

Larsen’s historical emphasis is useful in indentifying Evangelicalism not solely as a theological but also as a cultural construction. It is in many ways a family which displays hereditary traits but also marked differences both globally and nationally. Despite a high degree of global networking Evangelicalism takes many different forms in different nations and in particular it is important to note that its American and British forms are by no means identical. Evangelicalism tends to be more politicized and to have a higher profile in the United States. Indeed all American presidents since Carter have had close relationships with Evangelicals (Lindsay, 2007). By contrast:

⁴⁶ http://www.eauk.org/about/what_is.cfm (accessed 19 January 2011).

Evangelicals in the UK have little discernible political voice, and what is in evidence appears muted and with limited leverage in government. Popular protest is more visible, but mainly due to media interest in what has become colourful novelty within a nation notable for its apparent apathy towards things of a religious or spiritual nature (Guest, forthcoming).

Consequently a lot more sociological research has been done on Evangelicals in the United States than is the case in Britain or the rest of Europe (see especially the work of Ammerman (1997), Noll (2000) and C. Smith (1998, 2002)). However, whilst the body of American literature generated is a useful resource for British sociology, great care is needed in drawing parallels between the two contexts.

Larsen's comments on the Protestant nature of Evangelicalism also need careful explaining. Whilst on the European mainland the term Evangelical is denominational and is associated mainly with the Lutheran Church, in Britain the term carries no denominational association but is normally viewed as a subset of Protestant. So whilst it is true that the vast majority of Evangelicals would consider themselves Protestants (although *pace* Larsen the label may also occasionally be used by some Roman Catholics (Noll, 2000, 37)), it is not true that all Protestants would consider themselves Evangelicals. The term Protestant normally stands as distinct from particularly Roman Catholic and Orthodox, whilst the term Evangelical tends to stand as distinct from liberal on the one hand and fundamentalist on the other, although the latter is not so marked in the British context as it is in the American (Guest, 2007, 14).

McGrath (1994, 13) and Hilborn (2008) illustrate this by pointing out that in America the label was adopted in the 1940s by the *National Association of Evangelicals* precisely to distinguish themselves from those who were called Fundamentalists and who typically withdrew from society and held to a literal interpretation of scripture, espoused young-earth creationism, supported the State of Israel as a fulfilment of prophecy and opposed women in leadership.⁴⁷ Whilst fundamentalism has not been a significant part of the Protestant church in Britain (Bebbington, 1989, 276), the term is still sometimes used pejoratively to label any Christian opinion, or indeed any religious activity, that is judged to be extreme or overly conservative.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ See Ammerman (1987) for a fuller account of American Christian Fundamentalism. (Ammerman, 1987)

⁴⁸ See for example Modell (2008a) where *fundamentalist* is used to label Christians teaching creationism in school, campaigning against abortion and speaking critically of Islam.

The association of the word Evangelical with fundamentalism and a feeling that in common perception Evangelicals are always *against* something has led some Evangelicals to consider jettisoning the label. In America leading Evangelical social activists like Tony Campolo, Jim Wallis and Brian McLaren have coined terms such as “progressive Evangelical” or “red-letter Christians” (Campolo, 2008).⁴⁹ This is an issue for British Evangelicals too, although many feel that it is important to retain the term and reclaim its true meaning (Watkin, 2008, Buckeridge, 2006).

One final confusion is the relationship between the terms *Evangelical*, *Charismatic* and *Pentecostal*. Charismatics are Christians who emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit and particularly the spiritual gifts, or *charismata*, such as prophecy, healing or miracles. They are predominantly Protestant but there are significant numbers of Catholic Charismatics as well. Some embrace the term Evangelical; a few have rejected it or split away from umbrella organizations. Whilst charismatic is not a denominational label and is used to describe Christians in a range of traditional churches, including the *Church of England*, the term Pentecostal tends to have historical denominational associations (§5.3). Examples of Pentecostal churches include the *Elim*, the *Assemblies of God* and many of the large back diaspora churches in cities such as London.

Of course these terms are here being used as ideal types and the reality is often somewhat more imprecise. For some, the huge diversity of churches with such heterogeneous theology and ecclesiology from so many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds do not fit comfortably under the single label of Evangelical.⁵⁰ In fact in many cases the term Evangelical says more about what it is not than what it is. However, it is still the best term that we have for what Smith describes as:

a particular orientation of religious practice, an activist faith that tries to influence the surrounding world. For the Evangelicals themselves, this involves a heartfelt, personal commitment to and experiential relationship with God, from which springs a readiness to take a stand and speak out for

⁴⁹ The latter refers to certain editions of the Bible which have the words of Jesus printed in red ink and the message is that these Christians are basing their beliefs and morals on the teaching of Jesus himself rather than on any other traditions or interpretations that they feel have accreted to the term Evangelical.

⁵⁰ For further discussion of the sociological inadequacy of the label see the thread at http://www.ssrg.org/blogs/immanent_frame/category/evangelicals-evangelicalisms/ (accessed 16 December 2010).

faith. To many more mainline and liberal Christians, Evangelicalism suggests a more emotional, noisy, and, possibly, pushy version of faith". (C. Smith, 1998, 242)

5.3 A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVANGELICALISM IN BRITAIN

Bebbington (1989) provides a magisterial overview of the history of Evangelicalism in Britain. The movement's earliest roots were in the sixteenth century European Protestant Reformation as the Reformers challenged the ecclesial power of Rome and the dissenting churches were born. The Congregationalists and the Baptists in particular trace their roots back to this time and especially to the Puritan movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which separated from the newly created Church of England.

It was not until the eighteenth century, however, that Evangelicalism became prominent (Soper, 1994, 36). Indeed Bebbington claims that the decade following 1734 was the most important period in Protestant history as it saw the "the emergence of the movement that became Evangelicalism" (1989, 20). John Wesley and George Whitefield were the epitome of this movement (Larsen, 2007a). Thousands were converted through their ministry and the Methodists, as they became called, soon grew to number almost a quarter of a million. Wesley himself was a committed Anglican to the end of his life and had no intention of leaving the Church or founding a new sect but many of his supporters left and the Methodist church was born.

This new movement displayed many of the classic traits of a sect. Adherents were drawn mainly from the working class, met in small groups and were led by a largely lay leadership. There was a strong emphasis on individual salvation and turning away from sinful behaviour that inevitably led to a high degree of tension with the surrounding society (Stark and Finke, 2000, 144). This changed, however, as affluence increased, itinerant preachers settled down to become professional clergy and Methodists, no longer a sect, were accepted amongst the mainline denominations. Indeed as the clergy became increasingly liberal Methodism itself became "a source of dissenting sects" as new reformers sought to return to a more radical faith (ibid 265).

This fissiparousness is characteristic of Evangelicalism as demonstrated by the springing up of many new movements over the past 200 years. With the authority of the established church

diminished, Evangelicalism, with its emphasis on individual choice, suited the new mood of optimism and confidence, especially in the nineteenth century (Tidball, 1994, 38). People began to read and interpret the Bible for themselves. If they did not agree with the preacher they could always start a new congregation! However, whilst this new Evangelicalism was clearly expressed in schism and the creation of new sects, it also had a profound and stimulating effect on the established church. The revival hymns found their way into the mainstream – much as Graham Kendrick’s songs did in the 1980s – and there was a new energy among the clergy (Tidball, 1994). Moreover, there were even Evangelicals to be found amongst the Church of England clergy, although they remained unconnected with Methodism (Bebbington, 1989, 30). Thus a sort of symbiotic, love-hate relationship existed between church and sect.

The *Evangelical Alliance* was formed in 1846 and by the end of the nineteenth century Protestant missionaries like William Carey and Henry Martyn were taking the Gospel to the world under the auspices of a host of new mission organizations. In London the Clapham Sect set about social reform under the leadership of Henry Venn. William Wilberforce and later Lord Shaftesbury became household names at the forefront of Evangelical activism. Both the non-conformists and the *Church of England* grew, with many bishops espousing Evangelicalism (Tidball, 1994, 41). “Revivalism” arrived from America with the coming of D.L. Moody and the evangelistic campaign was born. Popular preachers like the Baptist Charles Spurgeon drew huge crowds and great conventions were held culminating in the start of the Keswick Convention in 1875 which continues to this day.

The nineteenth century also saw the birth of at least two significant new sects looking to return to a New Testament pattern of the religious life (A. Walker, 1998). Conferences at Albury, Surrey, and Powerscourt, Dublin, became focal points for a new interest in Biblical prophecy and interpretation inspired by the teaching of Edward Irving and John Darby. Their premillennial, dispensationalist theology aided by the Schofield Bible greatly appealed to the middle classes and the aristocracy, but led to a disillusionment with the world that inspired a new branch of rejectionism within Evangelicalism. Irving and Darby were soon to part company, the former becoming the founder of the Catholic Apostolic Church and the latter the leader of the Christian Brethren. The Irvingites, as they were known, were more Pentecostal in outlook and embraced charismatic gifts but the Brethren rejected these manifestations of the Holy Spirit. It was not long

before the Brethren themselves split again, the “Exclusives” following Darby declaring the “Plymouth Open Brethren” to be unsound.

The early twentieth century saw a continuance of revival and schism within Evangelicalism. In 1904 the Welsh revival under the leadership of Evan Roberts was followed the year after by the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles and the modern Pentecostal movement was born. There were many “physical and ecstatic manifestations of the Spirit” (Tidball, 1994, 49) but suspicion within mainstream Evangelicalism meant that those affected by these events left their congregations and formed new sects. *Elim* formed in 1915 and the *Assemblies of God* in 1924, tended to draw people from the working classes and differed from each other in their practice of governance and theology of the baptism of the Spirit (Bebbington, 1989, 197). This Pentecostal outbreak has become known as the “First Wave” of the Holy Spirit (Tidball, 1994, 73) and both movements today are generally accepted as part of mainstream Evangelicalism.

Meanwhile in the early part of the century mainstream Evangelicalism was struggling to come to terms with the challenges of the modern world and the liberal social gospel. After a period of theological infighting, scholarly leaders such as John Stott, Michael Green and F.F. Bruce emerged who in the post-war years began to restore confidence in conservative Evangelicalism. A seminal moment came in 1966 when Martin Lloyd-Jones called for Evangelicals to leave their historic congregations and form a new church together. He was strongly resisted in this by Stott and the result was the *Keele Statement* which kept Evangelicalism within the mainstream of the Church of England and other historic denominations (McGrath, 1994, 40).

In the 1960s a “Second Wave” of Charismatic renewal broke out, which resonated with the prevailing culture of optimism and freedom. Within the mainstream Anglican movement Michael Harper set up the *Fountain Trust* to promote renewal (A. Walker, 1998, 57) and most of the historic denominations were touched by this movement over the coming decades. Others, however, chose to abandon their congregations and form new groups. These were initially known as *House Churches*, but were later referred to as the *Restoration Churches*, due to their emphasis on recovering what they saw as New Testament norms. Today, and for the purposes of this thesis, they are simply called the *New Churches*. In the early days they were characterized by strong “apostolic” leadership, belief in the priesthood of all believers and strong criticism of

denominationalism. Ironically, however, this movement too became subject to schism (or different “streams”), the major split being between the more authoritarian “R1” stream initially based in the north of England under the leadership of Bryn Jones and Terry Virgo amongst others, and the less conservative “R2” stream in the south clustered around John Noble and Gerald Coates (see A. Walker, 1998, for a full history of these movements). Many of those joining the New Churches came from a Brethren background and in many ways the R1/R2 split looks like a replay of the division between Open and Exclusive Brethren in the previous century. Whilst these mainly middle class congregations saw large growth during the 1980s and into the 90s, this growth has now slowed, although the Vineyard (which came from America) and New Frontiers (of R1 origin) continue to grow through “planting” new congregations (Brierley, 2006, 40).

The 1980s saw something of a rapprochement between the Charismatic congregations and mainstream Evangelicalism. Part of this was due to the so-called “Third Wave” of the Spirit associated with the ministry of John Wimber. Despite his emphasis on “power evangelism” and supernatural healing his close connections with mainstream Evangelicalism ensured that the Charismatic revival spread and continued through the 1980s (see Stackhouse, 2003, for a critique of Wimber and other “fads”). Another key factor during this period was the annual, week-long Spring Harvest training conference which “brought together keen charismatics and non-charismatics in a way reminiscent of Keswick” (Bebbington, 1989, 247).

This increasing openness to ecumenism is one the major shifts that Bebbington (2009) observes within British Evangelicalism over the last fifty years. He also detects a decline in both anti-Catholicism and premillennial dispensationalism which has significantly altered the character of Evangelicalism, broadening it and engendering a greater concern for social issues. These trends, however, coupled with the growth of charismatic renewal, have provoked a resurgence in conservative reformed theology as witnessed by the formation of both the *Proclamation Trust* and *Reform*, which was set up in 1993 to reform the Church of England “according to the Holy Scriptures”.⁵¹ In response *Fulcrum* was founded in 2003 by “open Evangelicals” and “the main polarization was now between those who saw doctrinal fidelity as the primary responsibility of Evangelicals and those who, in their vigorous quest for conversions, were less insistent on vocal defence of orthodoxy” (Bebbington, 2009, 98). The tension between these two tendencies within

⁵¹ <http://www.reform.org.uk/> (accessed 17 January 2011).

British Evangelicalism is likely to be a very significant factor in determining Christian approaches to Islam and must be borne in mind during the later presentation of the empirical material.

5.4 EVANGELICALISM IN BRITAIN IN THE TWENTYFIRST CENTURY

Today Evangelicals constitute a significant and active part of the British church. Brierley classifies 50% of the general British population as “notional Christians” who are “neither members nor regular attenders of a church, but who would say they were Christian” (Brierley, 2000, 13). This figure, when considered alongside church attendees, is roughly borne out by the 2001 UK Census in which 71.8% of the population identified themselves as Christians. Most Evangelicals, however, would not view these people as “true Christians” at all as they have not “made a decision” to join the church or religious community. After all, to be an Evangelical Christian requires both volition and activism (§5.1). With this in mind Brierley estimates that there are 1.2 million Evangelicals in England today (2006, 52) and probably 2 million in Britain as a whole (Ashworth and Farthing, 2007) which equates to 40% of all churchgoers including Protestants, Catholics and Orthodox.

Unsurprisingly, however, these Evangelicals are far from being a homogenous group, a fact highlighted by a survey of 17,000 Evangelicals conducted by the EA and *Christian Research* (P. Green, 2011)⁵² which affirmed Bebbington’s observation of the polarization between those focused on doctrinal orthodoxy and those focused on cultural relevance. It also revealed that denominational labels, whilst important, are of limited use in distinguishing Evangelicals both from one another and from other Christians. Several taxonomies have been proposed (see Brierley, 2006, McGrath, 1994, Tidball, 1994, Peck, 2008) which try to capture the various historical, theological and ecclesiological characteristics. Rather than trying to impose a nomenclature for this thesis, however, what is needed is an “identity map” which corresponds to the one that people use in “real life to negotiate the religious identity world” (C. Smith, 1998, 233).

Drawing on Brierley (2006), Peck (2008) and Bebbington (2009) certain labels and oppositions emerge that usefully distinguish the different strands of contemporary British Evangelicalism:

⁵² See www.eauk.org/snapshot for the full report (accessed 19 January 2011).

- conservative v open
- mainstream v charismatic
- denominational v non-denominational

Thus, for instance, the New Churches tend to be charismatic and non-denominational but may either be conservative (*New Frontiers International*) or open (*Ichthus Christian Fellowship*). Pentecostal churches on the other hand tend to be conservative and charismatic but may either be denominational (*Elim*) or non-denominational (*Glory House*). The majority of Evangelical leaders would be familiar with these distinctions making them a useful tool for self-identification (§8.2.b).

A further significant feature highlighted by the *English Church Census*, and also noted by Bebbington (2009), is the increasing strength of the Black Majority Churches (BMCs), especially in the London area (see Sturge, 2005, for an account). Although present in small numbers for many hundreds of years, Christians from the Caribbean and Africa began to arrive in Britain in large numbers during the post-war years in response to the need for labour after the ravages of two world wars and became “the solution that started a problem” (Cashmore, 1989, 79). In the atmosphere of heightened racial tension the first black Christians did not find a welcome in the British churches – Evangelical or otherwise – a fact which Davie calls “one of the saddest indictments of mainline Christianity” in Britain during this period (1994, 26). Instead, these black Christians founded “the free churches of urban Britain” (ibid 63) which became centres of “communal belief” helping to sustain the black community by providing “a whole range of support mechanisms for the immigrant population” (ibid 111).

Today it is in the Global South that the church is growing fastest (Jenkins, 2007b). This is reflected in the fact that some of the the fastest growing churches in Britain have African origins. The *Redeemed Christian Church of God* (RCCoG) with its roots in Nigeria is probably the largest BMC with its biggest congregation, *Jesus House*, attracting 2000 weekly worshippers (Petre, 2006); *Kingsway International Christian Centre* (KICC) is reckoned to be the largest single “mega-church” with around 10,000 members; and *Kensington Temple*, an *Elim Pentecostal* church, is probably the largest mixed congregation with around 3,000 blacks attending out of a congregation of about 5,500 (Brierley, 2006, 99, 275).

Figures from the 2005 *English Church Census* (Brierley, 2006) suggest that in all about 10% of churchgoers in England are now black (over 330,000). As 60% of British blacks (and 80% of Africans) live in the capital (Reddie, 2009) unsurprisingly black churchgoers now outnumber white churchgoers in inner London (Brierley, 2006, 99). This leads to the suggestion that the future of Christianity in Britain lies in the black community. Indeed the phenomenon of so-called “reverse mission” has seen an influx of Christian missionaries from Africa as well as South America who see their task as being to re-evangelize Britain (Ojo, 2007, Catto, 2008, Adogame, forthcoming). However, there is no sign of these churches attracting significant numbers of white Britons and indeed many of the smaller ones are ethnically monocultural even to the extent of continuing to use their African tribal languages.

Of course, there are many other ethnic churches in Britain many of which would be Evangelical. These include Chinese, Iranian and Arab examples centred mainly on London. There is also influence from other international Evangelical movements. For example the *Vineyard* movement, founded in the United States by Wimber, is active in church planting and *Hill Songs* from Australia has a large congregation of some thousands in central London.

5.5 THE EVANGELICAL PUBLIC SPHERE

The real focus of this study, however, is not so much the British Evangelical churches themselves as the public sphere associated with them. And it is not just the churches that host this sphere. Rather it is all the associations, organizations, representative bodies, conferences, networks and media which could be termed Evangelical civil society and facilitates Evangelicals in debating the various issues around which micro-public spheres form.

5.5.A EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATIONS AND NETWORKS

One key association is the *Evangelical Alliance* (EA) which is perhaps the most visible, united face of British Evangelicalism, claiming to represent over 7000 congregations and 750 organizations across the Evangelical spectrum. Clearly it sees its mission being to engage in the wider public sphere:

the Alliance speaks on behalf of its members and represents Evangelical concerns to Government, the National Assemblies, the media and key decision-makers. In resourcing its members and encouraging Christians to fully engage in their communities as responsible citizens, the Alliance strives to make Evangelical truths publicly accessible.⁵³

Through its *Idea* magazine, its website and regular newsletter it provides a focal point for many Evangelicals.

Not all Evangelicals, however, choose to be part of the EA. Other associations have sprung up, normally to affirm a more conservative position, such as *Affinity*, a “network of many hundreds of Bible-centred churches and Christian agencies throughout Britain and Ireland” which grew out of the British Evangelical Council in 2004.⁵⁴ *Reform* is another similar “network of individuals and churches” committed to “reforming the *Church of England* from within according to the Holy Scriptures”.⁵⁵

There are also many organizations committed to social action, evangelism and political lobbying that are significant in the formation of the EPS. Examples are too numerous to mention exhaustively but include such well-known agencies as the *Bible Society*, *Scripture Union*, *Tearfund*, *Operation Mobilization* and *Faithworks*. Two groups of particular interest for their campaigning on Christian values are *Christian Concern for Our Nation* (CCFON) and *Christian Voice* which both feature in this study. There are even a few Christian political parties notably the *Christian Peoples’ Alliance*, which despite having a few councillors has still not had a candidate elected to parliament. This does not mean to say that Evangelicals are not present in parliament though; indeed they are part of a growing number of Christian MPs across the parties (Tomlinson, 2010).

Conferences also play an important part in this public sphere. The *Keswick Convention* has already been mentioned (§5.3) and is still in existence today. Even more significant though are *Spring Harvest*, founded in 1979, *New Wine*, founded in 1989, and the many other annual conventions of the various Evangelical streams. These see tens of thousands of Evangelicals coming together for a week of teaching, preaching and training and are a major influence on the life of the churches in

⁵³ <http://www.eauk.org/about> (accessed 14 December 2010).

⁵⁴ <http://www.affinity.org.uk> (accessed 23 October 2010).

⁵⁵ <http://www.reform.org.uk/pages/whatisreform.php> (accessed 23 October 2010).

Britain (A. Walker, 1998). They not least provide Evangelical church and parachurch leaders with a wider platform than they normally have access to in their local churches, and their teaching is customarily distributed through CDs and, increasingly, internet podcasts.

5.5.B EVANGELICAL MEDIA

The latter are part of a highly developed network of Evangelical media in Britain ranging from subscription television to internet blogs and forums. The traditional linchpin has been the Christian publishing house. Nonetheless, whilst Evangelical leaders still write and publish many books, it seems that Christians are not reading enough of them and Evangelical publishers (like many others) are struggling in the present economic climate.⁵⁶ Of course it is not only texts published in formal book and pamphlet formats that make up a modern discursive public sphere. Many different media are utilized. Articles are published in Evangelical magazines and newspapers such as *Christianity*, *Evangelicals Now*, *Evangelical Times* and *Third Way*. Evangelical authors are also represented in *The Church Times*. *Premier Radio* and *God TV* are amongst the stations, including many from America and elsewhere, that broadcast Christian programming via satellite and the internet. Websites and blogs too are increasingly used to disseminate Evangelical debate. *Fulcrum* is a popular internet forum committed to “renewing the Evangelical centre” and hosts discussion on many topics.⁵⁷ Some Evangelicals even host their own websites and write blogs which generate debate within the community.

5.5.C ISSUES FOR DEBATE IN THE EVANGELICAL PUBLIC SPHERE

So what type of issues do Evangelicals discuss? There are many different topics around which Evangelical micro-public spheres coalesce. They tend to be broadly concerned with theology – that is what Evangelicals believe; ecclesiology – that is how Evangelicals organize themselves; or socio-political concerns.

An example of the first was the theological controversy surrounding the publication of *The Lost Message of Jesus* which challenged the traditional Evangelical understanding of the atonement (Chalke and Mann, 2003). Steve Chalke, the book’s co-author, is a popular Christian leader who

⁵⁶ Note the sale of Wesley Owen and STL in 2009. See <http://www.thebookseller.com/news/107408-wesley-owen-stores-enter-administration.html> (accessed 16 December 2010).

⁵⁷ <http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/forum/> (accessed 16 December 2010).

frequently appears on television and radio. Following publication, "for the conservative stalwarts Chalke was a heretic, but for many others he remained a hero" (Bebbington, 2009, 98), and many media were deployed in the ensuing furore. A rebuttal was published in book form (Jeffery et al., 2007); a magazine article reported the new rift between Calvinists and Arminians (Roberts, 2008); blogs were written (e.g. Warnock, 2008); and even the bishop of Durham, Tom Wright, wrote an article on *Forum* (Wright, 2007). The debate was so widespread that in July 2005 the EA arranged a special symposium at the *London School of Theology* bringing the main protagonists together.⁵⁸ It is a good example of the fears that surround any perceived liberalizing of Evangelical theology which is a very important theme in the Evangelical debate about Islam (§9.3).

An example of an ecclesiological debate is the discussion surrounding the "Emerging Church" movement which seeks to find new, socially relevant expressions of the church (for a discussion see Murray, 2005). This is also a good example of how the EPS is influenced by the wider transnational public sphere. Brian McLaren (2001), an American Evangelical, is a particular proponent of new forms of church which have been heavily criticized by others such as Don Carson (2005), another American. This conversation is carried on in Britain via magazines (e.g. Buckeridge, 2009), newsletters (e.g. Downes, 2008), internet fora and national conferences.

Finally, there are many socio-political issues about which Evangelical Christians feel strongly, and groups like *Christian Action Research and Education* (CARE), the *Christian Institute* and CCFON regularly campaign about topics such as abortion, embryology, gender issues and the family. Indeed it is the response of Evangelicals to one such particular socio-political concern – the increasing Muslim presence in Britain – that forms the focus of this research.

Having given a brief overview of Evangelicals in Britain and the manner in which the EPS is constituted, I turn in the next chapter to consider this Muslim presence in Britain. This is followed in Chapter 7 by an examination of the specific interaction between the two groups and an outline of the formation of an Evangelical micro-public sphere specifically concerned with Islam.

⁵⁸ See http://www.eauk.org/theology/key_papers/Atonement/atonement-statement.cfm for a report (accessed 23 October 2010).

CHAPTER 6 MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN

“It is clear that Islam is a crucial factor that we ignore at our peril. Not only does it offer an additional religious choice for Europeans, it has become, simply by its existence, a catalyst of change. Islam must adapt to Europe (that is clear), but Europe must also adapt to Islam.”

(Davie, 2006, 271)

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Barely a weekly passes without some mention – positive or negative – of Islam in the British media. Amidst the journalistic comment and occasional public hysteria it is sometimes hard to discern the truth. However, as Muslims form the Other of this study, it is important to have an accurate understanding of their situation in contemporary Britain. This chapter provides an initial overview by looking at the global context, the history of the Muslim presence in Britain, the development of a British Muslim public sphere and issues of concern to Muslims.

6.1 THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

The situation of Muslims in Britain cannot be considered in isolation from certain interpretations of global events. It is now common place to frame the discussion of Islam and its role in the international community as a supposed “clash of civilizations”, tragically encapsulated in the rubble of the Twin Towers. Huntington’s seminal article (1993) and his subsequent book (1996) predicted a future of global conflicts between the great civilizational blocs of the world, the chief of which would be the clash between the West and the Muslim world with its “bloody borders” and rising fundamentalism. An altogether more optimistic view of the “end of history” was held out by Fukuyama (1992), who predicted the imminent victory of liberal democratic ideals over all other ideologies, including Islam despite its current resistance. These two books are frequently used paradigmatically to illustrate polarized approaches to international relations with respect to Islam (see for example Hefner, 2005, Eisenstadt, 1999).

There are those who feel that Huntington’s vision of the future has been confirmed by world events. The spectre of Al-Qaeda and Islamist terrorism; the intractable wars in Iraq and

Afghanistan against Islamist-inspired insurgencies; the millenarian rhetoric of President Ahmedinejad of Iran; the worldwide riots following the publishing of images of Muhammad in Danish cartoons; reports of widespread human rights abuses in many Muslim countries; and fears of nuclear-fuelled political chaos in Pakistan all fit well within such a paradigm. Against such an ominous backdrop the presence of unprecedented numbers of Muslims in the West causes considerable unease. Some use reports of high birth rates amongst immigrant communities, street protests and ubiquitous conspiracy theories to stoke fears of an Islamic takeover of Europe, fears which are accentuated by the presence of radical preachers in mosques and the emergence of European-born suicide bombers. It is little wonder then that there is talk amongst some commentators of a coming "Eurabia" (Ye'or, 2005) and even of an already-present "Londonistan" (M. Phillips, 2006).⁵⁹

Not everyone, however, agrees with such Manichean interpretations of world affairs. Nielsen sees such views as "superficial and ignorant" (Nielsen, 1998a, 1). Jenkins believes that "perceptions of a naked 'clash of civilizations' are wide of the mark" and declares that "Eurabian visions are wildly unlikely" (Jenkins, 2007, 205, 284). Eickelman looks at the impact of mass education and media on Muslim populations and sees a coming transformation of Muslim societies in which "the idea of Islam as dialogue and civil debate" gains ground (2000, 20, see also Eickelman and Anderson, 1999). Others argue that there is no incompatibility between Islam and the nation state (Piscatori, 1986), democracy (Hefner, 2005) or the separation of state and religion (C. Brown, 2001, Hussain, 2004b). Esposito & Mogahed draw on data from the Gallup World Poll to show that the majority of Muslims globally want democracy and in fact admire western values of freedom, whilst rejecting western hegemony, neo-colonialism and declining moral standards (2007).

Clash of civilization theories are sometimes seen as influenced by the sort of Orientalist academic approaches heavily criticized by Said (1978). Said describes Orientalism as "a kind of Western projection onto and will to govern over the Orient" (ibid 95). Binary opposition, inculcated by terms such as West and East, inevitably "polarizes distinction ... and limit(s) the human encounter between different cultures, traditions and societies" (ibid 45). Using this sort of reasoning

⁵⁹ The term "Londonistan" seems to have been first used by French counter terrorism experts (O'Neill, 2001). See also Phillips (2010) for why she feels vindicated in her views.

“scholars of Islam and political scientists who emphasize the role of Islam as a system of norms and values ... run the risk of becoming essentialist and ahistorical” (Cesari, 2005, 1016). Salvatore sees essentialism as an over-simplification in the construction of a “Self-Other polarity”, and traces it back to the work of Weber whose study of Islam was hugely influential, although deficient, for future generations of sociologists (Salvatore, 1996, 459). Such essentialism fails to take into account the huge diversity within the Muslim world and finds it extremely difficult to admit that Islam could reform itself because in itself “reform is a betrayal of Islam” as understood from the Orientalist point of view (Said, 1978, 106). Thus Muslim reformers, such as An-Naim (1990), Souroush (2000) or Ramadan (1999), are either not really Muslims and so doomed to failure, or are Islamist conspirators downplaying the Islamic agenda and so not to be trusted.

However, whilst global Islam is often pictured as being in crisis between open reformers and intolerant radicals, there is also a crisis within the West of how to understand Islam – and itself. Is there an essential, essence of Islam, or are different expressions of Islam too broad to be conveniently boxed? With echoes of Locke, can an individual really be trusted to owe fealty both to a national polity and a transnational religion (§3.1.c)? Why do distinct religious identities persist? As Al-Sayyad and Castells point out:

despite our academic preoccupation with globalization as a discourse, the world continues to demonstrate a movement towards cultural differentiation and not homogenization, in which each individual belongs to many cultures and in which people have multiple cultural identities (Al-Sayyad and Castells, 2002, 6).

This is certainly true for Muslims in Britain but is, of course, true for all other communities too.

6.2 THE MUSLIM PRESENCE IN BRITAIN

6.2.A STATISTICS

Given these global debates about the place of Islam in the modern world it is of paramount importance in this thesis to paint an accurate picture of the situation in Britain. That said obtaining accurate statistics for the numbers of Muslims in Europe is problematic not least because some countries, such as France, do not include a census question on religion out of

principle (Cesari, 2004). Happily, however, in 2001, for the first time in recent history, such a question was included in the England and Wales census and the relevant statistics for religion can be seen in Figure 6.1. Although these statistics are now almost a decade old they offer a starting point for estimates of the current number of Muslims in Britain which vary between 2 and 3 million - often depending on the point of view of the speaker.

Statistics are emotive, often minimized by government for political purposes or maximized by both Muslims trying to attract greater benefits and by right wing opponents trying to foment fear amongst the majority. For instance, a video entitled *Muslim Demographics* posted on *YouTube* in 2009 had by April 2011 received over 12.8 million hits.⁶⁰ The makers quoted high birth rates amongst Muslim immigrant communities and predicted that Islam would become the dominant religion in Europe in a few short years. Some social scientists too point to the elevated birth rates of religious groups as a significant factor in projections about the future of religion globally (Kaufmann, 2010). Others are more circumspect in their predictions (Jenkins, 2007a). Whatever the case, it is interesting to note that Britain, in 2001 at least, had one of the lowest percentages of Muslims amongst its main Western neighbours (see Figure 6.2).

It is also important to note that unlike the figures taken from the *English Church Census* (§5.4) these figures give no indication of what percentage of Muslims in Britain could be described as practicing Muslims. As has already been said, a Muslim population tends to resemble a community cult and is in reality “simultaneously a religious community and a political community” (Casanova, 1994, 48). However, when these two forms “meet, fuse, interpenetrate, and repel each other” all kinds of dynamics result (ibid 47). Moving from one to the other can be hugely problematic and consequently Evangelicals and Muslims exhibit significant differences in how they view membership of their respective religious communities. This causes great tension when considering issues of evangelism, religious freedom and the treatment of apostates. Whilst Islam understands itself to be a universal religion and welcomes converts, some of its expressions find it harder to allow its adherents freedom to leave. This is a significant problem for many Evangelicals and recurs throughout this study.

⁶⁰ See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-3X5hIFXYU> (accessed April 2, 2011).

Figure 6.1 – The population of England and Wales by religion⁶¹

Religion	No. of adherents	%age of total
Christian	42,079,000	71.6
Muslim	1,591,000	2.7
Hindu	559,000	1.0
Sikh	336,000	0.6
Jewish	267,000	0.5
Buddhist	152,000	0.3
Other religion	179,000	0.3
No religion	9,104,000	15.5
Not stated	4,289,000	7.3

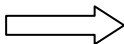
Figure 6.2 – Muslim populations in Western Europe⁶²

Country	No. of Muslims	Total population (millions)	Muslims as %age of population
France	5-6,000,000	62.3	8-9.6
Netherlands	945,000	16.3	5.8
Denmark	270,000	5.4	5.0
Switzerland	310,800	7.4	4.2
Austria	339,000	8.2	4.1
Belgium	400,000	10.3	4.0
Germany	3,000,000	82.5	3.6
Sweden	300,000	9.0	3.0
United Kingdom	1,600,000	58.8	2.8
Spain	1,000,000	43.1	2.3
Italy	825,000	58.4	1.4

⁶¹ Data taken from the UK Office for National Statistics
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=293> (accessed 20 August, 2009).

⁶² Data taken from BBC survey drawing on statistics from various national statistics offices and government agencies 2001-2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4385768.stm>, 23 December 2005, (accessed 20 August, 2009).

Figure 6.3 – Muslims in England & Wales by ethnic background⁶³

Ethnic Group	%age of total no. of Muslims		
Asian or Asian British	73.65		
	(of which)		
		Pakistani	42.52
		Bangladeshi	16.79
		Indian	8.51
		Other Asian	5.82
White (inc. Balkans & E.Europe)	11.62		
Black or Black British	6.88		
Mixed	4.15		
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	3.70		

6.2.B MUSLIM MIGRATION TO BRITAIN

The census figures show that the majority of Muslims in Britain are of South Asian origin (Figure 6.3), a fact attributable to colonial history. Several authors provide a detailed overview of the history of Muslim migration to Britain (e.g. Lewis, 1994, Nielsen, 2004, Rex, 2002)⁶⁴. Early arrivals included businessmen, diplomats and *lascars* (sailors) from Yemen and South Asia, but the main period of Muslim migration to the West came in the post-war period when there was a need for labour and it was natural for European countries to look to their former colonial territories, which for Britain included the Indian Subcontinent. This was the first stage of what is often seen as a “four phase pattern” (Lewis, 2002b, 17). Pushed by political and economic turmoil at home and pulled by the promise of work, large numbers of men began to migrate. Indeed in many cases the workers were specifically invited and British companies went to Asia and held recruiting drives (Vertovec, 1997, 169). The initial cohort of workers came mainly from the newly created Pakistan and later from Bangladesh, although it should not be forgotten that Britain is somewhat unique in Europe in having large numbers of Asian Hindus and Sikhs in addition to Muslims (Davie, 1994,

⁶³ data taken from the UK Office for National Statistics
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=6892&More=Y> (accessed 20 August, 2009).

⁶⁴ See also Sardar (2008) for a highly readable, Bryson-esque account of South Asians in Britain.

26).⁶⁵ Next came a period of “chain migration” as the early workers helped their relatives and friends to migrate and in some cases the men folk of whole villages migrated *en masse*. In the early days little thought was given by British planners and politicians to the future. It was presumed that the migrant workers would eventually return home and indeed the migrants kept close links with their homeland sending remittances and visiting frequently. The third stage of immigration, however, saw wives and families coming to join their husbands. This was inadvertently accelerated by the Immigration Acts of 1962 and 1971 as families rushed to enter Britain before the door closed, and also by the fears of Asian women that their husbands would marry British wives. With the arrival of families, religion, which had largely been associated with “over there”, became more important “over here” (Nielsen, 2004, 106). Women needed the protection of conservative practices; a place was needed for prayer; and children needed to be educated in the *Qur’an*. This required the creation of Islamic institutions such as mosques, *madrasas* (Islamic schools), and funding and lobbying associations (Vertovec and Peach, 1997, 24). Thus began the final stage in the process of migration as a new generation of Muslims were born and raised in Britain.

Since this initial influx from South Asia there have been many other Muslim arrivals. East African Asians, Iranians, Turkish Cypriots, Kurds, Somalis and Afghans have all come to Britain in large numbers, driven by unrest in their homelands. In addition to these asylum seekers and economic migrants there have always been numbers of Arab students and businessmen, particularly in the London area. All of this means that the Muslim population of Britain is extremely diverse and tends to form separate, very localized, ethnically-based communities representing very different traditions and practices of Islam. Around 85% of Muslims in the UK are *Sunnis* but there are also significant numbers of *Shi’ites* as well as other smaller groups like the *Ahmadiyya*⁶⁶ and the *Ismailis*⁶⁷ both of whom are seen as heretical sects by other Muslims (Rex, 2002). Even the *Sunni* community, however, is itself extremely heterogeneous.

⁶⁵ One particular ‘push’ factor that brought ‘Mirpuri’ Muslims to Britain was the building of the Mangla Dam in 1967 in Kashmir which submerged the whole of the town of Mirpur and its surrounding villages. Virtually the whole population migrated, many going to Bradford, which now has the largest Kashmiri population outside Kashmir (Sardar, 2008, 121).

⁶⁶ See <http://www.ahmadiyya.org.uk/> (accessed 6 April 2011).

⁶⁷ See <http://www.theismaili.org/> (accessed 6 April 2011).

The two dominant groups, both of South Asian origin, are the *Barelwis* and the *Deobandis*. The *Barelwis* form the largest group and follow a mystical Sufi form of Islam the most important of which is the *Naqshbandi* school. The *Deobandis*, who have the largest number of mosques and *madrasas*, adhere to a strict, pietistic interpretation of Islam which specifically rejects Sufi practice (Rex, 2002). Several other movements have branched out from its centre in Deoband, India. The Tablighi Jama'at (TJ) is a *Deobandi* "proselytizing and preaching movement, dedicated to reaffirming the basic principles of Islam and to drawing back into the fold Muslims who may have strayed" (King, 1997, 129). It has recently come to public attention over its plans to build a so-called "mega-mosque" adjacent to the Olympic site in East London (Johnston, 2006). Whilst TJ claims to be non-political, there are concerns that it is isolationist and on occasion nurtures radicalism.

Such radicalism is particularly influenced by the writings of Qutb (1906-1966) of the Egyptian *al-Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood)*, Mawdudi (1903-1979) of the Pakistani *Jama'at i-Islami* and, of greatest concern, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) the spiritual influence behind the Saudi kingdom who preached a radical *salafiyya*, which advocates a puritanical return to the practice of the early Muslim community. His followers today are often referred to as *Wahhabis*. More groups could be mentioned but this should suffice to demonstrate that it is problematic to talk about "British Muslims" as though they were one united group. This diversity needs to be firmly held in mind during the following discussion.

Initially Muslims were largely invisible in British society and were not distinguished from the rest of the immigrant population. The main issue of the day was not religion but race and, as has been mentioned (§3.4.a), Britain chose to celebrate cultural difference rather than follow the French in insisting on assimilation. Following the early period of immigration and relative anonymity, several events propelled Muslims into the British public consciousness. The first was the Iranian revolution in 1979. The shock of seeing robed clerics backed by Revolutionary Guards deposing the powerful, western-backed Shah and the horror of the American Embassy siege brought Islam, and particularly this new brand of *Shi'ite* fundamentalism, onto the world stage.⁶⁸ The second

⁶⁸ See Armstrong (2000) for a short history of the Iranian Revolution including an account of how the CIA in 1953 supported the overthrow of a democratically elected government in Iran and the re-

Chapter 6

event was the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, which was followed by Muslim protests including book burnings in northern English cities and a death *fatwa* from the Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran.⁶⁹ The affair confirmed the worst fears of many that Islam was incompatible with western liberal democracy and freedom of speech. Both of these events served notice to the secular elites of the West that religion was making an unexpected and, for them, unwelcome return to the public domain.⁷⁰

Other events reinforced these fears, kept Muslims in the public consciousness and significantly shaped the nature of the Muslim presence in Britain. During the First Gulf War (1990-1) many British Muslims were opposed to the government action, although there was no united voice on the issue (Nielsen, 1998b, 135). The Bosnian civil war (1992-5) caused even greater resentment and mistrust amongst Muslim communities. The impression was of the West allowing Serbian Christians to massacre white Bosnian Muslims, which raised anxiety amongst Asian Muslims as to their own safety, and the resulting anger was harnessed to great effect by radical groups recruiting on British university campuses.⁷¹ More recently the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and 7/7, the perceived police targeting of Muslims in incidents like the Forest Gate police raid, controversial detention without trial, and stop and search policies have continued to dominate the media and therefore to shape the place of Muslims in Britain.

6.2.C MUSLIM CIVIL SOCIETY

These events have happened in parallel with the establishment of many new Muslim institutions and associations giving rise to what Herbert terms a "Muslim civil society" in Britain (2003). Initially Muslims had negotiated and lobbied for rights and freedoms to do with education, food provision and mosque building at a local level. However, with the increasing centralization of power during the Thatcherite period they began to adopt a national focus (Ansari, 2004, 235). The *Union of Muslim Organizations* established in 1970 had had little success in unifying Muslims. The difficulty of forming Muslim representative bodies was highlighted when, shortly after the 1984

instatement of the royal family, a fact which goes some way towards explaining Iranian anger at Western meddling in their internal affairs today.

⁶⁹ For a recent account see Weller (2009).

⁷⁰ For an account of fundamentalist religion on the world stage see Kepel (1994) in addition to Armstrong (2000).

⁷¹ See for example Husain (2007).

launch of a national *Council of Mosques* (COM), Barelwis launched a competing Council of Imams and Mosques, as they perceived COM to be dominated by Deobandis with Saudi connections (Ansari, 2004, 361). The Rushdie crisis, however, precipitated the formation of the *United Kingdom Action Committee on Islamic Affairs* which was more successful in bringing together Barelwis and Wahhabi inspired Deobandis (Lewis, 1997) and eventually led to the formation of the *Muslim Council of Britain* (MCB) in 1996 at the urging of the then Home Secretary Michael Howard. The MCB is still not truly representative as it lacks *Shi'ite* participation and is seen as being dominated by Deobandis with close links to *Jama'at-i-Islami* (Nielsen, 2004). Despite this the MCB became for a time the chief Muslim interlocutor for the government and has encouraged Muslim participation in the political process including voting in national elections. Managing the tension between the demands of the government and the expectations of the Muslim public has not, however, proved easy and the government has since distanced itself from the MCB, championing instead the formation of the *Sufi Muslim Council* despite the lack of grassroots support (Birt, 2005).

Other Muslim groups such as the *Islamic Society of Britain* and the *British Association of Muslims* also encourage participation in wider British civil society. The only attempt at forming a Muslim political party, the *Islamic Party of Britain*, has failed, however, and most Muslims tend to join or vote for one of the mainstream British parties, traditionally Labour (Ansari, 2004, 239).

It is important to note that the Rushdie affair also catalyzed the emergence of rejectionist Muslim groups that eschewed participation in British public life. The *Muslim Parliament* was formed in 1992 by Kalim Siddiqui of the *Muslim Institute* who urged the Muslim community to “isolate itself from the damaging influences” of the wider society and form a “non-territorial Islamic state” with its own separate institutions (Ansari, 2004, 362). Although still in existence, the *Muslim Parliament* is seen as a failure as it has never been truly representative and creates a negative impression amongst non-Muslims (Lewis, 1994). Other radical groups have also emerged; some home grown, others with a transnational element. *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (HT) was formed in Palestine as an offshoot of *al-Ikhwan* and became very successful at recruiting disaffected students on British university campuses in the 1990s with its talk of reviving the Muslim *khilafa* (caliphate) which had ended following Turkey's defeat in the First World War (Nielsen, 2004). The even more radical *Al-Muhajiroun* split away from HT and later became *Al-Ghurabaa*, the *Saviour Sect* and most recently

Islam4UK as each successive group was banned by the government (Neumann, 2008). All such groups have in common a rejection of participation in British society and are closely monitored by the security services.

6.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BRITISH MUSLIM PUBLIC SPHERE

The discourse surrounding such events and the building of such institutions in Muslim civil society – whether participationist or rejectionist - points to the development of what has been called a “British Muslim public sphere” (Herbert, 2004, Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins, 2004). Clearly this is another example of a discursive public sphere similar to the EPS outlined in the previous chapter. As Herbert points out, this sphere is already diversified and pluralized (2003, 190), and a more accurate comparison with the Evangelical sphere would be something like the “*Shi’ite* micro-public sphere” or the “Barelwi micro-public sphere”. For the purposes of this thesis, however, it is the wider Muslim public sphere which is of interest as it is largely that which Evangelicals are reacting to.

As with other spheres, the British Muslim public sphere is mediated in many ways. In addition to public meetings in mosques and community centres, the organizations and associations already mentioned provide fora for face to face debate, official communications and opportunities for informal meeting. There is now a thriving Muslim publishing sector and books, cassettes and videos are available in English and many other languages.⁷² Whilst in the early days the only Muslim newspapers available were London editions of foreign newspapers, there are now several home grown newspapers, magazines and journals for diverse audiences including children, young people and academics.⁷³ There are also television and radio stations broadcasting Muslim programming, such as the London-based *Islam Channel*,⁷⁴ and many of these media have their own websites which encourage debate and comment. Indeed the Muslim public sphere utilizes cyberspace as much as any other group. This has been dubbed the “virtual ummah” and includes

⁷² The Muslim Educational Trust, Amal Press, An-Najm and Greenbird are just some of the Muslim publishers in the UK publishing everything from classical theology to Islamic fiction and children’s books.

⁷³ Publications include *The Muslim Weekly*, *Islamic Times*, *Q-News* (although the last edition appeared in 2006), *The Islamic Quarterly* and *The Revival*, a youth magazine.

⁷⁴ <http://www.islamchannel.tv>

everything from information sharing, fora and online religious authorities to propaganda and “cyber-jihad” (Cesari, 2004, 111-3).⁷⁵

The internet opens up the public sphere to a wide range of participants who do not have access to more traditional Muslim media. It is particularly noticeable that the young, who tend to be more comfortable with technology, and women, often excluded from the mosque and other fora, are well represented on internet bulletin boards and even on television and radio.⁷⁶ Of course the internet also entails a substantial transnational aspect to the British Muslim public sphere, a factor utilized by the full spectrum of traditions representing contrasting intentions.⁷⁷ These types of new media ensure that the boundaries of the emerging British Muslim public sphere remain blurred (Eickelman and Anderson, 1999, xi).

Freedom of speech, however, is controversial within some parts of the Muslim community. Muslims almost without exception are very sensitive to comments about Muhammad and there is widespread support for the introduction of blasphemy laws which would restrict criticism of Islam. Also, as mentioned above (§3.2.a and §6.2.a), religious freedom is itself problematic. It is clear in all schools of Islamic jurisprudence that *ridda* (apostasy) was historically forbidden. There is much disagreement, however, over how this should be interpreted today. Modernisers see it as historically redundant. For instance, An-Na’im says “I am unable *as a Muslim* to accept the law of apostasy as part of the law of Islam today” (1990, 183, emphasis in original) and Talbi believes that:

Islam is a religion (promoting) religious freedom and there is no trace of the legal judgement concerning apostasy in the Qur’an itself, and that this legal judgement is the product of historical conditions in which apostasy was considered as treachery against the homeland in time of war (quoted in Nettler, 2004, 230).

Conservatives, on the other hand, see it as still being an essential part of the *shari’a*, although opinions vary as to how punishment should be implemented. In 2007 Ali Gomaa, the Grand Mufti

⁷⁵ See for example the Muslim Public Affairs Committee (MPAC(UK)) which maintains a large interactive website and forum (<http://www.mpacuk.org>) and Ask Imam, a North American based online authority <http://www.askimam.org/> (both accessed 6 April 2011).

⁷⁶ See *Muslimah Dilemma* for an example of an all female chat show on the Islam Channel, <http://www.islamchannel.tv/MD/> (accessed 2 December 2010).

⁷⁷ See Neumann (2008) for an account of the role of the internet in recruiting radically jihadists.

of Egypt, was reported to have declared that the Qur'an defers punishment for apostasy until the hereafter (Abdel-Tawab, 2007). Qaradawi, however, in a 2006 ruling widely circulated on the internet distinguishes between "minor apostasy" (private conversion) and "major apostasy" in which the apostate openly proclaims his conversion. According to Qaradawi, a popular theologian, broadcaster and founder of www.islamonline.net, the former is to be tolerated, the latter is to be "severely punished by the death penalty".⁷⁸ Such restrictions on freedoms within some parts of the Muslim community make the public sphere a contentious space for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

6.4 ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE BRITISH MUSLIM PUBLIC SPHERE

6.4.A DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The issues of concern to Muslims in the public sphere range widely from discussion of Islamic family life to national and international politics. Muslims in Britain are interested in the daily practice of Islam and are talking about issues like times of prayer, correct procedure for fasting and what is permitted (*halal*) or forbidden (*haram*). They are also concerned with their rights which does not mean that Muslims "compete with Christians, but rather is understood as the realization of freedom of religious belief and equality among citizens" (Cherribi, 2003, 210). Indeed the desire for these rights is often no more than "the exercise of liberal rights according to wholly British procedures and standards, but because they are made by Muslims – tarred with the same brush as Middle East extremists – the demands are not usually perceived as such" (Vertovec, 1997, 173).

Concerns over such rights are closely linked to the feeling that Muslims are socially disadvantaged and are increasingly forming an underclass in Britain. Anwar (2003) presents statistics to demonstrate that Muslims in Britain face higher rates of unemployment, poorer housing and worse health than the rest of the population. Education has long been an area of concern for Muslims, some of whom would prefer their children to attend gender-segregated schools or even Muslim faith schools. Some ethnic groups, particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi boys,

⁷⁸ <http://www.slideshare.net/IslamicBooks/apostasy-major-minor-by-dr-yusuf-al-qaradawi-2777415> (accessed 27 January 2011).

significantly underachieve educationally, although the reasons for this are complex (see Lewis, 2002a, for a fuller discussion).

Western foreign policy is also a high profile concern for many British Muslims. Globalization has transformed the understanding and reality of the global *ummah* meaning that international affairs almost immediately become the local concern of British Muslims (Nielsen, 1997). Since the First Gulf War and the Bosnian crisis some have become increasingly vocal in their opposition to the “war on terror”, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and pre-eminently western support for Israel, with the plight of the Palestinians becoming a *cause célèbre*. These policies are often seen as a war on Islam and a form of neo-colonialism reinforcing western global hegemony and are the subject of much reporting and comment in Muslim media and internet fora, although it should be noted that there is no clear consensus on what the Muslim response should be and attitudes vary considerably within the community.

6.4.B MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF ISLAM

The role of the media is key. Foreign affairs, terrorism, immigration issues and the place of Muslims in Britain are all mediated to the general public, including other faith groups, through national and local newspapers, television, radio and other publications. The media are by no means unbiased in their reporting and much has been written on the treatment of Islam in the media (Said, 1997, Poole, 2002, 2006). According to one report there has been a substantial increase in the coverage of Islam in Britain in the new millennium, rising from 352 stories in 2000 to 4196 in 2006 (Moore et al., 2008). Two-thirds of the reporting treats Islam as a threat or a problem and even the images portraying Muslims tend to have negative connotations. This sort of critical reporting has a profound effect in shaping public attitudes and in fuelling the anxieties of Muslims.

The media, however, are not uniformly negative about Islam. Godazgar (2007) has studied British terrestrial television documentaries and found that the majority of them portray the diversity of Muslims fairly. Although they frequently emphasize difference, the majority of them take a *modernist* approach which is “less general and less absolute” than is the case with some other forms of media (ibid 153). This suggests that some mainstream programming is not unsympathetic to Muslims and that “it is wrong to think that only dreadful or racist pictures of

Islam can be found in the West” (ibid 163). That does not mean, however, that the media can be complacent and there are many ways in which the media could improve its coverage of Islam (see for example Stone, 2004, 69, 71). In short the media cannot be ignored in this study as they are a major factor influencing public perception, including that of Evangelical Christians.

6.4.C ISLAMOPHOBIA

The term Islamophobia first came to prominence through a report by the *Runnymede Trust Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia* entitled ‘Islamophobia a Challenge for Us All’. The report defined Islamophobia as “dread or hatred of Islam – and, therefore, fear or dislike of all or most Muslims” (Runnymede Trust, 1997, 1). Along with a later report (Stone, 2004) the commission found that there was endemic and institutional religious discrimination against Muslims in most sectors of British society. It was suggested that, whilst part of the population had “open views” on Islam, a significant proportion had “closed views”. These opposing views were summarized in a table, an abbreviated form of which is given in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4 – Closed and open views of Islam (adapted from Runnymede Trust 1997, 5)

	Open view	Closed view
Islam seen as:	Diverse	Monolithic
	Interacting	Separate
	Different	Inferior
	Partner	Enemy
	Sincere	Manipulative
Criticism of West:	Considered	Rejected
Discrimination:	Criticized	Defended
Islamophobia seen as:	Problematic	Natural

A report for the Home Office found that the majority of Muslims surveyed did indeed feel that they were sometimes unfairly treated because of their religion (Weller et al., 2001). This is reflected in a Muslim concern for greater legal protection and repeated requests for, amongst other things, the following: religious discrimination to be given the same weight in law as racial

discrimination; the extension of the blasphemy law to include Islam; and a law banning incitement to religious hatred.

Fear of Islam, however, is deeply rooted in European history and is after all “informed by an actual history of military conflicts” (Weller, 2006, 317). The “gates of Vienna” are still a potent symbol of fear as witnessed by the content of the weblog of that name which sees the West’s current encounter with Islam as “a new phase of a very old war”.⁷⁹ So whilst it is clear that Muslims feel threatened and that discrimination is a major topic of discussion in both the Muslim and wider public spheres, it is equally clear that at least some of the majority also feel threatened by Muslims or are suspicious of their presence. Although the situation clearly calls for a broad, open but sensitive debate, there is a concern lest the fear of Islamophobia is itself being used as a device to stifle debate (see Stone, 2004, 21 for examples). Halliday warns that universalist sensitivity towards all religions should “not be at the expense of a critical examination of how these religions treat their members” (1999, 899) – a point acknowledged in the *Runnymede Trust* report:

it is not intrinsically phobic or prejudiced to disagree with or to disapprove of Muslim beliefs, laws or practices In a liberal democracy it is inevitable and healthy that people will criticize and oppose, sometimes robustly, opinions and practices with which they disagree (Runnymede Trust, 1997, 4).

Halliday goes on to suggest that “the alternative to the ‘clash of civilizations’ need not be the mutual indulgence of communities” (ibid 901). Weller also cautions that the term Islamophobia should not lead to special pleading for Muslims. The issues at stake are generic issues for all faith groups and he recalls that non-conformists, Catholics and most recently Jews have also been in similar situations in Britain (§7.1.a). Indeed today any legal provisions should include the rights of “atheists, agnostics and humanists” (Weller, 2006, 316, 324).

To conclude, Islamophobia is a contested term. Muslims suffer it, liberals campaign against it and conservatives are sceptical of it. At its root are questions of identity and belonging. Are Muslims an isolated minority in Britain forever condemned to be aliens or can they be embraced as part of

⁷⁹ Refers to the Ottomans’ sixteenth century siege of Vienna. See <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/> a very active blog maintained by the anonymous Baron Bodissey and Dymphna (accessed 16 December 2009). Interestingly it is included on the Nexus academic search engine.

society whilst maintaining their religious distinctiveness? This issue of identity is of critical importance in the British Muslim public sphere and indeed to the country as a whole.

6.4.D IDENTITY

Set in the context of both a crisis within global Islam and a crisis within Western thinking about Islam, the question of Muslim identity, and particularly the identity of Muslims living within the West, is vital to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Discussion of this issue has become therefore both a touchstone for the Muslim public sphere and a “key site for understanding the intersection of Islam, transnationalism, and the public sphere in Europe” (Grillo and Soares, 2005). Work on this identity has accumulated rapidly, reflected in titles such as *To Be a European Muslim* (Ramadan, 1999), *Towards a European Islam* (Nielsen, 1999) and *Muslim Europe or Euro-Islam?* (Al-Sayyad and Castells, 2002), which are all concerned with the relationship between minority Muslim populations and the western states in which they are living.

In Britain, as elsewhere, this is not a straightforward question, not least owing to the huge ethnic, religious and ideological diversity amongst British Muslims which has already been described. Such diversity has led some to talk of many different “Islams” (Al-Azmeh, 1996, Loosley, 2008, 241). Others, however, prefer to talk not of “many ‘Islams’, but rather (of) many expressions of the Muslim way of life” (Hussain, 2004a, 99). Whatever terminology is used, it is clear that this diversity results in a contested discourse of identity within Muslim communities, a fact which essentialist western discourse often loses sight of.

At a time when Muslims are especially likely to be construed in essentialist terms and as an alien other, it is all too easy to assume that identification with a transnational Muslim community is integral to Muslim identity and that as an individual’s Muslim identification increases so does their psychological distance from their non-Muslim neighbours. The problem is that this takes one vision of Muslim identity as definitive when the reality is one of contestation (Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins, 2004, 55).

Muslims in Britain today are assuming a wide range of identities some religious, some political and some social. Whilst many of these identities are compatible both with traditional Islamic and western societal norms, there has also been a development of negative, oppositional identities, particularly amongst disillusioned, disenfranchised young men in some parts of Britain. This has manifested itself either in a macho “assertive Muslim identity” which tends to criminality and has

little to do with either traditional Islam or Islamic groups of any persuasion (Lewis, 2002a, 137), or a radical political identity that sees isolation from western society and "shouting at rallies and denouncing moderates" as the "most satisfying acts of worship" (Winter, 2003, 21). Such developments are not only of concern to the government and the British public at large, but also the Muslim communities themselves and a "heartfelt search" over the issue of identity and its relation to extremism has been in evidence particularly since the events of 9/11 (Hussain, 2004b). There is a real desire for the Muslim identity to be defined not in negative oppositional terms, but in terms of its positives (Winter, 2003).

The key difficulty for Muslims in the West is the very strangeness of not living in a Muslim majority country. In 1981 Zaki Badawi observed that, "*Sunni* Muslim theology offers, up to the present, no systematic formulation of the status of being in a minority" (Badawi, 1981, 27, quoted in Lewis, 2007, 6). One particular difficulty revolves around the issue of the *shari'a*. This word is often translated as "Islamic law" but in fact it is much broader than that. It is "an Arabic word meaning the path to be followed leading not only to *Allah*, the Most High, but the path believed by all Muslims to be the path shown by *Allah*" (Doi, 1984, 2). Thus as Rippin explains:

(shari'a) is a far broader concept than that generally perceived in the English word (law). Included in it are not only the details of conduct in the narrow legal sense, but also minute matters of behaviour, what might even be termed 'manners', as well as issues related to worship and ritual. Furthermore, the entire body of law is traditionally viewed as the 'revealed will of God', subject neither to history not to change (Rippin, 2000, 83).

Following such a path may clearly be difficult for Muslims living in a non-Muslim country with un-Islamic laws and customs. Certainly it is a cause of great concern for many Muslims who would like to follow its precepts. However, the *shari'a* is a controversial issue in a liberal western democracy with many people associating it with severe criminal punishments and the repression of women. Debates around its compatibility within the British legal system ignite fierce passions, as the Archbishop of Canterbury discovered to his cost in 2008 (§10.3.e).

Despite attempts to develop a rationale for Muslims living in the West, there is still little progress towards a consensus amongst Muslims. At one extreme some argue that for both religious and social reasons Muslims should not live in a non-Muslim country, especially if it causes Muslims or

their children to lose their faith.⁸⁰ As Britain is traditionally seen as part of *dar al-harb* (the abode of war), does not enforce *shari'a* law, is immoral and is at times involved in aggression against Muslim countries, it is argued that Muslims should migrate back to *dar al-islam* (the abode of Islam). Hussain has no time for such arguments and points out that ironically many who maintain this stance still choose to live in the West and in any case Muslim countries are also immoral and condone unjust policies (2004a). Ramadan, among others, reframes the traditional understanding and suggests that the West should in fact be seen not as a place of conflict (*dar al-harb*) but as *dar al-da'wa* (the abode of testimony) (2004, 63). He is concerned to identify the essential teachings of Islam and make them central, whilst stripping away all cultural accretions. This he believes would allow the development of a truly European Islam (ibid 215).⁸¹ However, given that *da'wa* means "invitation" involving proselytism and given the universal claims of Islam (ibid 78), this may not greatly reassure British citizens and politicians of either the right or the left who are wary of Muslim intentions in the West.

Again echoing Locke (§3.1.c), their concern is over the issue of loyalty. Are Muslims loyal to their religious identity or to the nation of their residence? The suspicion is, as a BBC Panorama program put it, that they are *Muslim first, British second*,⁸² the implication being that they are not trustworthy and pose a threat to national security as some sort of "sleepers" or "fifth columnists" allied to an "axis of evil" (Allen, 2005, 51). Many prominent participants in the Muslim public sphere, however, argue vociferously that, to the contrary, "Islam supplies arguments for loyalty" (Winter, 2003, 20). To suggest otherwise is to confuse the philosophical with the political (Ramadan, 2001). Recent opinion polls seem to lend support to this argument. A poll of Asians found that 87% of Muslims feel either "very loyal" (42%) or "fairly loyal" (45%) to Britain even

⁸⁰ See for instance the argument of Joshim Uddin in '21st Century Islamic State - A Case for Hijra' on the website of the *Grande Strategy*, <http://www.grandestrategy.com/2010/01/21st-century-islamic-state-case-for.html>, (accessed 18 January 2011). He feels that "it was the superficial understanding of Islam of our parents which led them to abandon the lands where the *adhan* is heard without fail five times a day to settle in countries bereft of spirituality and religion It is clear from the shari'ah evidences that our presence in the West should leave us worried indeed".

⁸¹ It is interesting to note the parallels here with the discussion of "contextualization" within Christian mission literature (Parshall, 1980) and also discussions about the nature of church in the twenty-first century (§5.5.c).

⁸² First broadcast on Monday 16th February 2009. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_7886000/7886578.stm (accessed 6 April 2011).

though 64% “opposed” British and American military strikes against Afghanistan (MORI, 2001). A second survey shows that 77% of British Muslims identify “extremely” or “very strongly” with the UK, whilst only 50% of the general public do so (Gallup, 2009, 19).

That the loyalty of other religious groups is not questioned in the same way is a source of resentment to Muslims. Seddon points out that:

Protestants have the privilege of being largely excluded from scrutiny when their religious convictions are in contention with their national identity. When there is contention it is usually presented or contextualized as a matter of moral conscientious objection rather than a question of allegiance or loyalty (Seddon, 2004, 142).

Ramadan makes the argument that Muslims too have a right to a “conscience clause”, although only in limited circumstances as Muslims who live in the West are obliged to obey western laws (2004, 96). He sees no necessary conflict for Muslims and argues for the development of a “corpus of adapted law, a *fiqh* for the West” (ibid 99).

This does not mean, however, that Muslims are not looking for recognition and inclusion. Religion is a highly significant self-descriptor, especially for South Asian Muslims in Britain (Modood et al., 1997). This is linked to a rise in “Muslim identity politics” which “has brought new or renewed importance to religion in public policy” (Modood, 2002, 121). Not only do Muslims want an end to religious discrimination and parity with native religions but they also want “positive inclusion of religious groups” (ibid). Such an approach is reflected in the development of “hyphenated identities” whereby young Muslims are “blending the local identities of their environment and friends and the culture of their parents” to arrive at descriptions such as “British-Pakistani-Muslim” (Hussain, 2004a, 86 see also Modood, 2007). Identity markers of this type are not negative oppositions to majority identities but are rather creative attempts to be true to both religious and civil allegiances.

Looking to the future Winter (2003), himself a Muslim, believes that extremism will eventually disappear and that the mainstream will prevail. Similarly Hussain feels that Muslims need to be given “time to settle down” and to realize that “Britain belongs to them and they to Britain” (2004a, 116, 118). Recent angst within the British political establishment over the lack of a clear

definition of “British-ness” has created new problems for Muslims, requiring a process of reflection, discussion and negotiation that it would be unwise to rush. This is obviously still very much work in progress.

Ironically, the debate has also created problems for the majority population who are ill equipped to debate the place of religion in society. Schnapper points out that "Britain itself is facing a crisis of identity linked with the end of empire and entry into the European Community" and this is becoming more rather than less acute (1994, 158). So not only is there a crisis of identity within global Islam and a crisis within the west in the understanding of Islam, there is also a crisis within the West as to its own identity which suggests that “the debate with Islam is in fact a European search for a European soul” (Roy, 2005, 7). This search is clearly reflected in the interaction between the various faith groups in Britain and particularly in the relationship between Islam and the Evangelical community to which I now turn.

CHAPTER 7 THE EVANGELICAL-MUSLIM ENCOUNTER

“Consciously or unconsciously Christians and Muslims have developed in the past, and to a large extent continue to develop, all sorts of strategies in order to avoid recognizing the very fact of religious plurality.”

(Basset, 2000, 286).

+ + + +

The encounter of Christians and Muslims, be they nominal adherents or religious zealots, is unavoidable in the pluralized society of contemporary Britain. The outcome, however, is not necessarily negative:

some Christians and some Muslims, perhaps even an increasing proportion of the membership of both communities, see the relationship as being intrinsically and essentially an adversarial one, but history itself points to the existence of a more positive irenic way of thinking among both Muslims and Christians at certain stages of their history (Goddard, 2000, 4).

That said, in what follows it will be seen that Evangelical Christians have tended to a more negative view of Islam than other Christian traditions. The chapter begins by very briefly sketching the history of the Protestant Christian encounter with Islam and looks at the ways in which British churches have begun to come to terms with the presence of large numbers of Muslims. It then reviews what has been written about Evangelical responses to Islam, particularly comparing the American and British cases. It finishes with an account of the development of a British Evangelical micro-public sphere relating to Islam - the EPS - which is the focus of the remainder of the thesis.

7.1 THE PROTESTANT ENCOUNTER WITH ISLAM

7.1.A THE REFORMATION PERIOD

What follows is a necessarily brief sketch of the contours of the history of the Protestant encounter with Islam. As previously described (§5.3) Evangelicals trace their roots back to the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation, a period during which the Ottoman Empire was at its zenith and its armies were threatening Europe having conquered the Balkans and laid siege to

Vienna. Christian-Muslim relations in the West at this time were largely characterized by an “ideology of isolation” (Lochhead, 1988, §4.3), ignorance and, on the part of “Christendom” at least, fear.⁸³ Following medieval thinking, Islam was generally seen as being a Jewish or Christian heresy.⁸⁴ Space does not permit an in depth examination of the corpus of Reformation writings, but suffice to say that the Reformers along with others of their time saw Islam as a satanic deception, Muhammad as a degraded moral character, often associated with the Antichrist, and Muslims as being sexually depraved on the grounds that they permitted polygamy. They also emphasized what they saw as the theological errors of Islam in denying the Trinitarian nature of God and the sonship of Christ. All of these themes are present in modern day polemic against Islam.⁸⁵ For Calvin, an Ottoman invasion of Europe would have been “the end of Christianity as a power to be reckoned with” (Slomp, 1995, 129), a sentiment with continuing resonance. For Luther the Turks were a judgement from God and constituted one of the three great enemies of God along with the Pope and the Devil (Basset, 1998, 79). For some, however, Islam was a lesser threat than Catholic Rome. Zwingli even hoped that Protestants would be able “to propagate their teachings faster under Islam than under Catholic rule” (Vehlow, 1995, 247).

In parenthesis, this strong historical reaction of Protestant Christians to the Pope and Roman Catholicism has many parallels with western responses to diaspora Islam today. Casanova considers that, in the American context, “today’s totalizing discourse on Islam as an essentially antimodern, fundamentalist, illiberal and undemocratic religion and culture echoes the nineteenth century discourse on Catholicism” (Casanova, 2009, 147). The same could be said of Victorian Britain where Larsen observes that:

⁸³ As already noted both Spain and Sicily were of course part of Muslim empires. Christians and Jews in these areas of Europe as in the Eastern parts of the Muslim empires lived as *ahl al-dhimma*, meaning ‘people under the covenant of protection’ (see note 26 in §3.2.a).

⁸⁴ For an example of early eighth century Christian polemic against Islam see the second part of John of Damascus’ *Fount of Knowledge (Concerning Heresies)* where he says “(Muhammad) after having chanced upon the Old and New Testaments and likewise, it seems, having conversed with an Arian monk, devised his own heresy”, available at http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/general/stjohn_islam.aspx (accessed 8 January 2010).

⁸⁵ For a more detailed treatment of the reformers writings on Islam see Francisco (2007), Slomp (1995) and Vehlow (1995). (Francisco, 2007) (Slomp, 1995), (Vehlow, 1995)

the Church of Rome was seen as a persecuting, illiberal body. There was a long tradition of viewing Catholicism as a threat to the established government of the nation, with the Gun Powder Plot as just one link in the chain (Larsen, 2007b, 239).

Charles Kingsley in an exchange with the Catholic Cardinal Newman famously remarked that "truth for its own sake had never been a virtue with the Roman clergy" thus mirroring contemporary concerns over the Muslim doctrine of *taqiyya* (dissimulation – see §10.4.b).⁸⁶ The comparison with Muslims today is striking: both groups are seen as having aberrant values; both have transnational loyalties; both are associated with the extreme violence of a minority; and both are at times distrusted by the rest of society. This prompts Weller to:

look at the possibility that the place of Roman Catholics and of anti-Catholicism in English social, political and religious history might be helpful for illuminating aspects of current debates around 'terror', 'religious radicalism', 'religious freedom' and public policy' in the UK" (2009, 185).

Clearly there are examples that would provide further fruitful comparisons if studies were undertaken, including European Jews and possibly American communists under McCarthyism.

7.1.B THE PROTESTANT MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

Khalaf in his review of seventeenth to nineteenth century Christian literature on Islam observes that "once images are firmly rooted in the collective memory of a community, they die hard" (1997, 217). So it was that much subsequent Protestant writing followed the polemical tradition of the medieval and Reformation periods.⁸⁷ The development of Evangelical thought on Islam is particularly closely connected with the literature of the Protestant missionary movement of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which was a period dominated by an "ideology of competition" (Lochhead, 1988, see §4.3.c). Islam was no longer a threat but was still to be engaged in spiritual battle. The apologetics of Henry Martyn, the polemics of Karl Pfander, the criticism of Samuel Zwemer, and the appreciation of Temple Gairdner all represent different strands of the Evangelical approach during this period. Goddard (2000, 125) suggests that Gairdner's more irenic approach had the greater influence within denominational missionary

⁸⁶ *MacMillan's Magazine*, 1864, quoted on <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/kingsley/ckbio.html>. I am indebted to Archbishop Rowan Williams for drawing my attention to this example.

⁸⁷ See chapters 1-3 in Kidd (2009) for an overview of mainly American literature in this period.

societies but that it was Zwemer's confrontational approach that was dominant amongst Evangelicals. In either case the common thread was the general expectation, increasing with the confidence engendered by colonial expansion, that Islam would decline and Muslims must be converted to Christianity (J. Smith, 1998). This optimism reached its zenith with the Edinburgh missionary conference of 1910 with its goal of world evangelization within a generation.

Smith, however, (1998, 366) notes an irony here. The success of the resulting global missionary effort to plant churches led to the foundation of the *World Council of Churches* (WCC) in 1948, an organization which today is held in deep suspicion by many Evangelicals wary of its emphasis on ecumenism and dialogue. During the same period there was also a crisis of confidence amongst Evangelicals engaged in mission to Muslims. In a typical example Sharkey (2008) recounts how in Egypt the meagre fruit from the effort expended amongst Muslims caused a reappraisal of the missionary enterprise within the Protestant agencies. The decline of colonial power and the rise of Arab nationalism, coupled with a growing appreciation of Islam, caused some Evangelicals to move away from conversionism towards helping "to make Muslims better Muslims" (Watt, 1991, 364). The American University of Cairo and other philanthropic efforts embraced an "ideology of partnership" (Lochhead, 1988, see §4.3.d) and during the post-war Arab-Israeli crisis many missionaries withdrew altogether. To many Evangelicals this, along with developments at the WCC, smacked of accommodation and led to a "growing divide between (those) in favour of dialogue and those who (were) not" (Basset, 1998, 88). Since that time a dialogical approach has been favoured by more liberal mainstream Protestants but has been treated with scepticism by conservative Evangelicals.

7.1.C THE CONTEMPORARY ENCOUNTER

During the latter part of the twentieth century the development of a Christian public sphere concerning Islam can be observed. According to Nielsen it was only in the early 1970s that the churches in Britain began to respond to the interreligious encounter (1999, 119). Given the lack of expertise in interfaith issues amongst clergy, the church often turned for advice to missionaries returning from Muslim countries, some of whom would have had Evangelical connections. "Personal networks and resources crossing over all the sectors, public and private, home and abroad, came together to establish both formal and informal responses to the Muslim presence" (Nielsen, 1999, 121). In other words a micro-public sphere was beginning to emerge.

A full account of the history and complex nature of contemporary dialogue between Christians and Muslims is outside the remit of this thesis.⁸⁸ Lewis (2008) notes some of the challenges. Firstly, the participants in dialogue have often been unequally matched as the first generation of Muslim leaders were ill-equipped linguistically, culturally and intellectually to engage with specialist Christian Islamicists. Secondly, it has been difficult to move on from polite conversation to address “contentious societal problems” (ibid 96). A particular challenge in this regard has been the tension between mission (evangelism and *da’wa* respectively) on the one hand and dialogue on the other. Mitchell especially mentions the distrust engendered by the “decade of Evangelism” promoted by former Archbishop George Carey. She sees it as particularly problematic that “overtures to dialogue tend to be instigated by Christians rather than Muslims” thus fuelling suspicion of evangelistic motives (Mitchell, 2008, 27). Thirdly, partly because of this, it has taken time to build long term trust, although Nielsen is optimistic that a good foundation has been laid for the future (1999, 128). Finally, there has been a need to establish institutions and initiatives to facilitate the dialogue.

In 1977, the *British Council of Churches* (BCC) formed the *Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths* (CRPOF) which in 1993 spawned the *Churches’ Commission for Inter Faith Relations* (E. Harris, 2007). The *Church of England* has also been active in putting such structures in place and Sudworth (2009b) highlights key reports including *Towards a Theology for Interfaith Dialogue* (Board of Mission and Unity, 1984) and *Jews, Christians and Muslims: the way of dialogue* (Nazir-Ali and Pattinson, 1994). He points out, however, that these reports raised concerns, “especially amongst Evangelicals, that too much was being given away and presumed positively of Islam”. He especially notes Bishop Nazir-Ali’s objections to some of the language used (Sudworth, 2009b). Two more recent reports of note are *Presence and Engagement* (Mission and Public Affairs Council, 2005) and *Generous Love* (Network For Inter Faith Concerns, 2008) which specifically respond to the fact that today 900 parishes out of a total of 13,000 in England have a more than 10% presence of minority faiths (*Presence and Engagement*, 27) . Alongside the various reports, the *Inter-Faith Consultative Group* was set up in 1980 and the *Network for Inter-Faith Concern* in

⁸⁸ For more detail see Bennett (2008), Goddard (2000), Siddiqui (2000), Haddad and Haddad (1995) and Barnes (2002). (Bennett, 2008); (Goddard, 2000); (Siddiqui, 2000); (Haddad and Haddad, 1995); (Barnes, 2002)

1993 in order to advise the *Church of England* on its relationship to other faiths. However, it was not until the creation of the CMF in 2006 that a formal national body was established to bring Christians and Muslims together.⁸⁹ Of course there have been other initiatives in this time including Carey's engagement with *al-Azhar University* in Cairo and his launch of the *Building Bridges* seminars in 2002.⁹⁰ There have also been regional initiatives such as the *St Philip's Centre, Leicester*, and *Bradford Churches for Diversity and Dialogue*. Interestingly Evangelicals have been involved in some of these later initiatives and it is important to note that - despite its problematic nature - there are an increasing number of Evangelicals who are engaging in dialogue. The evolution of this Evangelical engagement and the development of an EPS concerned with Islam is explored further below (§7.3). Before turning to this, however, I review the recent literature on the Evangelical encounter with Islam in both the American and British contexts.

7.2 THE MODERN EVANGELICAL-MUSLIM ENCOUNTER

7.2.A THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

The literature reviewing the Evangelical contribution to writing on Islam is rather sparse. In particular little research has been done on British Evangelical responses to Islam – a lacuna that this thesis aims to fill. Kidd's recent book (2009) *American Christians and Islam* provides an excellent overview of work in the American context and as the subtitle suggests deals with *Evangelical culture and Muslims from the colonial period to the age of terrorism*. He finds that for American Evangelicals "discussions of Islam have historically revolved around several key themes: the desire to see Muslims convert to Christianity, the fascination with missionary work among Muslims, the mixing of political policy and theology as it relates to the Muslim world (and Israel), and the insertion of Islam into eschatological schemes" (ibid 165). This latter category has particularly been associated with the premillennial dispensationalism of authors like Hal Lindsey⁹¹ who, in his provocatively entitled *The Everlasting Hatred*, states that "Islam represents the single greatest threat to the continued survival of the planet the world has ever seen" (Lindsey, 2002, 11

⁸⁹ See Goddard (2009, 108) for a description of the structure and work of the CMF. Also see <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/> (accessed 6 January 2010).

⁹⁰ The first of the annual seminars was held in 2002 (see Ipgrave (2002)).

⁹¹ Lindsey is best known for his *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970) which has sold millions of copies. More recently pre-millennial eschatology has been made popular by LaHaye & Jenkins' *Left Behind* series published by Tyndale.

quoted in Kidd, 2009). The prevalence and influence of such theological views amongst politicians in the United States has been dubbed “theopolitics” and has not gone unnoticed by Muslims, particularly in the Middle East (Murad, 2009).

Casanova corroborates Kidd’s findings. He believes that a pre-existing “mainly Protestant native backlash against Islam” was exacerbated by 9/11 (Casanova, 2009, 161). He identifies three main sources of the “new anti-Muslim evangelical discourse”: “militant pre-millennial Zionism” which sees all Muslim countries as enemies of Israel; the “missionary competition between Muslims and Christians” which leads to the “evangelical frustration of being unable to preach openly the gospel of Jesus Christ in Muslim countries”; and finally support for the global “war on terror” which some Evangelical leaders have characterized as a crusade against “an essentially violent Islam”.

Kidd also notes a great increase in Christian publishing on Islam and terrorism since 9/11 which has generally “essentialized and stereotyped Muslims out of pain, anger and fear” (2009, 144). Ironically he points out that when Evangelicals paint the current military conflicts as the harbinger of “an inevitable spiritual clash hurtling toward Judgment Day” they “unwittingly ape the rhetoric of the Muslim *jihadists* they demonize” (ibid 163). He also finds that in many cases it is converts to Christianity from a Muslim background who have “supplied the conservative American Protestant with inflammatory characterizations of Islam” (ibid 147).⁹² This suggests that the influence of ex-Muslims will certainly be a factor to consider in the UK context.

The rush to reveal the “true nature” of Islam is not entirely new and neither is it uncontested. Despite the litany of invective against Islam from such high profile Evangelical leaders as Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and Franklin Graham there are still some who “call for charity and understanding amidst the din of apocalyptic warnings and denunciation of Islam” (Kidd, 2009, 145)⁹³. For instance Tony Campolo, who describes himself as a “radical Evangelical prophet”, clearly does not believe that Islam is essentially violent and says that it upsets him that “some of

⁹² Examples include Caner and Caner (2003) and Gabriel (2002).

⁹³ In a 2003 CBS interview Falwell said “I think Mohammed was a terrorist. I read enough of the history of his life, written by both Muslims and non-Muslims, to know that he was a violent man, a man of war.” <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/10/03/60minutes/main524268.shtml> (accessed 6 January 2010). In a 2009 interview with CNN Graham repeated his contention that Islam is essentially a violent religion <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByovBdIRV2o> (accessed 6 January 2010).

America's most prominent Evangelical leaders contend that God is on our side in the war" (2004, 144). He cites St Francis of Assisi and Louis Massignon as models of peaceful reconciliation towards Muslims. The lasting impression from Kidd's book, however, is that the majority of American Evangelical writing on Islam is negative and this seems to be reflected in the poll data. Kidd draws attention to a 2004 Pew Forum poll which showed that, compared to a national average of 37%, 46% of white Evangelicals viewed Islam unfavourably and this rose to 54% amongst those who attended church more than once a week.⁹⁴

Cimino quotes similar polls in an article which includes a content analysis of five books written by American Evangelicals before and 13 books written since 9/11 (Cimino, 2005). He identifies four broad types of Evangelical writing on Islam. Firstly, *apologetic* writing displays a "distinctively anti-Islamic thrust" (165). Since 9/11 there has been "a noticeable change of emphasis" and writing now tends to draw "sharper boundaries" with Islam being painted as "an essentially violent religion" which worships a "false god distinctly different than the God of Christianity and Judaism" (ibid 162, 166). The second type of writing involves the *prophetic* interpretation of the place of Islam in the end times, often as the enemy of Israel. For instance George Otis sees Islam as the *Last of the Giants* (1991) and identifies the *mahdi*, or messiah, of *Shi'ite* Islam with the anti-Christ. Cimino also finds Otis' book to be influential in the third category of writing which is the *charismatic spiritual warfare* literature which pictures Christianity as locked in a spiritual battle with the demonic powers which are supposed to be behind Islam. Finally, Cimino does find that a minority of Evangelicals, motivated by a desire to evangelize Muslims, take a softer more *contextual* approach which is more affirming of Muslim culture. In his concluding discussion Cimino points out that, although a majority of Evangelicals in America view Islam as an enemy of their faith, a fact which helps to maintain their own religious identity, Christians and Muslims actually "share a consensus on several moral/social issues" and should see the real struggle as being against "secularists and religious liberals" (ibid 172).

It is important to recognize that American Evangelicalism is not a monolith and embraces a variety of responses. This was made clear by Hoover through a quantitative analysis of articles appearing in *Christianity Today* and *World*, two right wing American Christian magazines, which "did not suggest a gathering storm across *all* of evangelicalism" (Hoover, 2004, 14 emphasis in original). He

⁹⁴ <http://pewforum.org/docs/index.php?DocID=54> (accessed 16 December 2009).

cited inflammatory comments by high profile Evangelicals such as the Southern Baptist Jerry Vines⁹⁵ but also pointed out that there were more irenic responses which were given very little media coverage. One example was an open letter published in the *Washington Post* urging President Bush to adopt a more balanced Middle East policy which was signed by 59 leading Evangelicals, including Campolo, Phillip Yancey and Gordon MacDonald (Murphy, 2002). Hoover concluded that "we must beware of simplistic assumptions about a homogenous Evangelical population girding for battle with Islam, for they do not bear up under empirical scrutiny" and sees "strong indications of a divide between the centre right and the hard right" in America (2004, 15, 16). Whether this divide exists in the British context will be a major question for later analysis.

It must again be emphasized that, although it is helpful to consider attitudes amongst American Evangelicals, the context is very different in Britain and, as with the empirical and theoretical work of Smith and Hunter (§4.4), comparisons can only be drawn with extreme caution. Moreover, Evangelicals in the United States are a much larger group than Muslims, a crucial distinction from the context in Britain, where their numbers are more commensurate and both groups tend to view themselves as minorities.

7.2.B THE BRITISH CONTEXT

As mentioned, little has been written specifically about British Evangelical reactions to Islam. Ipgrave gives three examples of Evangelicals who typify Lochhead's "ideology of hostility" (2008, see Lochhead, 1988, §4.3). He refers to David Pawson as a conservative Evangelical expecting "Islam to supplant Christianity as the dominant religion in Britain" due to the "laxity and error" of the church (Ipgrave, 2008, 7). Ipgrave describes Patrick Sookhdeo of *Barnabas Fund* as taking a "more nuanced approach" in distinguishing between the religion and the people but who nonetheless represents Islam as "a unified and monolithic system" (ibid 8). Along with other Evangelicals Sookhdeo is "fed by the concern which many Christians feel over the situation of their co-religionists who are members of minority communities in Muslim-majority states" (ibid). Ipgrave sees him as being "widely influential in the historic churches" and suggests that his views

⁹⁵ In 2002 Vines told a Baptist conference that "Islam was founded by Muhammad, a demon-possessed paedophile who had 12 wives, the last one of which was a 9-year-old girl", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A14499-2002Jun19?language=printer>, (accessed 6 January 2010).

converge with “secular views in the effort to exclude Islam from public recognition”. Ipgrave’s third example of Evangelical hostility is the website *Answering Islam* which in its apologetic approach he believes to be close to Lochhead’s “ideology of competition” (ibid 9).⁹⁶

In her discussion of the response of the *Church of England* to Islam, Mitchell makes reference to three Evangelical “practitioners” of Christian-Muslim relations (2008). Bishop Kenneth Cragg is a pioneer in the field who has written over 30 books. Mitchell rather snidely describes him as someone who “despite his Evangelical upbringing always asked deep theological questions and was not satisfied with simplistic answers” (2008, 30). For Cragg, God is at the centre of both faiths and “communication and relationship” are consistent themes (ibid 31). Mitchell does not specifically describe Philip Lewis as an Evangelical but sees him as an educator who takes a rather more sociological approach: “Lewis argues that the Christian vocation is to go forward in confidence rather than certainty; in faith and hope, rather than knowledge” (ibid 34). Finally, Mitchell portrays Michael Nazir-Ali, the first Asian bishop in Britain, as an influential Evangelical Anglican who draws on Cragg for his ideas of hospitality.

Cragg’s significance is widely recognized and Siddiqui describes him as being “very influential among a generation of Christians across all denominations” (Siddiqui, 2005, 673). Wood has recently written a monograph comparing the oeuvre of Cragg with that of Newbigin, another very influential Evangelical bishop writing on the theology of religions (Wood, 2009). As Wood, a Baptist, is a participant in the EPS no further comment is made on his work here. It will, however, re-emerge in later chapters.

The most comprehensive review of Christian writing on Islam which includes some British Evangelicals is Zebiri’s *Christians and Muslims Face to Face* (1997). Her “analytical survey” of both popular and scholarly, post-war Christian and Muslim literature again mentions Cragg as “the most influential figure in contemporary Protestantism” with regard to Islam (ibid 186). She rehearses the historical legacy of Christian views on Islam as either a man-made heresy or satanic deception portending the apocalypse and judgement of God; she then reviews both the popular and academic contemporary responses of Christians and Muslims to one another. Whilst apart from Cragg none of the specialist Christian Islamicists or theologians she mentions could be described as

⁹⁶ See www.answering-islam.org (accessed 6 April 2011).

Evangelical, she does mention several British-based Evangelical writers as having contributed to the “Protestant missionary literature” on Islam, namely Colin Chapman, Ida Glaser, Martin Goldsmith, Chawkat Moucarry and Michael Nazir-Ali, all of whom I consider to be part of the national elite of the EPS. Although the works analysed by Zebiri predate the period under consideration in this thesis, her comments are of interest. In particular the themes she draws out provided a useful pointer for the data collection. She categorizes the attitudes in this mainly derivative material under three headings: *Islam and Qur’an; Muhammad;* and the *relationship between God and humankind*. There is considerable disagreement over many issues including: whether *Allah* is the God of the Bible; whether the origins of Islam are human, demonic or neither; whether the rise of Islam is an indictment against the church and its failure to preach the Gospel to the Arabs; and whether there is any common ground between Islam and Christianity. Contrasts are often made between the relative emphases on themes such as love and sin in Christianity and power and law in Islam. Attitudes towards Muhammad also vary from a guarded admiration which compares him to the Old Testament prophets with all their failings, to outright rejection and severe criticism of his moral failings and use of violence. In contrast to some of the American literature, however, Zebiri found that there was “no suggestion of an apocalyptic role for Islam” in the end times amongst British writers (ibid 101). These are all themes which reemerge in Chapter 9.

Interestingly Zebiri notes that “most of the works cited quote extensively from books on Islam written by Muslims, and many refer to the diversity of interpretation among Muslims. At the very least the authors could be said to have made a serious attempt to engage with Islam as professed by Muslims.” She also notes that the “poor quality evangelistic literature” is mainly written by people that “have not lived in Muslim countries” (1997, 125). This leads her to remark that “one should not overlook the possibility that friendships with Muslims might have not just an emotional but also a philosophical and epistemological impact” (ibid 224). This idea is explored further with reference to my own material (§11.1.b).

Zebiri also recognizes the difficulty that Christians face in writing about Islam whilst trying to:

maintain a delicate balance between acknowledging Muslims as fellow believers and recognizing and respecting their ‘otherness’. To go too far in either direction is to entail opposing risks: the

temptation to harmonize Muslim and Christian beliefs may lead to an undue Christianizing of the Islamic, while laying emphasis on the otherness of Islam may lead to alienation (Zebiri, 1997, 220).

This balance is particularly acute as it is no longer possible to write for a solely Christian readership; it must be assumed that the work will be read by Muslims. Indeed it will be read not only by Muslims but also by those of other faiths and none.

Goddard (2000), in his exploration of the history of Christian-Muslim relations, also reflects on why Evangelical Christians find the relationship with Islam particularly difficult. He recounts the anecdote of a Muslim who, observing the presence of missionaries in Pakistan, said, “the Protestants seem to come here because they hate Islam and the Catholics because they love God” (ibid 189). Reflecting on this revealing story Goddard suggests four reasons why some Evangelicals might struggle with Islam more than other Christians. Firstly, conservative Evangelicals have a high view of the infallibility of the Bible which is challenged by the Qur’an. Likewise their high view of Christ is also challenged. Thirdly, he believes they tend to identify Islam as a threat to western culture which they regard as being Christian. Lastly, he again identifies the Christian Zionism prevalent in North America as leading to the demonization of Islam. These themes will reoccur throughout Part III.

One further piece of British research that should be mentioned at this stage is Herbert’s (1996) PhD thesis *The Common Good in a Plural Society*, not least because the subtitle, *Christians, Muslims and the public arena*, is very similar to the title of this thesis.⁹⁷ Herbert’s work, however, has a very different focus. His concern is with philosophy, law and public policy. He does not seek to understand Christianity – Evangelical or otherwise – on its own terms but rather sees it as a community identity label juxtaposed rather perfunctorily with “Muslim” on the one hand and “liberal” on the other. Neither is he interested in Evangelical Christian discourse. None of the subjects of my research appear in his work apart from Nazir-Ali, whose early work Herbert lists in his bibliography but does not discuss. He does critique the work of Newbigin but mainly engages those writing from within a philosophical framework, particularly MacIntyre and Millbank. Whilst in earlier chapters I have drawn on Herbert’s publications with respect to civil society, his doctoral research is not of direct relevance to the Evangelical-Muslim encounter.

⁹⁷ Herbert later wrote a book based on his thesis entitled *Religion and Civil Society: Rethinking Public Religion in the Contemporary World* (2003).

Finally, it should be noted that on occasion the various participants in the EPS themselves refer to types of Evangelical responses to Islam in their writing. For instance, Chapman identifies five emphases and their proponents although he notes that they are not necessarily mutually exclusive positions (Chapman, 1989, 8):

- *“A traditional response: no compromise with Islam”* - conservative exclusivists who see no good in Islam.
- *“A new threshold: we need a new theology of religions”* –an inclusivist if not pluralist approach.⁹⁸
- *“The call of the minaret: let’s approach Islam at its best”* – Cragg (2000).⁹⁹
- *“Folk Islam and power encounter: let’s recognize Islam as it is”* –Zwemer and more recently Musk (1989).
- *“Gospel and culture: let’s reduce every unnecessary hindrance”* –Parshall (1980) and the contextualization movement.

Sookhdeo (2006, 103-7) also identifies different Evangelical approaches to Islam:

- *Evangelistic* – looking for common ground and similarities between the two faiths as a basis for sharing the Gospel.
- *Caring and sharing* –seeking to love, show concern and offer practical help to Muslims.
- *Apologetic* –defending the Gospel against Muslim polemical attack.
- *Didactic* - teaching and equipping Christians to understand the differences and avoid confusion.
- *Eschatological* –focusing on the role of Islam in the *End Times* possibly as an antichrist agent.
- *Motivated by justice* – expressing concern for the rights of minority communities in Muslim lands.
- *Reconciliatory* - Christians and Muslims co-operating together on social issues (although he feels the use of the word “reconciliation” is unbiblical in this context).

⁹⁸ Taken from Brown (1976).

⁹⁹ *Call of the Minaret* was originally published in 1956.

- *Societal* –Christians taking social and political action to warn the authorities and policy makers about the dangers of Islam.
- *Dialogical* –highlighting the positives but ignoring the negatives.
- *Pluralistic* –seeing Islam as theologically compatible with Christianity.

These various responses illustrate the breadth and diversity that exist within the EPS. The later analysis (§12) draws these together with the typologies explored in Part I (§4.3) and suggests that the discourse of Chapman, Sookhdeo and other British Evangelicals like them forms a religious micro-public sphere (§2.5) around the topic of Islam in Britain.

7.3 THE FORMATION OF AN EVANGELICAL PUBLIC SPHERE CONCERNED WITH ISLAM

In the last twenty years there has been a surge of interest in mission to Muslim majority countries amongst Evangelicals, especially through the focus of the *AD2000 Movement* on the so-called “10/40 window” (see Kidd, 2009, 129).¹⁰⁰ However, during the post-war years the locus of the Evangelical-Muslim encounter moved towards Western Europe and North America, and it is the presence of an increasing number of Muslim communities in previously Christian majority countries which is of immediate interest in this thesis. The perception of this presence as a threat has meant a rise in an “ideology of hostility” (Lochhead, 1988, §4.3) towards Muslims in society as a whole and amongst some Evangelicals in particular.

Many Evangelical books on Islam were written prior to 2001 including the prodigious output of Cragg and the no less influential work of Sir Norman Anderson, the Arabist and legal specialist who led Evangelicals into “re-engagement with culture, society, politics, and ecumenism and spoke frequently on the relationship of Christianity to Islam (arguing) for the compatibility of proclamation and dialogue” (Thompson, 2008). There was also the work of former missionaries like Charles Marsh (1975, 1980) and stories of Muslim conversions to Christianity such as that told by Bilquis Sheikh (1978). To these can be added books on how to evangelize Muslims such as *Reaching Muslims Today* (North Africa Mission, 1976) and many on the issues facing Christian

¹⁰⁰ The ‘10/40 Window’ refers to the region between latitudes 10⁰N and 40⁰S between which, Evangelicals, lie the greatest number of non-Christians or ‘unreached peoples’ - mainly Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists.

mission to Muslims.¹⁰¹ Moreover several of the current participants in the EPS started their writing careers from the 1970s onwards including Sookhdeo (1977, 1990),¹⁰² Goldsmith (1982), Nazir-Ali (1983, 1987, 1998), Musk (1989, 1992, 1995) and Chapman (1995, 1998).

There was also significant Evangelical involvement in the Anglican engagement with Muslims despite the objections already noted (§7.1.c). Reports from Evangelical theologians Newbigin and Sanneh led to the founding of the BCC's CRPOF (§7.1.c) and the EA sent Sookhdeo as an observer to the committee (E. Harris, 2007, see 7.1.c). Chapman also wrote a couple of influential articles (1978, 1989) that are cited in later works.

In 1997 a conference entitled *Faith and Power* was held in London which Lewis observes was:

organized by Evangelical Christians who realized that Muslims were understandably concerned with such issues. This (was) a new and welcome departure for many Evangelical churches which, historically, if they thought of Muslims at all, did so in terms of debate and evangelism (Lewis, 2001b, 194).

Out of this conference grew the *Faith and Society* dialogue group which held three further conferences from 1998 to 2000 as well as forming focus groups to look at various social issues. Chapman, Glaser, Riddell and Christopher Lamb were all involved in the organization (Glaser, 2000a, 29). Although these events were attended by more Christians than Muslims, they are an example of how "Evangelical Christian approaches to other faiths have diversified beyond traditional mission activities" (Riddell, 2004b, 147 see Glaser, 2000a, for a more detailed history).

This all sets the scene for the dramatic increase of interest in Islam in the new millennium. In particular all of the big annual Evangelical conferences including *Spring Harvest*, *New Wine* and *Keswick* now routinely feature seminars on Islam attracting anything from 50 to 1000 people. Articles appear in Evangelical magazines such as *Christianity*, *Evangelicals Now*, *Evangelical Times*

¹⁰¹ For example a collection of the work of the missionary Vivienne Stacey can be found at <http://www.stfrancismagazine.info/ja/content/blogcategory/35/49> (accessed 11 November 2010).

¹⁰² Sookhdeo wrote six books prior to 2000 but interestingly none of them mention Islam in the title although the two cited dealt with Asians in Britain. It is also interesting to note that he placed a lot more emphasis on the need to welcome Asian migrants in his earlier writing. He said, "Asians in Britain need love and compassion Christian love will speak to the heart of the Asian in sharp contrast to the rejection which he so often experiences" (1977, 13).

and *Inspire*. It is the Evangelical authors and speakers – some of whom have already been mentioned – who take part in these initiatives that I have identified as the elite participants in the emerging EPS. In the next chapter I go on to describe how I went about identifying this group and the methods I used to conduct my research.

CHAPTER 8 THE RESEARCH PROJECT

"I know that I am caught up and comprehended in the world that I take as my object."

(Bourdieu, 2004, 114)

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This chapter sets out the methodology I adopted to investigate the EPS and its interaction with other public spheres. It provides an overview of and rationale for the strategy employed and explains how the research informants were chosen. It then describes the empirical phase of my research paying particular attention to the difficulties I experienced and the changes that I had to make to the original plan. An account of the analysis follows and the chapter closes with a consideration of my own position with respect to those I interviewed.

8.1 THE BEST LAID PLANS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STRATEGY

The initial challenge was to design a project collecting data that would elicit answers to my first two research questions:

1. What is the nature of the Evangelical public sphere which has formed around the subject of Islam and Muslims in Britain and how is it mediated within British churches?
2. What are the patterns of responses to Islam and Muslims exhibited within this public sphere?

The discussion of this data would then suggest possible answers to the remaining two questions:

3. How will these responses affect community relationships amongst Evangelicals, Muslims and government?
4. What are the likely trajectories of British Evangelicalism in the light of the Muslim presence?

Although I had an initial plan, this changed and evolved as I “determin(ed) the most practical, efficient, feasible and ethical methods for collecting data *as the research progress(ed)*” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, 138 emphasis added). I originally intended to trace the flow of activity in the EPS from the national elite through local church leadership to congregational membership in the hope of identifying, not just attitudes, but also the influences fuelling those attitudes. Due to time constraints it proved impractical to collect data at the congregational level. Consequently this thesis addresses primarily the attitudes of the Evangelical national elite and church leaders.

I chose to adopt a qualitative approach using purposive sampling (Bryman, 2004, 333) which I believed would yield the most nuanced data reflecting the thoughts and feelings of these leaders with respect to Islam. I gathered and reviewed all the naturally occurring material in the public domain (§8.3.a) and supplemented this with interviews (§8.3.b) which I felt would provide rich insights and help me to explore the attitudes and motivations of the participants. They also gave me an opportunity to build a network of relationships.

A quantitative survey was a more attractive option at the local church leadership level. A nationally circulated questionnaire, for instance, would gather data from as many church leaders from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible. This, however, was clearly beyond both my time and resource constraints. I decided therefore to conduct a limited geographical study with a sample of church leaders and London seemed the obvious location.

London is the heart of influence within the nation, not just politically and economically, but also within the churches. The Greater London area encompasses 11% of England’s church congregations, 20% of all churchgoers and 23% of all Evangelicals, not least because of the presence of the African and Caribbean diasporas (§5.4). According to the *2005 English Church Census* it is the one area in the country where attendance is increasing and it is home to several “mega-churches” which have congregations in their thousands made up particularly of young people. Indeed, countrywide 57% of all churchgoers in their 20s attend church in London (Brierley, 2006, 44, 249).

Secondly, London was likely to offer a full range of the different types of Evangelical churches that I needed to include in the study. Every denomination and stream is represented there. Finally,

London is also home to 38% of Britain's Muslims (UK Census 2001). So although the churches in the survey are not necessarily geographically adjacent to Muslim communities, the cosmopolitan nature of London means that the church members and their leaders cannot fail to be aware of the presence of Muslims. I felt that this should ensure that the presence of Muslims and Islam was a live issue for these churches without it necessarily being a special concern. This would have been the case had I chosen an area with a very large Muslim population. I was frequently asked why I did not interview churches in Bradford, for instance. However, I was trying to gauge the reactions to Islam of typical British Evangelicals rather than of those who have been forced by their circumstances to give Islam special consideration.

My original plan was to interview the church leaders and then trace the influence of the EPS into the congregation itself by conducting either focus groups or questionnaires with members in each of the churches. In the event both proved difficult to operationalize. Contacts were difficult to make and some church leaders were either too busy or felt it was too sensitive to permit. I did pilot a questionnaire in my home church and distributed it to three of the London churches where I had contacts and could get permission. After a long period of effort, however, I received but a dozen replies from one church only. With time and resources running out I took the decision to limit myself to the survey of local church leaders supplemented by observations at their churches.

8.2 WHO'S WHO? ESTABLISHING THE SAMPLES

8.2.A THE NATIONAL ELITE

From the outset it was clear that there were certain *key participants* in the post 9/11 British EPS who were regularly writing and speaking about the issues surrounding the presence of Islam and Muslims in Britain. In order to identify them I examined different Evangelical media including books, pamphlets, magazines, conference audio and internet material. I collected 46 books written specifically about Islam by 29 British-based Evangelicals *writing as Evangelicals*. In addition to this I found 6 chapters in edited volumes and 11 widely circulated booklets. I did not include books written for an academic audience (e.g. Riddell, 2001) or those books that deal more generally with all faiths, the uniqueness of Christ or missionary biographies (although I have drawn from these books once an author was included as a key participant e.g. Cotterell, 2006). Neither

did I include older books that have been reprinted since 2001 (e.g. Miller, 2008) unless it was a new edition (e.g. Musk, 2003). As I was focusing on the British context I included books written by non-British nationals resident in Britain but did not include books either published overseas or by authors not actively participating in the British EPS. The resulting list of authors was:

Azumah, John	Green, Stephen	Smith, Jay
Bell, Steve	Hicham, E.	Solomon, Sam
Brother Andrew	McRoy, Anthony	Sookhdeo, Patrick
Challen, Ed	Moucarry, Chawkat	Sookhdeo, Rosemary
Chapman, Colin	Musk, Bill	Steer, Malcolm
Cotterell, Peter	Nazir-Ali, Michael	Sudworth, Richard
Cox, Caroline	Orr-Ewing, Frog & Amy	Taylor, Jenny
Dye, Colin	Pawson, David	Wood, Nicholas
Glaser, Ida	Riddell, Peter	Zeidan, David
Goldsmith, Martin	Smith, Andrew	

In order to identify which of these authors are *key* participants I considered who of them had been invited to speak at the major Evangelical conferences by looking at the listing of audio recordings available for purchase from all conferences held since 2001. I also took into consideration other texts from magazines and the internet. I discounted those authors who had written a book but did not appear to be active in other media. This eliminated Challen, Hicham, Steer and Zeidan.¹⁰³ It should also be noted that the Dutch “Brother” Andrew is not resident in the UK but I included him as an *occasional participant* due to his influence through *Open Doors*, his occasional appearances at British conferences and because his books are very popular with British Evangelicals.

At the same time it became clear that there were others who had not written books or chapters and hence were not on this list but who were influential in other ways. These people became apparent to me through the quantity of informal texts they produced, through the references made to them by other key participants and through the organizations they led. Alan Craig for example was a local councillor in Newham, was leader of the *Christian People’s Alliance* (CPA) and was actively engaged in opposition to the East London “mega-mosque” (§6.2.b). Andrea Williams leads CCFON and is frequently involved in issues involving Islam. Bryan Knell speaks at conferences and is also a key player in *Global Connections* (an affiliate of the EA). Finally, former

¹⁰³ Although I do refer to one text by Zeidan in §11.4.c.

Archbishop George Carey, whilst he is not a specialist on Islam, is well-known as an Evangelical and has made several widely reported speeches commenting on Islam. I included him as an occasional participant along with Joel Edwards the former general secretary of the EA. Both were kind enough to grant me interviews.

There were also others I considered but discounted. These included Hugh Goddard, Toby Howarth, Christopher Lamb, Philip Lewis, David Marshall and Guy Wilkinson, who have all been affiliated to Evangelicalism in the past but on further enquiry either do not currently self-identify as Evangelicals or are not actively addressing Evangelicals. Rather they are involved in academia or in the organizational structure of the *Church of England*. As their writing is not published for an Evangelical audience and they do not speak at Evangelical conferences or churches I decided not to consider them as active participants in the EPS.¹⁰⁴

The process of refining this list of participants continued over the first 20 months of the project as I collected the data. Indeed the identification of the participants in the EPS is in a sense one of the findings of this research. Further biographical details for each of the key informants are provided for reference in Appendix A.¹⁰⁵ The final list I adopted to represent the national elite of the EPS is given in Figure 8.1. Added to these are four occasional participants: Brother Andrew, Carey, Edwards and Marshall.

I do not claim that these individuals are the sole participants in the elite EPS or that there are not important contributions from other actors. Rather I have identified these people as the *key* participants who are actively and regularly seeking to influence British Evangelical opinion with respect to Islam and so represent the major strands within the EPS. It is these 28 participants that I chose to be the particular focus of my study.

¹⁰⁴ It should be noted that Marshall has taught Islam at a theological training course organized by *Holy Trinity Brompton* and I did in fact interview him before deciding that he should not be included as an elite participant in the EPS. I include him here as an occasional participant.

¹⁰⁵ A fold-out copy of Appendix A is provided on the back cover of the thesis for ease of reference.

Figure 8.1 – The national elite of the EPS

Azumah, John	Green, Stephen	Smith, Andrew
Bell, Steve	Knell, Bryan	Smith, Jay
Chapman, Colin	McRoy, Anthony	Solomon, Sam
Cotterell, Peter	Moucarry, Chawkat	Sookhdeo, Patrick
Cox, Caroline	Musk, Bill	Sookhdeo, Rosemary
Craig, Alan	Nazir-Ali, Michael	Sudworth, Richard
Dye, Colin	Orr-Ewing, Amy & Frog	Taylor, Jenny
Glaser, Ida	Pawson, David	Williams, Andrea
Goldsmith, Martin	Riddell, Peter	Wood, Nicholas

8.2.B THE CHURCHES

In selecting the London churches to survey I needed to identify a manageable sample that I could realistically gain access to. Bearing in mind the discussion of diversity within British Evangelicalism (§5.4) my aim was to include a range of:

- a) Evangelical churchmanship from conservative to open and from mainstream to charismatic
- b) denominational affiliation from established church to non-denominational
- b) ethnic identities especially including the BMCs
- c) the biggest most influential Evangelical churches in London

I drew up a list of large Evangelical churches in central London using personal knowledge, internet search engines, directories of churches and advice from other church leaders. From these I selected what I considered to be a practical and representative sample. I was not able to establish contact or obtain interviews in all the churches that I hoped to due to the lack of response to my letters or the health of various leaders. I was helped, however, by one of the black church leaders who gave me introductions to several other churches. I eventually interviewed leaders from the the 14 churches listed in Figure 8.2 (see Appendix B for further details).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ A fold-out copy of Appendix B is provided on the back cover of the thesis for ease of reference.

Figure 8.2 – Churches in the London case study

Church name or pseudonym	Churchmanship
All Souls, Langham Place	– Conservative mainstream Anglican
Chinese Church of London	– Non-denominational
Christchurch (New Frontiers International)	– Conservative charismatic New Church
East London Tabernacle	– Conservative mainstream Baptist
Glory House	– Conservative Pentecostal
Holy Trinity Brompton	– Open charismatic Anglican
“a large Evangelical Charismatic Church”	– Open charismatic New Church
Kingsway International Christian Centre	– Conservative Pentecostal
Redeemed Christian Church of God	– Conservative Pentecostal
“a conservative Evangelical Anglican church”	– Conservative mainstream Anglican
“a central London church”	– Conservative charismatic non-denominational
St Paul’s Ealing (New Wine)	– Open charismatic Anglican
World Harvest Christian Centre	– Conservative Pentecostal
Greenwich Vineyard	– Open charismatic New Church

To these could be added *Kensington Temple* (KT), a large multiethnic Elim Pentecostal church. Although I was unable to obtain an interview there, the pastor, Colin Dye – included as a participant in the EPS (§8.2.a), – has written on Islam and there are a significant number of texts in the public domain emanating from KT including audio of sermons by Jay Smith and Sam Solomon. I had also hoped to interview a leader in the Caribbean churches and the pastor of a large Baptist church. Unfortunately despite several attempts both interviews had to be cancelled due to ill health.

Again I do not claim that this sample is exhaustive or indeed representative of Evangelicals in London. From the size of the congregations, however, these churches represent over 20,000 Evangelicals (half of them in KICC) which is 7.5% of Evangelical churchgoers in inner London and more than 1.5% of the total in England (Brierley, 2006). So the views and attitudes of their leaders are not insignificant.

8.3 WHAT'S WHAT? COLLECTING THE DATA

Marshall and Rossman (1999) suggest that qualitative researchers typically adopt four methods for collecting primary data, and at different times I have utilized all four in one way or another. Firstly, I have unavoidably been a participant observer in the research as I have previously been involved in church leadership, have taught about Islam and know some of the participants personally. I reflect on the implications of this involvement further in §8.5. Secondly, my observation has entailed “the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours and artefacts” (ibid 106) and I collected and organized all texts, events, meetings or observations relevant to the EPS throughout the period of my research. Thirdly, as discussed below, I have systematically collected and analyzed all the naturally occurring documents related to the EPS. Finally, I have conducted in-depth interviews with the participants.

8.3.A TEXTS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

As I began reviewing the more than 50 books and booklets written by the key participants it quickly became clear that I needed to devise a system for organizing such large amounts of material. I initially attempted to use NVivo analysis software but experienced technical problems. I then reverted to a purely paper collection but found the quantity unmanageable. Eventually I used MaxQDA software, which, whilst it lacked some of the more advanced features of NVivo, is specifically designed for qualitative data analysis (QDA) and worked extremely well for my purposes. It enabled me to organize all my notes and texts, to code them and to perform complex searches to retrieve relevant information.

For every book I noted down quotes and significant issues raised that pointed to the author's attitudes or responses to Islam and wrote a short summary. These notes were then loaded into the analysis software. As the reading of the books ran concurrently with the interviews, the two processes informed each other. I did, however, ensure that I thoroughly familiarized myself with an author's work before interviewing him or her. As the data in Part III are presented thematically rather than by author or publication, an annotated bibliography of all the books reviewed can be found in Appendix C.

In addition to the books, as part of a wider monitoring of Evangelical media, I collected any other texts written by or quoting the key participants, along with other relevant articles about Islam. Where possible I utilized the online archives of periodicals to search for texts on the topic. The publications reviewed are listed in Figure 8.3.

Figure 8.3 – Evangelical periodicals, magazines and newsletters

Periodicals	Newsletters & magazines of organizations
Anvil	Barnabas Aid (Barnabas Fund)
Christianity Magazine	Frontline (Open Doors)
Church Times ¹⁰⁷	Go (Interserve)
Evangelicals Now	Idea (Evangelical Alliance)
Evangelical Times	New Wine magazine
Inspire	
Third Way	

The majority of these publications are explicitly Evangelical. The *Church Times* whilst being broader still carries articles by Evangelicals like Riddell, a regular correspondent, as well as repeated references to particular Anglicans such as Nazir-Ali.

I also monitored Evangelical internet websites, forums and blogs (Figure 8.4). That said due to the huge volume of material available this study cannot claim to be a comprehensive survey of Evangelical websites in the post-2001 period. The work in this respect should be seen as indicative and is used to support other sources. Where key participants were writing on these forums, however, I included their texts in the analysis.

In order to include the major Evangelical conferences in my review I obtained 73 audio recordings of talks or seminars on Islam by 24 of the key participants. I listened to these over the whole of the empirical phase of the project and made notes on their content and main points. Only the most relevant quotes were transcribed for use in the analysis and loaded into MaxQDA. In most cases these sermons repeated material that could already be found in the speaker’s books. There

¹⁰⁷ Note that the *Church Times* is not specifically an Evangelical publication.

were on occasion, however, illuminating illustrations and views expressed on current affairs that offered an additional perspective.

Figure 8.4 – Evangelical websites, forums & blogs

URL address	Name of site
www.alansangle.com	– <i>Alan’s Angle</i> , the blog of Alan Craig
www.answering-islam.org	– a website focusing on apologetic and polemic material
www.barnabasfund.org	– <i>Barnabas Fund</i>
www.christianconcern.com	– <i>Christian Concern for Our Nation</i> (was www.ccfon.org)
www.christian.org.uk	– <i>Christian Institute</i>
www.christianvoice.org.uk	– <i>Christian Voice</i>
www.distinctlywelcoming.com	– <i>Distinctly Welcoming</i> , the blog of Richard Sudworth
hwww.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk	– <i>Fulcrum Forum</i>
www.licc.org.uk	– <i>London Institute for Contemporary Christianity</i>
www.youtube.com/user/PfanderFilms	– <i>Pfander Films</i> , the video site of Jay Smith
www.pilcrowpress.com	– <i>Pilcrow Press</i>

Christian television and radio are not as influential in the British Evangelical community as they are in the United States. They are present though, and American programming is also available via satellite. In the event it proved very difficult to obtain information on programming dealing with Islam on these media. Detailed programming schedules are not published and producers did not reply to my email enquiries. Nonetheless, I was able to retrieve a small amount of data from online archives but found no accurate records of the involvement of key participants apart from a few interviews and debates.

Finally, I gathered all the texts either written by or mentioning the key participants in the mainstream media using the Nexis search engine. These again were loaded into MaxQDA for later analysis.

8.3.B INTERVIEWS

Marshall and Rossman discuss the particular nature of interviews with elite subjects who have been selected “on the basis of their expertise in areas relevant to the research” (Marshall and

Rossman, 1999, 113). Such interviewees have the advantage of being “intelligent and quick-thinking people, at home in the realm of ideas, policies and generalizations” (ibid 114). This was certainly true of the national Evangelical participants I interviewed and also the church leaders. Such subjects, however, also present a number of challenges.

I started interviewing the national elite in July 2008, somewhat earlier than anticipated due to the personal circumstances of some of the interviewees. Approval for the research phase had been received from the university’s Ethics Committee in April 2008. The submission to the committee included assurances that my research objectives would be clearly explained to each participant, that information gathered would be held securely and confidentially, and that any participant who so chose would be granted anonymity.¹⁰⁸ This final assurance was important as I anticipated that some of the key participants would be concerned about security, or indeed might even refuse to participate at all. This proved to be the case.

The reason is not hard to understand. Evangelicals are active evangelists and they are committed to making disciples, including among Muslims. This sort of venture meets with fierce resistance from the Muslim community and both evangelist and convert can face real danger as a consequence. Indeed, several of the participants have reported receiving death threats (see Gledhill, 2008). For this reason I had to give assurances to church leaders that I would not ask questions about evangelism or converts amongst Muslims as they feared for the safety of their congregations and the converts involved. I was also requested not to ask questions about overseas mission in Muslim countries. Security is clearly a significant issue for many of these people and I have respected their concerns. Where anonymity was requested I have used a term or phrase of the interviewee’s own choosing such as “leader of a large Anglican church”. Consequently I have not been able to name all the churches in the London case study (see Fig. 8.2 and Appendix B).

My task was made more difficult by the screening of *Unholy War* (Barnett, 2007), a *Channel Four Dispatches* documentary primarily about the plight of apostates from Islam. The programme featured interviews with several of the EPS participants and was – unexpectedly for them – highly critical of Christian evangelism amongst Muslims in Britain. This unsympathetic public exposure

¹⁰⁸ Copies of the letter sent to interviewees and the consent form are included in Appendices D and E.

meant that my research was conducted against a backdrop of defensiveness and suspicion amongst some Evangelicals who felt that they had been deceived and betrayed by the media.

A few of the interviewees, both in the elite and in the churches, were already known to me personally and there was little trouble in arranging interviews. Others I had either met briefly at conferences or shared mutual friends with. Yet others, however, I had to approach without such introductions, relying on my association with various churches to lend credence to my request. This I usually did by a combination of e-mail and letter (Appendix D), although I also telephoned at a later stage if no reply was received.

A few failed to reply, particularly amongst church leaders, which I initially interpreted as inefficiency, over-busyness or lack of interest. Some, however, were unable to participate due to health or family circumstances. More interestingly, there were others that refused to take part either for reasons of security, as discussed above, or possibly due to my own identity. As I occasionally speak publicly on the topic of Islam, these individuals may associate me with an irenic response to Islam. In an increasingly polarized community this may have put me in the “other camp”. This is a factor which I have had to take into account throughout the research.

In total I conducted 37 interviews:

18 with key participants in the national EPS

4 with occasional participants

14 with church leaders

1 with Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, as background to my research

The interviews were conducted mainly in the office or private home of the interviewee. This created ideal conditions for recording and the digital device used produced high quality recordings for later transcription. A few people opted to meet in cafés where the background noise was occasionally an issue. One interview was by telephone and so was unrecorded and a further interview was via Skype which I was able to record with the interviewee’s permission. All participants were given the option of reviewing the transcript before analysis but in the event all declined.

At the outset of each interview I explained my research clearly and sought to establish a rapport with the interviewee. I offered the option of anonymity but quickly found that it was difficult for them to make a decision. Signing the ethics consent form (Appendix E) at that point also introduced an awkward, formal dimension to the conversation. So I adopted the tactic of explaining the concept of consent, optional anonymity and the need to sign a form at the beginning but suggesting that we wait until after the interview before they made a decision. For those who were nervous about what might be asked this seemed to reassure them as they would be making a decision in the light of what they knew they had said. As it turned out none of the key participants opted for anonymity as their opinions were already well established in the public domain. Several of the church leaders, however, asked for anonymity. In one case this was for reasons of security. For others, who were not necessarily the senior leader, it was because they felt unable to speak for their church as a whole and felt it better if the name of their church was not included. These churches are referred to by a generic description of the interviewee's choosing (Appendix B).

The interviews lasted 45 to 90 minutes and being "semi-structured" were "much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories" (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, 108) and left me "freer to probe beyond the answers" seeking "clarification and elaboration on the answers given" (May, 2001, 123). Nonetheless in order to keep the conversation on track and to ensure a level of comparability I used an interview schedule (Appendix F). This evolved during the early interviews and adjustments were made in response to ideas arising. This had to be the case given that it was not possible to fully pilot my schedule. As the questions were highly specialized and formulated for a certain elite group of people, it was difficult to conduct a trial interview with those not part of this group. I did pilot it with someone relatively familiar with the topic area, but it was a rather unsatisfactory exercise. In some cases I was able to obtain missing data through a follow up email.¹⁰⁹

Despite the interview schedule my aim was to allow the interviewee to talk freely without too much interruption. This was a difficult judgement to make. As Marshall and Rossman point out

¹⁰⁹ The interview schedules for both the key participants and the church leaders can be found in Appendix F.

“an elite person may turn the interview around, thereby taking charge of it” (1999, 114) and this was a particular danger as many of the interviewees were preachers and had little difficulty in talking! Indeed in several interviews I collected a great deal of material that was not central to my research. I was also conscious of the time involved as I had promised that the interview would be 60-90 minutes and I wanted to honour that commitment with busy people. Sometimes I had to move the conversation on to ensure that we touched on all the necessary areas.

Finally, during the course of the fieldwork, I visited 8 of the churches in question and observed a Sunday worship service in order to get an understanding of the variety amongst these congregations and to see the context in which they met together. I kept notes of all these visits but do not specifically cite them in my later analysis, although they provided me with an interesting insight into the life of the churches. These visits also gave me an opportunity to examine the various books on Islam available in the churches and to look out for other relevant literature.

8.4 WHICH “BUCKET”? ANALYSING THE DATA

The progression from data collection to analysis is rarely linear and sequential:

along with choosing appropriate strategies for data collection, the researcher must address the complex processes of managing, recording and analyzing data these processes occur dialectically throughout the conduct of a qualitative study as modifications are made in the initial design (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, 140).

This certainly proved to be the case in my research. As I gathered the empirical material, I loaded a total of 165 separate texts into MaxQDA including all the interview transcripts, observations, texts and book notes. This became the focus of a “content analysis”, understanding this as “the intellectual process of categorizing qualitative textual data into clusters of similar entities, or conceptual categories, to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes” (Julien, 2009, 120). Based on my reading and my experience in the field, I developed a provisional set of themes which I expected to find present in the data. Some of these were broad topics such as attitudes to “violence”; others were more specific subsets of these topics, such as the “war on terror” or “Islamic terrorism”. As I began the analysis further themes emerged from

the texts themselves such as the recurring theme of the “Crusades”. To each theme I assigned a code.

In the coding process “categories are generated through prolonged engagement with the data” which “then become buckets or baskets into which segments of text are placed” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, 154). The MaxQDA software allowed me to select portions of text and mechanically assign them to these different codes. These portions could then be retrieved using automated searches. The development of these codes proved to be an iterative process in which my understanding developed throughout the analysis necessitating many and repeated adjustments to the system.

In the early stages I was too ambitious in trying to label every slight nuance and I created far too many codes (some 18 main categories with a total of 159 sub-codes) that proved impossible to deploy with any consistency. As a result I broadened the categories and reduced the codes to 16 main categories with 70 sub-codes (Appendix G) and at the end of the analysis had over 4150 individually coded segments of text. These I collected together under the various categories, printed out and read through again in order to identify patterns and connections.

From this reading I was able to discern a natural progression within the themes which dictated the eventual order in which I presented the data: Evangelical perceptions of Islam (§9) inform their reactions to socio-political events (§10), which in turn affect their relationships with both Muslims and other spheres (§11). Before turning to this empirical material, however, I must address the issue of my own position with respects to the informants and the Evangelical community.

8.5 WHO AM I? THE REFLEXIVE QUESTION

From the outset I had to confront the insider/outsider dilemma. As has already been made clear not only am I from an Evangelical background but I am also an occasional participant in the EPS. I am sometimes invited to speak and teach on the topic of Islam at churches and conferences; I attend meetings with some of the subjects of this study; and I am now beginning to write on the topic. This was initially of some concern to me. How could I “objectively” study a group of people of which I am a part? How could I critically analyze beliefs with which in some cases, though

certainly not all, I have sympathy? Furthermore I was undertaking the research because I was concerned about developments within the EPS and wanted to make a positive contribution to the community. Did this not make me an “improver” or a “reformer” with a compromising “external agenda”, someone whom Bruce at least believes has no place in sociology (1999, 83)? Moreover, given that within the social sciences “hatred of religion has been a more respectable scholarly emotion than love, particularly hatred of one's own religion” (O'Flaherty, 1999, 341), how could I undertake sociological research as a person of faith?

My concerns, however, were alleviated by the many sociologists who recognize that no-one can obtain complete objectivity. Hufford, for instance, observes that, whilst “disinterest is urged on scholars of religion, disinterest is impossible in religious issues” (Hufford, 1999, 297). Even more specifically Hammersley admits that “researchers are always part of the social world they study; they can never step above it in order to gain an Olympian perspective or move outside it to get a ‘view from nowhere’” (2003, 934). Indeed one's background can be harnessed as a positive benefit: “experience linked to one's social past can and must be mobilized in research, on condition that it has previously been submitted to a rigorous critical examination” (Bourdieu, 2004, 113).

Whilst it would be exaggerating to say that I had undertaken a “rigorous critical examination”, I have come to realize that it is better to admit openly my position so that the reader can take this into account in the following analysis, than it is to pretend that I am completely free of all bias and prejudice. At the start of the research I strongly identified with an irenic approach towards Islam and would have had considerable sympathy with those in this study who espouse such a position. I still do. However, as the research draws to a close I also have a greater appreciation of the reasons why others take a more combative stance. In short I feel that I have been changed through the process.

To explore this further, McCutcheon (1999) outlines four possible methodological approaches to the study of religion that account for the position of the researcher. The first is the *empathetic* approach, associated with the *Verstehen* school, whereby the researcher tries to enter the subject's world in order to understand their experience from within. To a large extent, however, I could not “move in” because I had never really been “out”. Despite the fact that I do not always

“fit” comfortably in the Evangelical world, I am perceived by many of the participants as an insider and I do indeed have a privileged insight into the issues. In fact, it has come as quite a shock to realize that some Evangelicals now view me as an outsider because in a sense I have become a part of another community - the academic research community. If anything I have moved from “in” to “out”!

The second methodological approach is *explanatory*. This is the rationalist approach, firmly rooted in the Enlightenment, which gives a privileged place not to the observed but to the outside observer. It takes a reductionist approach, confident in its academic and religious neutrality. Certainly, coming from my natural science background, it is tempting to believe that one can ascertain the facts, cut to the root, and find the definitive answer without the impediment of ambiguity. I know how it feels, however, when this reductionist knife is applied to one’s own faith by supposedly unbiased academics. Paradoxically, it is a knife that I see wielded within the Evangelical community, which is in so many ways rooted in modern, Enlightenment thought. The sort of rational criticism which causes such outrage when focused on the Christian faith is itself turned against others, not least the Muslim community. Such reductionism is regrettable and I have sought to avoid it during this research.

McCutcheon’s third approach is *agnostic* and does not comment on religious truth. Berger reminds us that sociology and theology answer different questions. Even if sociology must view religion as a human projection, that does not preclude an objective reality (Berger, 1967). In other words our research has nothing to say about ultimate truth but looks rather at the social and political implications of the various beliefs that actors hold. This is a sort of neutral “mediating position” between the empathetic and explanatory approaches (McCutcheon, 1999, 215). Again this has some resonance with my research. My aim was not to pass judgement on the EPS and their responses to Islam. It was not to decide who was “right”. I did, however, want to examine the implications of those responses and make an assessment of where they may lead in the future.

Of course one cannot suspend all judgement and so the final approach is *reflexive*. “Reflexivity is a metaphor from grammar indicating a relationship of identity between subject and object, thus meaning the inclusion of the actor (scholar, author, observer) in the account of the act and/or its outcomes” (Hufford, 1999, 294). The necessity of including “myself” in this thesis was plain from

the start. By this I do not mean that I included my own texts in the analysis. Indeed at the outset I had no published texts either in books or magazines of any consequence. Rather I mean that at every stage of the process it has been impossible to ignore my own opinions and allegiances which I have commented on above.

Not only this but “both researchers and participants undergo reflexivity” (Dowling, 2008, 748). This means that, not only did my views change during the course of the research, but I also influenced the subjects of my research. For example, one church leader wrote to me after our interview and said:

it was good to meet with you the other week and I found it very helpful to talk through the issues you raised. It certainly set me thinking about all the inconsistencies between thought and practice. We will certainly be looking to change some of the ways we go about things as a church, and I would probably change some of my answers to you if we had the interview again!!

Whilst there are many diverse approaches to reflexivity, it essentially involves “*actively reflecting* on personal, interpersonal, institutional, pragmatic, emotional, theoretical, epistemological, and ontological influences on our research and interpretive processes” (Doucet and Mauthner, 2006, emphasis added). My experience of growing up in an Evangelical environment but then living amongst Muslims; my relationships with some of the participants; my institutional involvement through membership in various groups and committees; my access to certain facts, conversations and arguments that would not have been available to outside researchers; the openness or otherwise of people to talk because it was *me* interviewing them; all these factors had an immediate bearing on how I gathered and interpreted my data and should be borne in mind in moving on to the presentation of the empirical material.

PART III – BRITISH EVANGELICAL RESPONSES TO ISLAM: THE DATA

Chapter 2 explored the theoretical concept of a micro-public sphere and Chapter 7 described the formation of such a sphere amongst Evangelical Christians in order to discuss the presence of Islam in Britain. The previous chapter (Ch.8) laid out the rationale I used in deciding who to include within the elite of that sphere and the method I adopted to gather information from interviews, published texts and other media. In the following three chapters I present that data before proceeding to an analysis in Chapter 12.

The data are arranged thematically and are divided into three chapters moving from the abstract, through the socio-political to the relational. The first chapter looks at the internal discourse of the British EPS on the nature of Islam itself. What is Islam? What is its origin? How can it be understood from a Christian theological perspective? Is Islam essentially ideological and violent or not? Chapter 10 then moves on from this conceptual discussion to consider how Evangelicals assess the practical implications of the Islamic presence for British society as a whole. It explores how Evangelicals envisage the relationship between church and state, their reactions to multiculturalism and the concerns of some about “creeping Islamization”. It concludes by listening to their hopes and fears with regard to the future of the Muslim presence in Britain. Finally Chapter 11 examines the relationships of the EPS and the way it interacts with other spheres. It considers its interface with Muslims, the wider public sphere and significantly its own grassroots in the Evangelical churches. At this point the material from the interviews with the London church leaders will be presented. Part III concludes with an exploration of the internal tensions within the EPS, especially as highlighted by recent events and publications, which form a bridge to the analysis in Part IV.

These tensions become increasingly evident throughout the following chapters. For virtually every theme there are Evangelicals who demonstrate a closed, negative view of Islam and conversely those who encapsulate a more open, positive approach to Islam. On occasion there may be some who occupy more middle ground and indeed sometimes those who on one issue seemed closed may appear on another issue to be open, although it must be said that this is rare - to a large degree the demarcations are clear.

In presenting the data I also try to maintain a balance between those gathered through the fieldwork interviews and those gathered from other media. However, this is more problematic in the case of the closed view of Islam as I was unable to interview some of the key representatives of this position (§8.3.b). As a result this view is disproportionately represented by quotations from published sources and other material in the public domain.

I have also tried to maintain a balance in reporting the opinions of all the different participants in the EPS.¹¹⁰ Inevitably, however, some are rather more prolific than others and this is reflected in the number of quotes garnered from the various participants. There are those who are particularly active and influential and at times they become – naturally enough – the dominant voices in the narrative. The views of Sookhdeo¹¹¹ and Chapman are particularly prominent; indeed these two important figures have in many ways come to represent, not so much the extreme poles – which are inhabited by others - but rather the “mainstream” of the closed and open views respectively.

¹¹⁰ It should be noted that when I refer to ‘participants’ I mean all those who participate in the discussions and debates of this Evangelical micro-public sphere rather than just those who participated in my study by agreeing to be interviewed. These latter I refer to as ‘interviewees’.

¹¹¹ Note that, due to the frequency of occurrence of his name, I use “Sookhdeo” to refer to Patrick Sookhdeo and “Rosemary Sookhdeo” to refer to his wife. I also use the first names of Andrew Smith and Jay Smith in order to avoid confusion.

CHAPTER 9 EVANGELICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF ISLAM

How do British Evangelicals conceptualize Islam? This query is a vital antecedent to understanding how Evangelicals respond to Muslims and Islam. The following chapter interrogates the empirical material in order to create a map of Evangelical thinking about Islam by posing a series of questions for the data to answer. It is necessarily more conceptual and abstract than the following chapters and the responses often reflect the participants' own theological preconceptions as much as their experience of relating to Muslims.

9.1 WHAT IS ISLAM?

One of the most important questions concerns “the true face of Islam” (Riddell and Cotterell, 2003, 150). Before the worldwide resurgence of Islam, Chapman suggested that “the Christian ... questions the value of studying “ideal Islam”, especially when it seems to bear so little resemblance to the actual Islam that he sees in the society around him” (Chapman, 1978, 66). Since 9/11 this situation has changed dramatically leading others to argue that Christians “must have a clear understanding of the nature of Islam – its theology, ethics and culture - (in order to) help in the crucial decisions that have to be made on how to approach Muslims” (Sookhdeo, 2006, 11). But what is “the nature of Islam” according to Evangelicals?

9.1.A IS THERE AN ESSENCE OF “TRUE ISLAM”?

Whilst some take an essentialist view of Islam, others emphasize that Muslims themselves should be allowed to define what they understand Islam to be. All the participants agree that Islam has an identifiable core, which Riddell calls the “glue that binds Muslims together into a common religious system” (2004b, 210). This core, he suggests, consists of: Muhammad, the *Qur'an*, the *shari'a* and the basic pillars of Islam. This list coincides with what Taylor calls “distinguishable family likenesses which render discussion about ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslims’ valid without running the risk of stereotyping” (2005b, 80).

Some participants, however, see not just a small common core but an “essence” of “true Islam” which is “total”, “territorial”, “imperial”, “militant” and “in its concentrated form ... intolerant of

all other religions” (Pawson, 2003, 56-65). This is reflected in Sookhdeo’s *Faith, Power and Territory*, a title which “is intended to sum up the Muslim concept of their own religion” (2008a, vi). Sookhdeo believes that many of the distinctions made between different types of Islam are meaningless, as “Islamism is simply the *essence* of classical Islam” (2007a, 10 emphasis added) and so is in effect the “core orthodoxy” or “standard Islam” (2006, 6). In other words for Sookhdeo and others like him, it is so-called radical political Islam which is the true Islam.

In contrast other participants are wary of making any definitive statements about the nature of Islam. The Orr-Ewings are typical when they say that “statements such as, ‘Islam is a religion of peace’, or ‘Islam is a religion of war’ are too general to be meaningful” (2002, 103). Azumah felt that it was “very patronizing and very condescending for non-Muslims to begin to pontificate” about Islam (Azumah, *Interview 29*). Similarly Chapman was concerned about approaches that “find these negative things in some parts of Islam and then with this essentialist approach say this is inherent in Islam, this is a vital part of Islam that all Muslims believe and practice” (Chapman, *Interview 62*). He felt that “there is a danger that Christians are breaking the commandment that says ‘thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour’” (Chapman, *Interview 52*), a sentiment echoed by Glaser (2005, 235). In short, stark reductionist statements about Islam are treated with suspicion and avoided by some Evangelicals. Taylor demonstrated such a reticence in her blog:

Maryam Namazie, co-founder of the *Council of Ex-Muslims*, wants to ‘re-brand Islam as fascist’. Note the lack of any adjective before Islam. Islam per se. Not just extremist Islam. I believe that’s going too far (J. Taylor, 2008b).

Participants that reject such essentializing of Islam tend to follow Chapman’s line that “Islam is what Muslims say it is” (2007b, 59). For instance Azumah said:

Islam is what Muslims make it to be and say it is and therefore I will engage with the Islam of my Muslim neighbour who is next door to me and I will respect that rather than go out and tell him, as many Western Christians tend to do, that ‘oh your Islam is not really true Islam. The true Islam is Osama bin Laden’s Islam’ (Azumah, *Interview 29*).

In similar vein Knell considered what it would feel like to be on the receiving end of such essentialization: “I want to turn that the other way. If a Muslim comes to me and says the Bible

says this, that and the other, I want to say, ‘hold on; I’m the Christian. I want to tell *you* how to interpret this” (Knell, *Interview 28*). This willingness to put themselves in the place of the Muslim is characteristic of several of the participants – a stance that modifies their approaches to Muslims if not necessarily to Islam.

9.1.B SHOULD WE FOCUS ON ISLAM OR MUSLIMS?

This distinction between the people and the religious system is key for many of the participants. Most of the interviewees, including those who insisted that Muslims should be allowed to define Islam, also wanted to make a clear distinction between “Islam” and “Muslims”. Riddell suggests that “engagement should be two-pronged: engaging with people, and engaging with the system ... the human faces of Muslim people, which reflect the diversity of Islam, and a system of Islam, which provides its elements of unity” (2004b, 210). In reality, however, most participants, whilst holding these two separate, do tend to emphasize one or the other.

There are those whose main focus is on Muslims as people:

a Christian perspective on Islam ought to be at the same time incarnational, sympathetic, and critical. It should be concerned more with Muslim people than with Islam. Muslims are first and foremost human beings, made in God's image and loved by God as much as we are (Moucarry, 2010).

In her teaching, Glaser said, she emphasizes this with a *PowerPoint* slide where the words “Muslims - are - human - beings” drop down one by one (Glaser, *Interview 23*).

On the other hand there are those who tend to focus on Islam as a system. Solomon is typical:

let me make a clear distinction here. We are talking about Islam and not Muslims. Muslims are people. We love them. They are sinners. They need the love of Christ. They need to hear the gospel and repent But Islam is a different thing. Islam is an ideology (Solomon, 2006a).

In the sermon he then goes on to focus on the ideology of Islam rather than Muslims. Sookhdeo is at pains to make a similar point:

Muslims as people should be protected in our societies in no way should we denigrate people. We are called to love Muslims with the love of Christ ... even when they persecute us When we come to their religion that is another matter. In a secular society all religions must be fair game (Sookhdeo, 2009b).

So whilst these participants in the EPS may want to befriend Muslims, they feel a sense of conflict with Islam as an ideology (§9.4). This was a point that came out strongly in the interview with Jay Smith. He reported that the former Nigerian Archbishop, Peter Akinola, had once said to him “make sure you don’t confront Muslims; confront Islam. Confront their traditions; confront their *Qur’an*. Do that. That’s the battle.” (J. Smith, *Interview 83*). The concern of many such participants is that those who have “sought to embrace Muslims as people have unwittingly embraced Islam the faith” (Sookhdeo, 2009a, 12). The counsel of Riddell above would be that an overemphasis on either would be a mistake.

9.1.C WHO ARE THE “TRUE” MUSLIMS?

Some participants, however, are not sure that it is so easy to detach Muslims from Islam and choose instead to focus on the diversity of Muslims and Islam. Andrew Smith said “I’m not sure I’d want to separate them out completely” (A.Smith, *Interview 23*) and Sudworth felt:

that’s too simplistic. It’s a cute kind of throw-away distinction which enables you to say all sorts of things about Islam whilst supposedly being polite to Muslims. So I wouldn’t say that. There are tendencies within Islam but which Islam, which group?” (Sudworth, *Interview 43*).

As the Orr-Ewings put it “any thoughtful response to Islamism must take Muslim diversity extremely seriously and avoid religious and socio-political reductionism” (2002, 74).

Some of the participants reported that such diversity was indeed their own experience of Muslims. For instance, Jay Smith mentioned having Muslim friends who were moderates, liberals and radicals (J.Smith, *Interview 37, 67*). Bell recounted how one Muslim had said to him “show me two Muslims and I’ll show you three opinions!” (Bell, *Interview 61*). Many participants are careful to emphasize this diversity in their teaching and writing:

now you know, one is aware that obviously Muslims are deeply divided on a multitude of topics and attitudes and so on, and I think that is part of the truth that one teaches. You can quote Islamists and the sort of extremes on that side, and then that leads to very strong opposition and

even dislike and fear; or you can quote the very moderate and that can lead to a politically correct tolerance, or you can point out that actually both are there with everything in-between (Goldsmith, *Interview 24*).

To highlight this variety Moucarry (2008, 39), Bell (2003, 15), Riddell (2004b, 62) and Chapman (2007a) all adopt some sort of typology of Muslims. Such typologies normally include categories of Muslim such as “non-religious”, “reformist”, “moderate”, “radical” and “extremist” amongst others. The more significant factor for many Evangelicals, however, is the perceived polarization between these categories within the Muslim community. Riddell and Cotterell in a frequently referenced statement declare that “there is a titanic struggle taking place between moderates and radicals for the hearts and minds of the Muslim masses in the middle” (2003, 192). Cotterell later expands on this:

there’s another kind of division in Islam: between the traditionalists, the violent Islamists, and the modernists. The traditionalists want to get back to what Islam was at the beginning. The Islamists want the same, but see their main task as getting rid of the obstacles standing in the way of getting back to the past. The modernists are ready to let Islam change to fit into the twenty-first century (Cotterell, 2007).

For some Islamism is clearly winning and they treat it as being the dominant contemporary form of Islam. In his foreword to the *Islam in Britain* (ISIC, 2005) report Sookhdeo states that “while it is important to recognize that there are a variety of currents within the Muslim community, it is also important to discover the dominant trends and look at their agendas and methods” (2005a, iii).¹¹² The report goes on to make it clear that traditionalist Islam and Islamism rather than modernist Islam are considered to be the dominant forms in Britain today. It is certainly this type of Islam which is causing a negative reaction among many Evangelicals. For instance, Bell, who is usually quick to stress love for Muslims, says, “I am angry with such Muslims who are engaged in ‘politicized Islam’ Militant Islam clearly has a case to answer in the twenty-first century (it is) the dark side of Islam” (2006b, 43).

This leads some to point out the relative weakness of moderate Muslims. “The so-called ‘moderate Muslims’ have yet to produce one authoritative fatwa that would counter those which

¹¹² This report was produced by the *Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity* (ISIC), the research wing of *Barnabas Fund*, of which Sookhdeo is the director.

are being stated by the traditionally accepted orthodox Muslim channels who remain the authoritative bodies for all Islamic issues the world over” (Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, 2009a, 11). Likewise Cox and Marks find that the work of moderates and reformers is "tortuous, time-consuming and may well be a waste of effort given the lack of response to it or resonance with it by most Muslims”(2006, 198). Green, of *Christian Voice*, goes further and declares that “there are observant Muslims, and non-observant Muslims, but a moderate Muslim is hard to find” (2005, 15). Such authors tend to draw mainly on Islamist and historical Islamic sources for their quotes and illustrations rather than on the writing of more moderate contemporary progressive and secular Muslims.

In an interesting analysis Riddell remarks that "Muslim radicals are often seen by Christian Evangelicals (especially fundamentalists) as 'real Muslims' because of their scriptural-literalist approach. This response, however, is really more of a window into the mind of the Christians concerned” (2004b, 166). In other words Evangelicals see in the radicals some reflection of themselves. Other participants are rather less focused on the extremists. Musk believes that the “majority of Muslims live as though Islam is primarily a religion about peaceful living” but have been “upstaged by the Islamists’ claim to be more authentically Islamic” (2008, xvi). Consequently, he feels the need to place his emphasis on this more moderate Muslim voice. Musk along with others such as Glaser and Chapman are much more likely to quote and be sympathetic towards the work of Muslim reformers and to accept that these too may represent a genuine expression of Islam.

9.2 WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF ISLAM?

9.2.A GOD?

In their discussion of the nature of Islam Evangelicals frequently pose another important question. What was the origin of Islam? What inspired it? Obviously Muslims believe that the religion of Islam is a divine revelation. However, as McRoy bluntly stated:

well obviously I can't accept that it comes from God simply because that would negate my own Evangelical faith because like I said, rivalry without hostility, salvation is found in no-one else. So I don't believe it can come from God (McRoy, *Interview 40*).

Indeed no Evangelical I interviewed or read has said that they believe that Islam in its entirety does come from God. Many, however, admit that it contains some truth and allude to the maxim that “all truth is God’s truth”. For instance, Musk suggests that wherever Muhammad spoke truth about God he was being prophetic as “truth, after all, is truth, wherever it is found” (2005, 83). In his interview McRoy also concluded, “I don’t believe (Islam) can come from God. There are aspects of truth in it where it agrees with the Bible so obviously I would accept those parts” (McRoy, *Interview 40*).

Interestingly, Bell particularly expresses the conviction that the appearance of Islam could not be outside the sovereignty of God (Bell, 2003, 7). For him whilst God did not expressly send Islam, He has obviously permitted Islam to flourish for some purpose.

9.2.B HUMANS?

If Islam is not divinely inspired then Evangelicals have to give some other account of where they believe Islam has come from. From the general reaction of most participants who were interviewed they find this a difficult and sensitive question to answer. Rather than stating a definite source, some suggest a possible cause, which, following Cragg, they explain as being the failure of the Christian church at the time of Muhammad to properly evangelize the Arab people. If the Arabs had heard the gospel clearly in their own language they would not have needed Islam (Musk, 2005, 84, Bell, 2006b, 79). Others suggest a human source, Muhammad being the obvious candidate:

Well I don’t know. God knows! I don’t know. You know it is quite possible that Muhammad being the founder of Islam is the main source of Islam as well. Muhammad was both exposed to Christian and Jewish influence on the one hand and he came from a polytheistic background on the other hand and I think that Islam is Muhammad’s way of reconciling these two traditions, the Biblical tradition, the monotheistic Biblical tradition with the Arab polytheistic tradition. So it is a sort of synthesis between the Arab tradition and the Biblical tradition (Moucarry, *Interview 60-61*).

Yet Evangelicals also find it difficult to know what to think of Muhammad. Although some, like Glaser, seek to have “as positive and realistic an assessment of Muhammad as possible” (2000b, 47), others are rather more negative. Despite some extreme examples, like Green (2005, 7) who believes that Muhammad had an obsession with sex and generally attacks his character, most try to avoid the sort of notorious inflammatory statements occasionally made by leading American

Evangelicals (§7.2.a). This sensitivity notwithstanding most British Evangelicals feel that Muhammad compares poorly to Jesus, particularly in terms of moral character and the use of violence (Riddell and Cotterell, 2003, 196). As Sookhdeo puts it “the real difference between Christianity and Islam lies in the core issues of their sacred writings and the persons of their founders” (2006, 48). This suggests that the source of Islam is not just a person but also a text – the *Qur’an*.

9.2.C THE QUR’AN?

In practice many Evangelicals treat the *Qur’an* and the *Sunna* as the *de facto* source of Islam. For some this is obvious given the large amount of derivative material they see in the *Qur’an*. Jay Smith reckoned that:

a good 70% of the *Qur’an* we can source back to other sources, most of it Jewish apocryphal writings which is interesting because almost all of those stories in the *Qur’an* with the biblical characters are not in our Bible. But we know where the stories come from (J.Smith, *Interview 47*).

In a sermon at *Kensington Temple* Smith traced some of those sources and made the point that they were written by men, not necessarily even Muhammad (J. Smith, 2007a). When questioned further on this in the interview he suggested that the rise of Islam may have come about as part of a wider social movement rather than as the result of a revelation to Muhammad:

Smith: I think what you have there is very little to do with Muhammad. From what they’re telling us a lot of this is redacted back to a person named Muhammad So it looks like it’s not a religious phenomena, it looks like it’s an identity, an Arab identity that wants to have the same identity in a prophetic line coming through Ishmael as the Jews and the Christians had coming through Isaac.

Interviewer: So it’s a human socio-political structure?

Smith: Absolutely (J.Smith, *Interview 47-49*).

For Musk too minor variations in texts:

suggest that authority for today’s text of the *Qur’an* cannot simply lie in a claim that the current Arabic *Qur’an* contains the exact words of God as dictated or confirmed by the angel Gabriel to prophet Muhammad. That would appear to be a claim too far ... Beneath the surface, however, one may discern that the redacting and editing process involved human choices as to what the unified text should finally look like (Musk, 2008, 150).

So for most of the participants the *Qur'an* is not a divine revelation but is a rather more human compilation and is, along with the *Hadith*, the cause of many of the trends seen amongst Muslims today. Sookhdeo believes that Muslims can find in their texts anything they want to find: “by far the majority of Muslims today live their lives without recourse to violence, for the *Qur'an* is like a pick-and-mix selection. If you want peace, you can find peaceable verses. If you want war, you can find bellicose verses”(2005b).¹¹³ Thus the *Qur'an* becomes the source of different types of Islam depending on how it is interpreted.

9.2.D SATAN?

For Evangelicals there is one further possible source of Islam. As Pawson puts it: “there is another explanation for the ‘truth’ in the *Qur'an* which Christians must consider ... it is not hard to see an ‘unearthly’ force behind it” (2003, 82). He goes on to develop the idea that Satan is behind Islam as it is about “deception”, “distraction”, and “destruction”. This is not an uncommon view amongst Evangelicals. For instance, Williams said, “(Islam) has a spirit behind it that is untrue”, although she stressed that this demonization was “not personalized” about Muslims but rather about Islam as a system (Williams, *Interview 18*).¹¹⁴ Understandably Evangelicals are sometimes reluctant to express this view publicly. Williams herself in a TV documentary when directly asked this question says “I believe Islam is a false religion” and then becomes visibly uncomfortable and asks for the microphone to be turned off (Modell, 2008b). Even moderate interviewees believed that Islam, and indeed, in some cases, all religion, including Christianity, is at times partially demonic:

the whole question that comes up quite a lot is ‘is Islam demonic’? I believe Islam is demonic in the sense that the devil uses it and the devil is using it as a weapon today against the church. And the devil uses all sorts of things. ...I don’t believe that Islam is demonic in that it was originally planned or initiated by the devil. I don’t believe that at all. (Knell, *Interview 30*)

¹¹³ Cotterell makes much the same point with reference to what he identifies as the four authoritative sources in Islam: *Qur'an*, abrogation, *Hadith* and *shari'a* - “With four places to look, and thousands of pages to read, it’s not surprising that Muslims can find justification for almost anything: it’s a real Woolworth’s pick’n mix” (Cotterell, 2007).

¹¹⁴ Note that throughout Part III ‘Williams’ refers to Andrea Williams of CCFON. Where I refer to Archbishop Rowan Williams the first name or title is included.

Chapman, whilst partly agreeing, is uncomfortable with the way that some Evangelicals demonize Islam:

I feel very, very uneasy with the Evangelical approach that writes Islam off as a religion inspired by the devil. Having said that I feel I have to recognize an element of the satanic in every world religion. I have to recognize that there are some things in Islam which are deeply antagonistic to the Gospel and to Jesus as we understand him (Chapman, *Interview 34*).

Probably the majority of the participants in the EPS take the view that Islam is from a mixture of sources but want to show sensitivity towards the feelings of Muslims. In answer to a question at the end of a seminar about the source of the *Qur'anic* revelation Amy Orr-Ewing suggested that it was a mixture of truth and error but that one has to be careful about calling it demonic so as not to offend Muslims (A. Orr-Ewing and Orr-Ewing, 2003). This type of prevaricating agnosticism also came out clearly in some of the answers to the interview question about the source of Islam:

I genuinely don't know. Genuinely I don't have a kind of fixed view on that. I think I'm tempted to believe that it's a human construct that Muhammad was grasping at something, had influences from particularly Jewish understanding but also from Christians. Clearly he had read bits of the Bible and there were good things that he did and brought but I don't see Islam and I don't see the origins of Islam from God. I see them from humans. Not overarchingly. I have no fixed view on this but I'm prepared to believe that there may be demonic aspects to individual pronouncements of Islam as there doubtless are in certain pronouncements of the church over the years (Sudworth, *Interview 33-35*).

As a mixture. The same as Christianity. So I think that Islam in its essence is a mixture that there's some aspects of it in which I really think God is involved. At the same time I think that within Islam there is some very human stuff, human frailty, a mixture in terms of how what may come from God gets worked out on earth in the prophet Muhammad's life and in the lives of other Muslims, and I also think that there is some stuff which is from the Devil. ... and I think the same about Christianity (Musk *Interview 51*).

9.3 HOW IS ISLAM TO BE UNDERSTOOD FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY?

Clearly Evangelical evaluations of the origin of Islam have an enormous impact on their assessment of the theological relationship between Christianity and Islam. In their turn these theological assessments have significant implications for personal relationships between Evangelicals and Muslims. This section briefly examines some of the most contentious theological issues and the various opinions held across the Evangelical spectrum. Of course whilst these

positions reflect the specific resources that the participants draw on in reflecting on Islam, they also reflect the general theology of different Evangelical streams.

9.3.A WHAT THEOLOGICAL RESOURCES DO EVANGELICALS DRAW ON?

The majority of participants, but by no means all, draw explicitly on Christian theology, historical and contemporary, in formulating their approach to Islam. Notable exceptions include Green, Pawson, Solomon and even Sookhdeo. These participants focus almost exclusively on interpreting Islamic source texts, traditions and history and draw very little on Christian theology. Most though would agree with Chapman who, referring to those who have gone before, says, “we are heirs to a long tradition (and) we want to stand on their shoulders” (1998, 108). The Evangelical writer most frequently referenced both in interviews and in written texts was clearly Cragg. Sudworth calls him “possibly the greatest living Christian writer on Islam” (2009d). He is regularly quoted, especially in the work of those who see Islam in a more positive light such as Bell, Chapman, Glaser and Musk. That is not to say that they always agree with him:

I think I would have to say that I've been influenced by Kenneth Cragg more than anyone else. I don't think I go all the way with him on some points, but I feel sure that he has been the most significant influence on myself and many other Evangelicals (Chapman, email follow up to interview).

Newbigin is another twentieth century missionary theologian who has been an important influence on several of the participants including Musk (2008, 206) and Taylor (Taylor, *Interview* 5). Others who are occasionally mentioned include Sanneh, Waardenburg, D’Costa and O’Donovan. Barth, does not seem to have had a wide influence, except in the work of Glaser, who also, referring to the world congress initiated by Billy Graham in 1974, places her work “in the Lausanne tradition of understanding the Bible as God’s written word” (2005, 32). Andrew Smith is distinctive in that he is clearly aware of more diverse resources and mentions the work of Volf, Gunton and Barnes amongst others (A. Smith, 2009).

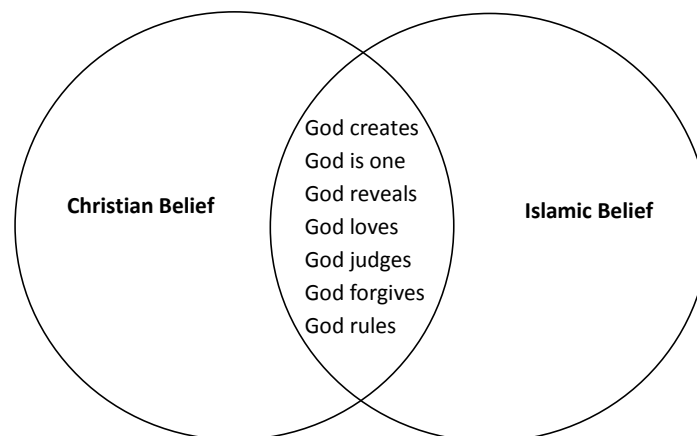
Not many authors draw on older theological works. Glaser’s booklet *Crusade Sermons, Francis of Assisi and Martin Luther* (2010a) examines earlier attitudes to Islam and the Orr-Ewings mention the work of John Wycliffe (F. Orr-Ewing and Orr-Ewing, 2002). That is not to say that there is no influence from past Protestant theologians but rather that it is not made explicit. What is quite

clear is that the participants draw on one another's work. This is obvious not only from the number of direct quotations but also from the plethora of mutual acknowledgements, forewords and endorsements which reflect the internal alignments within the EPS (§11.4).

9.3.B IS THERE CONTINUITY BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM?

Islam claims to be the fulfilment and proper outworking of the earlier Jewish and Christian traditions, a claim vigorously contested by both these faiths. There is disagreement amongst Christians, however, over the degree of continuity or discontinuity which exists. To illustrate this, Wood contrasts the work of Cragg and Newbigin (Wood, 2009). Wood sees Cragg as championing continuity between Christianity and Islam. In fact Cragg believes that it is possible for Muslims to “retrieve” from Islam “the Christ whom they have missed” (Cragg, 2000, 220). Nazir-Ali also refers to Cragg in his work and comments on the close connection of the three major monotheist religions: "with both Judaism and Islam, Christianity has close historical and, whatever the differences, theological connections" including the fact that both believe in one God who is the creator of the world and who is involved with the destiny and guidance of humankind (2008e, 30). Similarly Chapman lists seven “propositions” (2007b, 252) that suggest an overlap between Christian and Islamic beliefs (see Figure 9.1). For the disciples of Cragg their acceptance of some partial continuity between the faiths is a major contributing factor to their focus on the similarities between Christianity and Islam.

Figure 9.1 -Overlapping propositions (reproduced from Chapman, 2007, 252)



On the other hand, there are those who tend to focus on the discontinuity between the two faiths and inevitably highlight the differences. Whilst Wood acknowledges that Newbigin saw “total discontinuity” as “inconceivable”, he suggests that Newbigin’s work is in some respects paradigmatic for these Christians (Wood, 2009, 130). For instance, as Cotterell puts it “we can’t have two histories; both books can’t be right. it’s one or the other, or neither, but not both. It’s *Allah* or it’s *Yahweh*” (2006, 35). The stress for these participants is on the differences and this often leads to a more Manichean view: light versus darkness; right versus wrong; “love” versus “power” (Sookhdeo, 2006, 101). This particularly becomes the case when one considers some of the important elements of Christian theology that are explicitly denied by Islam.

9.3.C HOW ARE ISLAMIC DENIALS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE TO BE UNDERSTOOD?

Christianity and Islam clearly have enough in common that they at least share some of the same vocabulary. However, these commonalities are often the sites of great tension and make the relationship more problematic. Furthermore, Islam denies some of the foundational beliefs of the Christian faith. One interviewee put it this way:

from the Christian theological point of view, I see real differences between Islam and Christianity and therefore it cannot be the same things that we’re talking about. Because we claim we share common territory and a common tradition that is where our deepest differences arise from. So for me theologically we have to be realistic that there are issues here and we have to engage that (Azumah, *Interview 27*).

Chapman summarized the main Islamic denials of Christian theology in this way:

Islam not only denies the Trinity, it denies the incarnation, it denies the atoning death of Jesus on the cross, it denies the resurrection, so the fundamentals of the Gospel are denied. So I have to take account of that (Chapman, *Interview 34*).

These denials centre almost entirely around the person and identity of Jesus Christ who is, by definition, of central importance to all the participants in the EPS. Moucarry emphasized this point:

my problem with Islamic teaching is not about God, it’s more about Jesus Christ. And as you know Jesus Christ is seen as a great prophet in Islam but is not the Lord and the Saviour of humankind which is why I cannot accept Islam as a God-given religion because we have here conflicting truth

claims about who Jesus is. And one has to choose either the Islamic perspective on Jesus as the right one or the Christian perspective. We can't accept both perspectives as being compatible with each other because they are not (Moucarry, *Interview 59*).

Virtually all the participants would share this sentiment. However, whilst some would accept that at least Christianity and Islam are talking about the same Jesus (or *'Isa*), others feel that they are not:

the far, far bigger problem with Islam is they are undermining and downgrading Jesus Christ. That is the essence of the problem and, if they can get that thought, it completely neuters Christianity. If we accept that *'Isa* is the same as Jesus and we accept, of course we're all talking about the same people, we can all agree he was a good prophet, but of course I mean you are then missing the essence of the Gospel. Either Jesus was God or there is no faith. Either He died and rose again or we have no faith. We're wasting our time." (Craig, *Interview 29*)

9.3.D WHO IS ALLAH?

If the identity of Jesus is the focus of debate and disagreement between Evangelicals and Muslims, the identity and nature of *Allah* is the more contentious debate amongst Evangelicals themselves. Brother Andrew suggests that Islam "presents a far greater challenge for Christians" than communism as, compared with communism's "absurd claim that there is no God", Islam poses the question "who is God?" (Brother Andrew and Janssen, 2007, 245). It is not necessary here to go into all the arguments surrounding what Musk calls "the big question" (2005, 147). He seeks to answer the question by considering history, philology, theology and missiology. Of greater interest here, however, is to note the sharpness of the disagreement amongst Evangelicals over this question. Whilst some Evangelicals accept that Christians and Muslims are referring to the same God, others fiercely contest this and believe they worship different gods – the ultimate discontinuity.

Those that identify *Allah* with the Christian God often do so on the basis that he is described by Muslims as the creator. "If Christians and Muslims agree that there is only one God, the creator of the universe and of humanity, and both claim they are worshipping this God, then clearly they are both worshipping the same God" (Azumah, 2008, 139). Bell includes a whole appendix on this question in his manual and concludes that "it is more helpful to see *Allah* as the God of the Bible, with the proviso that the Muslim understanding of Him is faulty" (2003, 82). This final caveat is important and is common to all those who hold this position, as participants on both sides of the argument recognize that at the very least Christianity and Islam describe the character of God and

his actions very differently.

Cotterell is typical of those who see a greater discontinuity in the nature of the gods described.

Based on the denials discussed above he says:

Islam rejects the Trinity, and makes it clear that *Allah* is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Allah* is not Yahweh, not the God defined in the Christian creeds, not the God who is described in the Bible as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God" (Cotterell, 2006, 42).

Jay Smith believes that "all fundamental differences between Islam and Christianity are rooted in the perception of God" (quoted in Bell, 2003, 40). In his interview he said:

the difficulty is how do you define the name? So I'm very careful. Who's the character behind the name? It's completely different. the first question I ask any Muslim is 'Can your *Allah* enter time and space? Can he come to earth?' Immediately then I let them answer that and then I say 'Well then you can see that we're talking about two different Gods. Get a bigger God – His name is Jesus!' (J.Smith, *Interview 51-53*).

In a *YouTube* video Smith points out that God's proper name in the Bible is Yahweh, a name not found in the *Qur'an*. He then mentions that it is unfortunate that Arab Christians also use the word *Allah* and suggests that "sooner or later we are going to have to change that" (J. Smith, 2006). This video attracted almost 2000 responses and a Muslim group made a video in reply that particularly referenced "Evangelical Christians" who were attacking the identity of *Allah*.¹¹⁵

This question is of critical importance for some participants. It appeared to be the reason one well-known Evangelical teacher declined to be interviewed by me. During a telephone conversation he asked me whether I believed that *Allah* was the God of the Bible. My answer to that question, along with another about the source of Islam, was clearly enough to persuade him it was not worth meeting me. Certainly there is a sharp criticism of each other amongst Evangelicals over this issue. For example, speaking of those who consider *Allah* to be the same as the Christian God, Dye laments:

¹¹⁵ See *Allah is the God of the Bible*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moFwW4Sv9Ro&feature=watch_response (accessed 11 August 2010).

tragically, their understandable love for the lost and opportunity for dialogue seems to have caused them to downplay the biblical revelation which shows unequivocally that the *Allah* of the *Qur'an* cannot be our God (Dye, 2009, xiii).

The May-June 2010 edition of the *Barnabas Aid* magazine included a lengthy article discussing which term – God or *Allah* – should be used. It concluded that:

The important question is not whether Muslims and Christians use the same term for God or even whether they believe in the same God or in different gods, but what they each believe about God and His character. Christians understand the nature of God by looking into the face of Christ, who revealed God to humanity. They believe that God's primary attribute is love and call him 'Father' (Barnabas Fund, 2010a).

The article goes on to suggest that "as Muslims do not accept Christ as the only way to God", whom they view as transcendent and "other", then "they can have no valid access to the one and only true God they claim to worship" (ibid). A rather different approach is taken by prominent Evangelical Steve Chalke writing in *Christianity* magazine (2010). He is critical of the "insularity of so much Western Christianity (which) has often failed to do justice to the humility, devotion and longing for fellowship with God that is present in some other religions" (ibid 44). For Chalke a "rejection of equality does not imply a denial of commonness". His article prompted letters to the editor that clearly revealed the division within the Evangelical community over this question (September 2010 issue).

As in many other cases Green is at the extreme of this spectrum. In a TV documentary he says bluntly "*Allah* is Satan" (Modell, 2008b). This view is expanded on the *Christian Voice* website:

when Muslims go into a mosque and bow down before their false god, '*Allah*' ('the god' in Arabic) they are engaging in idol worship without realizing it. It is only necessary to look at the symbol of Islam, the crescent moon, to realize the identity of the real spirit behind Islam. It follows that a mosque is a place where demonic principalities and powers are glorified (Christian Voice, n.d.).

Such stark statements emphasize what an important and contentious theological argument this is. Moreover, it is one that is bound to have implications for interaction between Evangelicals and Muslims. As Bell says:

it is a critical question because how you answer it will determine everything else about your response to Muslims ... whether you take an apologetic or a polemic approach look for similarities or the contrasts (Bell, 2003, 82).

9.3.E IS THERE SALVATION IN ISLAM?

This discussion about the identity of God is certainly very much part of the Evangelical debate about Islam and salvation. Moucarry in a seminar at *Spring Harvest* explained Race's three-fold typology (§4.3) and clearly linked it to the different views that Christians hold about Islam (Moucarry, 2006). Exclusivists, he suggested, tend to see *Allah* and Islam as demonic and "believe that (Christians) should engage with Muslims in terms of spiritual warfare and are not opposed even to the idea of engaging in polemics a war of words" because Muslims are seen as "God's enemies". Pluralists, on the other hand, see Islam as God-given, focus on dialogue and want to encourage Muslims to be "genuine Muslims". Finally, inclusivists accept that "Muslims do worship God" but do not see Islam as a "saving faith". Rather "God is able to use Islam" to save some people. "Muslims are neither our enemies, nor our brothers and sisters; they are our neighbours" and need to be engaged in dialogue as part of the Christian mission.

It was very obvious that none of the Evangelicals interviewed would ever consider endorsing pluralism, which Riddell sees as a product of secular society, "theocentric rather than Christocentric", and "in fact a new religion" (2004b, 208). Glaser was typical: "I'm definitely not a pluralist. That's for sure" (Glaser, *Interview 35*). So all the participants would see themselves as being either exclusivists or inclusivists. However, whilst some were happy to be clearly identified, some were less sure and were reluctant to be labelled.

Of those interviewed only McRoy took a strong, unmodified exclusivist stance. "Exclusivism says there's only one way of salvation, and that is basically the Evangelical position," he stated emphatically (McRoy, *Interview 21*).¹¹⁶ Others interviewed were more cautious in their response. Wood said that he would see himself as "a form of inclusivist" (Wood, *Interview 21*), but nobody else made an unqualified statement about their position. Goldsmith described himself as "a moderate exclusivist – something like that" (Goldsmith, *Interview 58*). Bell and Chapman both saw

¹¹⁶ Although it seems likely that some of the other participants in the Evangelical public sphere would also hold this position it is regrettable that they were not available for interview and their views are not a matter of public record.

themselves as being “between the exclusivist and inclusivist” position (Bell, *Interview 41*, Chapman *Interview 30*), whilst Glaser placed herself “towards the exclusive end of the inclusivist spectrum” adding that “it’s simply not for us to say who’s going to be saved and who’s not” (Glaser, *Interview 35*).

Others questioned the usefulness of the typology. Andrew Smith admitted, “I’m not sure any of those three exist really I probably end up sounding like an inclusivist. I think inclusivism is just exclusivism with a nice badge on it to be honest” (A.Smith, *Interview 63*). Musk even found himself identifying with all three positions, as did Newbiggin before him (Musk, *Interview 49*).¹¹⁷ This ambiguity is maybe indicative of the shift which Riddell observes as “Protestant churches by and large have moved from a position of exclusivism to inclusivism since the Second World War” (2004b, 133). The majority of those interviewed reflected this change. That said, there is clearly a certain amount of reticence within this public sphere to make categorical statements and to pass judgement on the ultimate salvation of Muslims.

9.3.F HOW IS ISLAM TO BE UNDERSTOOD IN THE CONTEXT OF ISRAEL AND THE END TIMES?

One final important area of theology to consider is eschatology. Whilst there is relatively little speculation about Islam and end time scenarios, there is still an issue for British Evangelicals surrounding the role and status of Israel. It is immediately noticeable in surveying books published by Evangelicals in Britain that there is a great deal less emphasis on Islam’s place in a future apocalypse than is the case in America (Kidd, 2009). In fact quite the reverse is true and many of the authors and speakers featured in this survey go out of their way to distance themselves from such dispensationalist views. Musk, for instance, severely criticizes the outworking of this theology in America. He claims that such views result in Muslims being seen as “obstacles to God’s plans for Israel in the last days” (2008, xxii). Chapman agreed and suggested that such theology “inevitably puts the whole of Islam in a very demonized situation” (Chapman, *Interview 76*).

Of course, this eschatological view is not entirely absent from the British church. Wood reported meeting a leader in a small church who was very pro-Israel and commented that “the Israel-Palestine situation does reinforce for some people a particular eschatology and therefore colours

¹¹⁷ See Newbiggin (1989, 182).

their whole approach to Muslims” (Wood, *Interview 47*). Bell, who does not entirely dismiss eschatological concerns and believes that “we are now likely to be in the closing days of history” (2003, 9), is nonetheless impatient with those who focus on speculation about the future. He suggests that “Christians would be more use if they invested time praying for Israel rather than delving into prophetic speculation” (Bell, 2006b, 113).

The scarcity of apocalyptic speculation notwithstanding, modern Israel remains a key issue for British Evangelicals. In fact disagreements over the degree to which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict causes conflict between Islam and the West is a major source of tension between Evangelicals which becomes clear as I change direction to look at how British Evangelicals understand Islamic ideology.

9.4 WHAT IS ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY?

Islam does not only challenge Christianity theologically. For many Evangelicals the greater challenge is ideological and has far wider implications than a theological dispute.¹¹⁸ For these observers the essence of Islam is not just religious but political. Solomon and Al-Maqdisi put it like this:

(Islam) is *a whole encompassing system*. It is first and foremost a socio-political and socio-religious system, as well as a socio-economic, socio-educational, legislative, judiciary, and military system, cloaked and garbed in religious terminology (2006, 6, emphasis in original).

Viewing Islam as an ideology leads to concerns and questions over, amongst other things, Islam’s relationship to the West and its approach to power, violence, territory and global ambition. These are explored conceptually below and will be taken up in the next chapter when considering Evangelical reactions to socio-political developments in Britain.

¹¹⁸ It is worth noting that scholars of Islam also acknowledge the ideological nature of Islamic texts in the formative as well as the modern period (Rippin, 2000).

9.4.A IS ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY COMPATIBLE WITH WESTERN FORMS OF THINKING?

As observed above (§9.1.b), those who focus on Islam as an ideology nonetheless almost all endeavour to emphasize that “the vast majority of (Muslims) lead law-abiding lives and live peaceably with their neighbours, including those of other faiths” (Cox and Marks, 2006, 1). They also accept that there is a measure of diversity within Islam. Nonetheless, many of them question whether Islam as they understand it is *ideologically* compatible with Christianity, liberal democracy and the West, and, by and large, conclude that it is not. This incompatibility, however, is not uniformly viewed as being the fault of Islam. Two books that illustrate these different approaches are Cox and Marks’ *The West, Islam and Islamism: Is ideological Islam compatible with liberal democracy?* (2006) and Musk’s second edition of *Holy War: Why do some Muslims become fundamentalists* (2003)?¹¹⁹

Cox and Marks are concerned that “peaceable Islam may be endangered by the beliefs and practices of radical Islamists” which is “perhaps the greatest challenge facing Islam today” (2006, 10). They suggest that the epistemological principles on which Islamism rest are fundamentally opposed to those of western liberal democracy. Whilst the latter are academic and rational, the former are “closed, dogmatic and monolithic” due to a reliance on “claims of revealed truth and infallibility” (ibid 21). They compare this “ideological mode” to that of former Marxist regimes and conclude that radical Islamists are trying “to undermine or even destroy the Western societies they have so far failed to emulate scientifically or economically” (ibid 57).

Musk typically evinces a more sympathetic interpretation of “Islamic fundamentalism”. In his comparison between Islam and the West he notes that, whilst the Islamic concept of *tawhid* puts God at the centre of the Muslim worldview, western secular humanism has put man at the centre of its worldview. He goes on to suggest that western Christians have largely acquiesced with this view and have thus accepted the relegation of their faith to the private domain. Thus, for Musk, “the irony of the situation is that modern Islamic ‘fundamentalists’ adhere to a worldview that is

¹¹⁹ It is interesting to note that this book was first published under the title of *Passionate Believing* (Musk, 1992). The second edition, however, published in 2003 specifically in response to 9/11, is entitled *Holy War*. In his interview the author informed me that he preferred the original title but the publisher wanted to include the phrase ‘holy war’ in the new edition. The new edition added two new chapters explaining the history and rise of the *Taliban* and *Osama bin Laden*. Musk describes the book as “the most important of the materials I have written concerning Islam” (2003, 7).

far closer to the biblical norm than is our western aberration” (2003, 68). He suggests that Islamic ideology is really a critique of western materialism and should “provoke us to stop and reflect” (ibid 250). So for Musk it is not so much Islamic ideology which is incompatible with western liberalism but secular liberalism which is incompatible with belief in God and the public practice of religion.

There is one point, however, on which all Evangelical commentators seem to agree: Islam embraces, and indeed actively seeks, temporal political power. Green bluntly describes Islam as “a violent political force masquerading as a religion”(S. Green, 2006). Others are more subtle and make reference to the Islamic principle of *din wa dawla* (religion and government) pointing out that since its inception Islam has always sought political power (e.g. Moucarry, 2008, 38). Sookhdeo suggests that one of the reasons for this is that, whilst in Christianity God is seen as “love”, in Islam God is seen as “power” (2006, 101). Several follow Cragg in tracing the cause to Muhammad’s decision to move to Medina at the *hijra* (the migration in 622 AD) (e.g. Wood, 2009, 72). His acceptance of political power at that point is contrasted with Jesus who, in the Garden of Gethsemane, chose the suffering of the cross over temporal power. In similar vein Musk quotes Newbigin’s stark comparison of the two founders: “the Prophet rode into Mecca to conquer; Jesus rode into Jerusalem to die. The crux lies there” (in Musk, 2003, 257). Knell summed up all this in his interview: “Islam is very much about power. It’s about power, it’s about success, it’s about achievement, it’s about military might, and Islam always struggles when it’s not in a position of power” (Knell, *Interview 16*).

9.4.B IS ISLAM INHERENTLY VIOLENT?

This perceived Islamic struggle for power is a major source of concern for Evangelicals. The question is what form this struggle takes. The contentious Arabic word for it – *jihad*, meaning “fight” or “battle” (Cowan, 1976) – is variously interpreted and many are concerned that its most natural expression is in “holy war”. Yet again, however, Evangelicals are divided in their opinions. Whilst some see *jihad* as inherently violent and blame Islamic terrorism on the nature of Islam and the contents of its sacred texts, others believe that the causes of Islamic violence equally lie in western attitudes and foreign policy.

All recognize that talking about “Islamic violence” is a sensitive issue. Referring to recent terror plots Williams said:

that is Islamic terror. That is what it is. We have evidence that that’s actually what it is and people begin to get scared of saying it Of course not every Muslim backs that stuff, but again what we’re seeing is that in the public domain and amongst leadership these sorts of atrocities are happening in the name of Islam (Williams, *Interview 76*).

Evangelicals are also careful to stress that semantically Islam does not mean “peace” and point out that the literal meaning of the Arabic word *islam* is “submission” (e.g. A. Smith Interview 27, Solomon, 2006a).¹²⁰ The connection between these two is that in Islam peace is achieved when a person – or society – submits to God’s revealed will. This sounds ominous to many Evangelicals as it appears that the Muslims’ goal is “to bring the rest of mankind to such submission” (Musk, 2003, 243).

Sookhdeo is particularly critical of those politicians and church leaders who portray Islam as essentially peaceful (Sookhdeo, 2006, 11). Maybe one such church leader he has in mind is Lord Carey who, whilst he sees “a sharp ideological tension” between the West and the Muslim world, believes that this “does not reflect the true values of Islam” (Carey, 2004b). Not all are convinced by this. Referring to Carey’s speech Dye rather sceptically remarks: “let us hope that his assumption concerning the peaceful nature of Islam is correct” (2007, 61).

One other point of general agreement is that the *Qur’anic* revelation moves chronologically from peace to violence. Cotterell in his explanation of Islam on the EA website explains that “there is what has been called a trajectory of violence running through the *Qur’an* from submission, to defensive fighting, to aggressive fighting” (2005). This chronological shift again is thought to have come about as a result of Muhammad’s move from Mecca, where he was in a position of weakness, to Medina, where he was in a position of power and not afraid to use military force.

¹²⁰ It is interesting to note that in Sookhdeo (2006) it is wrongly stated that “‘salam’ (peace) and ‘Islam’ may sound similar but they are unrelated and do not come from the same (Arabic) root” (ibid 13). In a parallel passage in Sookhdeo (2009) this has been corrected to “It is true that both ‘salam’ (peace) and ‘Islam’ (submission) come from the same root. But in Arabic a root can carry a variety of meanings Form 1 leads to the noun ‘salam’ (peace). Form 4 leads to the nouns ‘islam’ (submission) and ‘Islam’ (the religion)” (ibid 18).

Since that time Goldsmith (2009) suggests that violence has followed Islam down through the centuries.

In this regard most of the participants go on to discuss the Islamic concept of *al-nasikh wal-mansukh* (abrogation). This is the principle whereby discrepancies in the revealed text are resolved by concluding that later revelations abrogate or supersede earlier revelations. The Orr-Ewings explain this concept and then, commenting on the infamous “sword verse” (Surah 9:5)¹²¹, point out that:

there are some Muslims who argue that this verse need not be interpreted literally any more, but many do still hold that the *Qur’an* is the immutable Word of God and that these sections have enduring practical relevance. It is true that the *Qur’an* also contains verses urging tolerance of non-Muslims, as we have seen, but these verses frequently predate the more belligerent ones and are thus abrogated by them” (2002, 31).

Musk recognizes that a similar principle is used in Christianity to explain the progression from the violence of the Old Testament to the teaching of Jesus in the New Testament. However, in company with several others he feels that whilst abrogation in Christianity leads from war to peace, in Islam it leads from peace to war. He suggests that “the doctrine of abrogation features strongly in Islamists’ arguments for a literal interpretation of the concept of *jihad*” and he goes on to list all the *Qur’anic* verses expressing toleration that were later abrogated by the “sword verse” (Musk, 2008, 58). The doctrine of abrogation is thus seen as problematic by almost all participants and Musk calls on Muslim scholars and leaders “to address the issue of abrogation as part of their response to the Islamists’ agenda” (ibid 57).¹²²

¹²¹ “When the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war).” Surah 9:5, (Yusuf Ali translation).

¹²² Interestingly this is a contentious issue within Islam too. Taha (1987) suggested that there were two messages in Islam: the first an historically conditioned message formulated in response to humankind’s weakness and based on the later Medinan revelations; the second a form of higher Islam based on the earlier Meccan revelations which humankind can rise to as it evolves. This led him into conflict with the *‘ulama* in Sudan over the relevance and application of the *shari’a* and he was executed for heresy and political sedition in 1985. His work is continued today by An-Na’im (1990).

Chapman is one of the few Evangelical authors that mention another principle used by Muslims to explain violent verses in the *Qur'an*, namely *asbab al-nuzul* (the occasions of revelation). He points out that “many very orthodox moderate Muslim scholars have their own ways of dealing with (textual) problems They have always insisted that every verse needs to be understood in the context in the life of the Prophet in which it was revealed” (Chapman, 2005b). Thus, for instance, they would understand Surah 9:5 to be only applicable in time of war and not incumbent on all Muslims at all times. Moucarry agreed:

well I would say, you can't use verses in the *Qur'an* without putting them in their historical context because yes there are texts in the *Qur'an* which could be misunderstood if they are interpreted in isolation from the *Qur'an* as a whole (Moucarry, *Interview 55*).

Despite this many Evangelicals insist that Islam is inherently violent and that this is the traditional Islamic position. Following the 7/7 bombings Sookhdeo criticized the general reluctance to name the violence as “Islamic” and argued that “if (the bombers) say they do it in the name of Islam, we must believe them. Is it not the height of illiberalism and arrogance to deny them the right to define themselves?” He went on to suggest:

could it be that the young men who committed suicide were neither on the fringes of Muslim society in Britain, nor following an eccentric and extremist interpretation of their faith, but rather that they came from the very core of the Muslim community and were motivated by a *mainstream* interpretation of Islam?” (P. Sookhdeo, 2005b, , emphasis added).¹²³

The reason for believing Islam to be inherently violent is explained in different ways. Firstly, some see the cause lying in the *Qur'an* itself. “The problem with finding and promoting moderation within Islam is that the most 'natural' reading of Islamic texts, as well as much influential historical interpretation of these, provide fuel for the radicals” (Dye, 2007, 50). Cox and Marks share this opinion feeling that moderate interpretations rely on disingenuous, selective “cherry picking” of tolerant texts:

¹²³ For a strong riposte see Chapman (2005b).

ironically, the most straightforward expositions of the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna* are often those given by the Islamists whose brutal clarity is in stark contrast to the evasiveness of many cherry pickers (Cox and Marks, 2006, 194-5).

Defending his polemical debating style Jay Smith says, "I just open up the *Qur'an* and I read its pages and I try to find out where people are sourcing their material for what they are doing in the world today" (J. Smith, 2008a).¹²⁴ Even more irenic Evangelicals recognize the violence that lies within the pages of the *Qur'an*. Bell says that "the under-reported fact of the matter is that the *Qur'an* itself contains over a hundred violent *jihadic* passages and a hundred and nine passages urging war in the name of Islam" (2006b, 44).¹²⁵ Even Musk admits that for the Islamists "the *Qur'an* is the primary motivator and justifier of their extreme actions" (2008, xiv).

Secondly, for some it is not just the *Qur'an* but also the example of Muhammad which incites violence in Islam. Azumah observes that "Muslims have always taken pride in the military exploits of Muhammad" (2008, 41). Cotterell makes a similar observation and compares Jesus, "the man of peace", with Muhammad who "was most decidedly not a man of peace: according to the earliest biography of Muhammad (written by Ibn Ishaq, a Muslim), he was personally engaged in 26 or 27 battles!" (2007). Many feel, therefore, that it is not surprising that some Muslims turn to violence as "Muhammad's own example shows clearly that he frequently interpreted *jihad* as literal warfare and himself ordered massacre, assassination and torture" (P. Sookhdeo, 2005b). This necessarily "casts a bleak question mark" over the assessment of Muhammad as an "exemplar, the perfect example" (Riddell and Cotterell, 2003, 30).

The third commonly identified cause of Islamic violence is the teaching and interpretation of *jihad*. Many authors note that there are different categories of *jihad* within traditional Islamic thinking ranging from the internal struggle against sin to outright warfare against non-Muslims. Some suggest, however, that the softer interpretations are a more recent innovation. For instance, Azumah claims that "the notion that *jihad* is a spiritual struggle or a last resort in self defence is purely a post-modern apologia and is hardly borne out by mainstream Muslim scholarship" (2008, 41). Rather Sookhdeo, in his 669-page book on the topic, believes that:

¹²⁴ Smith made a similar point on the BBC programme *Newsnight*, 'Should Wilders have been granted entry to the UK?' (broadcast 12 February 2009) which can be seen at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/7888607.stm> (accessed 20 December 2010)

¹²⁵ Bell references these statistics from Richardson (2003).

there is no doubt that in Islamic history *jihad* has normally been viewed, both in traditional Islamic law and in Islamic practice, as the armed conflict against non-Muslims permanently waged to ensure the victory of God's chosen community and religion, the *Umma*, over all polytheistic powers, peoples and lands" (Sookhdeo, 2007a, 13).¹²⁶

This leads some Evangelical participants to portray *jihad* purely in terms of inter-religious confrontation. In particular Solomon and Al-Maqdisi suggest that "it is the enmity itself that fuels and drives *jihad* in all of its forms – toward the Jew first but ultimately to all religions, as when it comes to *jihad*, no non-Muslim is exempt" (2010, xvi). According to them the whole of Islam, including each one of the five pillars or duties, is aimed at furthering *jihad* against non-Muslims (2009b, 10).¹²⁷

Several of the participants point to one further significant theological motivation for violence and particularly of martyrdom missions and suicide bombings. Islam, they claim, offers no assurance of a place in paradise other than to die in *jihad*. This point comes out strongly in the writing and speaking of the Orr-Ewings. For instance, at the popular *Keswick Convention* Amy Orr-Ewing stressed her belief that it is not sociological or political grievances that produce suicide bombers but rather the lack of eschatological assurance in a religion that apparently offers no certainty of future paradise apart from martyrdom in *jihad* (A. Orr-Ewing, 2006). Sookhdeo makes the same connection in his *Pocket Guide to Islam* claiming that for Muslims desperate to escape hell "becoming a suicide bomber is the one sure way to avoid the torments of the grave" (2010a, 17).

9.4.C ARE THERE OTHER CAUSES OF ISLAMIC VIOLENCE?

Nonetheless, not all Evangelicals accept that Islam is inherently and essentially violent. Some take a middle path. Riddell and Cotterell, for instance, believe that "the Islamic sacred texts offer the potential for being interpreted in both ways (i.e. peaceful and violent). It depends how the individual Muslims wish to read them" (2003, 192). In a speech in the House of Lords Nazir-Ali

¹²⁶ Note White's (2009a) scathing review of this book that caused controversy in the EPS in 2009 (§11.4.c).

¹²⁷ Again, whilst in this thesis I do not attempt an exploration of debate on these issues amongst Muslims, it is important to note that some Muslims share these concerns. See for instance An-Na'im's discussion of the incompatibility of *shari'a* with international law as it "sanctions the use of force to propagate Islam" (An-Na'im, 1990, 151).

drew attention to the role of highly educated ideologues who use and manipulate poor, uneducated Muslims particularly from the *madrasas* of Pakistan and suggested that “some urgent dialogue needs to take place between Muslims and Christians on when armed conflict might be justifiable” (Nazir-Ali, 2004). Still others point to local regional factors (Azumah, *Interview 7*, Bell, *Interview 39*) or cultural factors such as preservation of *izzat* (honour) (McRoy, 2006, 233).

For others though the violence perpetrated by some Muslims is not necessarily indicative of the nature of Islam. Whilst not exonerating Islam entirely, these commentators are aware of other contributing factors and are often highly critical of the role of the West, in marked contrast to those who appear to attach no blame at all to western actions or attitudes. These Evangelicals believe that understanding the causes of Muslim anger is a critical issue in Christian-Muslim relations.

I know this is almost the \$64,000 question, but I’m not convinced that Islam is inherently violent. this is the pivotal issue that underlines whatever position people are going to take. You either believe Islam is inherently violent or you’re prepared to stand back and say there are contributing factors within it that seem to allow it, condone it, qualify it (Bell, *Interview 39*).

Sudworth was at pains to point out that, whilst there might be “tendencies within Islam, to say any system or people is inherently violent is an unchristian statement because it’s a predetermined predisposition which denies that God can work to change people whether they’re Christian or not” (Sudworth, *Interview 41*). So Chapman insists that:

instead of suggesting that 'the *Qur’an* is essentially violent', Christians should listen to the internal debate between moderate and extremist Muslims and add whatever weight they can to support Muslims who challenge the more violent interpretations of the *Qur’an*, and who do so *from within Islam* (Chapman, 2007a, 5, emphasis in original).

Of course, these Evangelicals are very careful to stress that they do not in any way condone violence. Chapman in his booklet on the topic declares at the outset his “condemnation of terrorism of every kind in the strongest possible terms ... A firm stand against terrorism, however, needs to go hand-in-hand with serious reflection on the root causes of terrorism” (2005a, 4).

Indeed Chapman has been at the forefront of the debate about external causes of Islamic

violence. He argues that “terrorism itself, it seems, is not the root of the problem; it is usually a reaction to a perceived injustice, and therefore needs to be seen as a symptom of other underlying problems” (Chapman, 2007b, 191).¹²⁸ Others agree with him. Bell observes that “Islam critiques the West; that’s why they are angry” (2006a). Nazir-Ali explicitly identifies Israel-Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, Bosnia and Kosova as the “flashpoints” which “are the cause of (terrorism) and not only the location for it” (2002, 92). He recognizes that “there is a sense of injustice, and the sharper it is, the more extreme the measures to counter it will be” (ibid). Moucarray summed up this more self-critical approach in his interview:

it is very easy to blame Islam and Muslims and make them a scapegoat without taking a very critical look at ourselves, you know. I am sure that the foreign policy of many Western countries has contributed to these extremist interpretations of Islam which is found among Muslim extremists. So rather than accusing Islam of being a violent religion, perhaps some people should ask themselves whether they have any part in the way they have, through their foreign policy, pushed Muslims to take extremist views and extremist understanding of Islam (Moucarray, *Interview* 53).

McRoy exemplifies such a self-critical approach. Writing in *The Muslim Weekly* he declared that “if the British government wants to prevent another 7/7, it needs to address what caused it – foreign policy” (2005b). He is particularly critical of western support for Israel and believes that the plight of the Palestinians is a major cause of Muslim anger.

As already noted (§9.3.f) this latter point is a particularly contentious issue amongst Evangelicals. Should Christians support Israel or the Palestinians? Again Chapman has been at the forefront of the argument.¹²⁹ He believes that “if we want to understand the anger that has been building up within the Muslim world in recent decades, it is important that we try to understand what the creation of Israel has meant for Muslims” (Chapman, 2007b, 145) and again “we are dealing here with one of the most important and the most bitter of all the complaints that Muslims direct towards the West” (2004a, 194). Several other authors also identify it as an issue. Bell admits that “clearly one of the biggest blockages to gaining the trust of Muslims is the fact that they perceive the West (i.e. including the Christian church) to be endorsing and financially supporting the political state of Israel” (2003, 30). Glaser too recognized that:

¹²⁸ It should be noted that Chapman did not express this view in the first edition of *Cross and Crescent* (1995). Indeed the topic of political Islam was largely missing from the first edition, an omission which is corrected in the second edition (2007) in response to world events.

¹²⁹ See Chapman (2002) and (2004c).

you have the Christians who are very pro-Palestinian and you find Evangelicals in that situation who are really out for truth and righteousness and justice, and that makes them likely to be more sympathetic towards Muslims, and on the other side you've got your Zionist fruitcakes who want to be Jews and see all that's going on in the Middle East in those terms (Glaser, *Interview 53*).

Musk points out that some well-known Evangelical church leaders in the UK including David Pawson have "identified themselves as 'Christian Zionists'" (Musk, 2003, 263, see also note 147 on page 309). This is not just a theological position. Moucarray believes it tends to make them "very negative in their approach to Muslims" (Moucarray, *Interview 93*). This in turn has political implications as Arabs and Muslims conclude that, particularly in America, "the theology of Christian Zionism is behind the 'biased foreign policy' of the United States" (Musk, 2003, 263). This brings the issue to the forefront of Christian-Muslim relations:

I've been to many interfaith conferences and the problem that comes up consistently is the question of the Israel and Palestinian conflict. What has that got to do with Muslims and Christians? That's the Jews and Muslims. There's a serious issue there (Azumah, *Interview 31*).

The Israel-Palestine issue is not only a cause of disagreement between Christians and Muslims but also amongst Evangelicals themselves. Riddell believes that "while the conflict fuels the radical Islamist movement, it is not a root cause (of violence)" (2004b, 171). Both Chapman (2007a, 4) and McRoy (2003) though take issue with this lack of causal association. In his interview Riddell acknowledged this criticism but made his point even more explicit:

if anybody suggests that really the root cause of 'Islamic terror', if you want to use that term, is say American and British foreign policy, then I have to say well the problem is that I see a similar phenomenon having happened during the early years of Islamic history there was a common thread there, so I just don't buy the line that it's all to do with present foreign policy issues and if there is a change of foreign policy it will just go away. I just don't buy that line (Riddell, *Interview 55*).¹³⁰

Solomon and Al-Maqdisi's *Al-Yahud: Eternal Islamic Enmity and the Jews* is also an explicit rejection of the causal nature of contemporary Middle East politics. They conclude that:

¹³⁰ See also his article in *Church Times*, 'The question no one wants to face', where he says, "a statement that the problem lies in British foreign policy is simply a cop-out. Rather, the fundamental ingredients for such attitudes lie in parts of the Islamic sacred texts, which, taken literally along a timeline from Mecca to Medina, easily produce a mindset of hostile separation" (Riddell, 2006).

the myth that Israel has caused the enmity can also be seen for what it is – a distortion of ‘cause and effect’ meant to distract from the true roots of both the endemic Islamic ‘enmity’ towards the Jews, and the endemic Islamic ‘claims’ to Jerusalem and the entire holy land” (Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, 2010, 124).

Elsewhere Solomon suggests that to identify contemporary political situations as the cause of violence is “to put the cart before the horse” (Solomon, 2006c). To quote Sookhdeo once more:

no other religious group in recent times have been shown to pose such a threat of violence and terrorism across the globe as consistently as Muslims do. Is there something distinctive about Islam as a religion that makes it more likely to justify violence in other religions? (Sookhdeo, 2007a, 44).

9.4.D WHAT IS ISLAM’S GLOBAL AGENDA?

The ultimate fear that some Evangelicals have about Islam as an ideology is that they believe it to be seeking world domination. This fear forms the backdrop to the following chapter on Evangelical reactions to Islam in Britain. However, the claims about the ideological roots of Islam’s global agenda properly follow on from the discussion of violence and are briefly explored here to set the scene for the next chapter.

Some Evangelicals discuss these issues in the context of Huntington’s thesis of an inexorable “clash of civilizations”. At least eleven of the Evangelical participants refer to this thesis in their writing or speaking, although it has to be pointed out that not all of them by any means agree with the inevitability embedded in it. Carey, in particular, has used it to frame many of his speeches on Christian-Muslim relations but always concludes that such a clash is not inevitable. Whilst he believes “it would be foolish to claim that Huntington’s thesis lacks total validity” (2005b) he clearly says that “I for one do not accept that the future is one of escalating violence, deepening bitterness and a grudging dialogue between 'incompatible faiths' and cultures” (2004a).

Other Evangelicals disagree. Solomon and Al-Maqdisi believe that “he is mistaken who thinks that the Islamic conquest that was started by Muhammed some 1400 years ago is over” (2009b, 29). For them it continues today. Sookhdeo, referring to Huntington’s comments about Islam’s “bloody borders”, claims that “Islam has an inbuilt theological urge at its very core towards empire-building i.e. the continual expansion of its political dominion” (2007a, 103). Elsewhere he

discusses the Islamic doctrine of “sacred space” and concludes that “Islam is a territorial religion, very conscious of whether or not an area is under Islamic control” (Sookhdeo, 2008a, 45). He believes this is highlighted when Muslims talk about *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* and is a “key motivation of radical Muslims” (ibid 45).

The *Islam in Britain* report also expresses concern about the political and territorial ambitions of Islam. It quotes a spokesman for Regent's Park mosque saying "the Muslims will be the next civilization to lead the world and will take the world to new horizons" (ISIC, 2005, 15). The report itself goes on to say:

the real root of Muslim radicalism in Britain is Muslim self-understanding as a religious community theologically destined to world dominion. Most contemporary Muslims, like most Muslims in the past, see Islam as a religious and political ideology inherently committed to expansion into infidel territory, which must be sanctified for Islam ... Radicalism and violence are inherent in much of traditional Muslim theology, ideology, sectarianism and history (ISIC, 2005, 53).

As Green sees it, “Islam makes no bones about its goal, which is the establishment of a world-wide Islamic state under the dominion of *Allah*” (S. Green, 2006, 3).

Again it should be emphasized that not all Evangelicals are so reductionist in their assessment. Even though Chapman notes that “bringing land under the control of Islam and keeping it within Islam has always been a very fundamental goal for Muslims who know anything of their history”, he clearly does not accept the inevitability of a “clash of civilizations” (Chapman, 2007b, 85). The Orr-Ewings too, whilst broadly accepting Huntington’s thesis, caution that although “it is helpful to start with this broad brush approach, a simplistic projection of monolithic Western civilization pitted against a monolithic Islamic civilization must be avoided” (2002, 74). However, as I turn to examine Evangelical reactions to the public role of Islam in Britain, it is clear that some Evangelicals do embrace Huntington’s thesis and believe that:

Britain is facing a challenge unlike anything faced for many centuries. It is the challenge of a new religion, which is both a faith and territorial power, a religion which could easily become numerically and structurally the dominant religion in coming years (Sookhdeo, 2008a, 229).

CHAPTER 10 THE SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ISLAM

Following on from these reflections on Islam's global ambitions, this chapter explores the data to discover how the participants in the EPS view the socio-political implications of Islam in Britain. It would be impossible to understand their various reactions without some appreciation of what they perceive to be the proper relationship between religion and the state. The first section briefly examines the participants' opinions on church-state relations. The second section then explores Evangelical reactions to the increasing ethnic and religious diversity of British society and the deficiencies and failures that they perceive in multiculturalism. This naturally leads on to a consideration of the Islamization that some observe in various sectors of British society ranging through everyday life, education, media, law and finance. The chapter closes with a review of the participants' various predictions concerning the future of Islam in Britain, which especially includes the fear of an Islamic takeover and the various solutions proposed to prevent this.

10.1 EVANGELICALS AND THE STATE

Some Evangelicals feel that Britain should be a "Christian country". Dye reminds his readers that in the 2001 UK Census over 70% claimed to be Christian and comments that this "should warn people against suggesting that Britain is no longer a 'Christian' country" (Dye, 2007, 19). This is a strong theme of the campaign work of both Williams (CCFON) and Green (*Christian Voice*):

the government should say frankly and unapologetically that this was, is and is going to be a Christian nation, and that anyone who does not like that state of affairs is free to leave (S. Green, 2005, 18).

However, most do not take quite such an ideological view of establishment (§3.4.c). Craig called Green a "Christendom man" (Craig, *Interview 11*) and Bell, Chapman, Knell, McRoy, Moucarry and Musk all expressed scepticism about Christendom and doubted that Britain had ever been a "Christian country". Glaser warns against harking back to the model of Israel in the Old Testament and interestingly - in the light of the attitudes of the BMC leaders (§11.3.c) - observes that:

non-Western Christians sometimes dream of a Christian state, and criticize Westerners for separating 'sacred' and 'secular' Wanting to link state and faith is natural, but can be dangerous. It should make us ask to what extent the separation of church and state reflects a wrong separation of faith and the rest of life, and to what extent it is a unique and liberating Christian idea" (Glaser, 2005, 203).

Nonetheless many regret a sense of decline in the nation and speak of a spiritual "vacuum" (Pawson, 2003, 22, Sookhdeo, 2006, 4). They believe that Britain has "Christian roots" (Craig, *Interview 41*) and that "our 'secular', 'liberal' democracy was based on Christianity" (Glaser, 2000a, 16, see also Newbigin et al., 2005). This is something that most feel should be publicly acknowledged and Nazir-Ali urges people to "put the Christian case vigorously in public debate, that will remind the nation of its Christian heritage" (2009).

Even former bishop Nazir-Ali, however, is ambivalent about the establishment of the church in Britain, suggesting that the church should "move from patterns of 'working with the grain', of being part of the social furniture, to being radically alternative communities" (Nazir-Ali, 2008e, 11). Bell, Knell and Jay Smith, all from non-conformist backgrounds, were ideologically in favour of disestablishment (§3.4.c), as was the Anglican Riddell who said:

I don't see how we can privilege one religious group over another in terms of the structures of state ... I would disestablish the lot (Riddell, *Interview 11*).

However, Craig, Sudworth and Andrew Smith each observed that, whilst they had held disestablishment positions in the past, they were now more pragmatically in favour of establishment of the church, partly because they saw it as a positive benefit for minority faiths (Chapman, *Interview 16*). Sudworth warned against a "glib iconoclasm" and counselled that "for the church to voluntarily wind back things I'm not so sure is wise or appropriate" (Sudworth, *Interview 19*). Speaking of the multicultural nature of Britain today Taylor agrees and says:

it could well be argued that pluralism, limited by existing laws in terms of unacceptable elements of social and religious praxis and *guaranteed by a state church* acting as a broker for religion within the secular polity, is not only a more likely way forward than total assimilation (of different minorities), but the only realistic one (J. Taylor, 2005b, 125-6 emphasis added).

10.2 EVANGELICALS AND MULTICULTURALISM

The Evangelical participants in this public sphere, however, are by and large critical of multiculturalism and the way that successive British governments have pursued it as a policy. Although a few see some positive benefits, the majority feels that it has failed and should be rethought. Furthermore, several fear that Islam has been the beneficiary of these policies at the expense of other faiths in general and Christianity in particular.

Sookhdeo has been an especially outspoken critic of multiculturalism and the place he believes it has afforded to Islam. He himself came to Britain from Guyana in the 1960s as a Muslim and later converted to Christianity. He remembers that at that time immigrants were expected to assimilate and adapt to the British way of life (Sookhdeo, 2009b). However, all this changed with the advent of multiculturalism, which “has had serious consequences, which were not foreseen by the well-intentioned individuals who have promoted this doctrine so successfully” (Sookhdeo, 2008a, 222). For him the most serious consequence has been the freedom that he believes it has given to radical Islam:

I am both aggrieved and alarmed to see how equality, peace and harmony in British society are fast disappearing, for which the main cause seems to be the egregious behaviour of a radical minority within one particular faith, Islam. There is such fear of radical Islam that few voices dare to point out what is happening (Sookhdeo, 2006, 1).

He warns that “careful thought needs to be given to the future of society in the United Kingdom” and whether the nation is headed towards fragmentary communalism or unifying integration of individuals (Sookhdeo, 2008a, 211).

Certainly Sookhdeo is not alone in his concerns. On the one hand, many of the participants interviewed expressed the sentiment that immigrants are welcome in this country and even bring a diverse richness. Goldsmith was typical when he said “guests and newcomers are always welcome as far as Christians are concerned. I’m very happy for people of different sorts to come to Britain” (Goldsmith, *Interview 18*). Nazir-Ali emphasizes that, in fact, this is a Christian duty and makes the point that “in Britain it is the Judeo-Christian heritage, the Bible, which provides a way of welcoming people, of hospitality of treating the stranger as yourself. That should have been

the basis of constructing an inclusive society (not multiculturalism)”¹³¹.

On the other hand, almost all those I talked to added a caveat; all groups should be expected to adapt and embrace the British way of life. For instance, Craig said “you’re welcome but this is who we are” (Craig, *Interview 17*) and Goldsmith likewise said “I feel that Muslims coming to Britain, and the same for Hindus or Judaists or Buddhists or whoever, that Muslims need to adapt to the British life, not Britain to them” (Goldsmith, *Interview 18*). Quite clearly there is a feeling that this adaptation has not happened to the extent which it should have, and it is this omission that leads many Evangelicals to suggest that multiculturalism has failed.

McRoy stated it typically bluntly: “multiculturalism has been a disaster because we’ve had the Balkanization of the United Kingdom” (McRoy, *Interview 30*). Bell too saw multiculturalism as problematic:

it became what we didn’t intend. I think the original aspiration was honourable but naive. And the whole thing got out of hand and I see multiculturalism as in demise at the moment and I think we’re in a vacuum and we’re saying, ‘what next?’ (Bell, *Interview 25*).

Sudworth was one of the few who expressed a different opinion and suggested:

that’s the easy critique. I think that I’m wary of the church and Christians who just take the simplistic critique because arguably what multiculturalism has done has brought in a concept of freedoms that otherwise wouldn’t have come in (Sudworth, *Interview 23*).

10.2.A THE FAILURES OF MULTICULTURALISM

Government policy

Evangelicals suggest various reasons for the perceived failures of multiculturalism. Some blame the government, others blame Muslims and others the concept of multiculturalism itself. Riddell felt that “the problem is not with the growth of the (Muslim) community *per se*, my problem is too much of a hands-off policy from government” which has, firstly, not controlled the speed of change and, secondly, has allowed ghettos to develop (Riddell, *Interview 17*). In an article in the *Church Times* (Riddell, 2005) he suggests that “it may even be necessary to monitor Muslim

¹³¹ A point made during a BBC Two *Newsnight* debate broadcast on 16 December 2010.

immigration until such time as the existing minority community is more effectively interwoven into the fabric of British society, and is more accepting of majority values”, a theme later picked up by Carey in various media articles (e.g. , 2008). Bell also believed that the government should have kept more control and introduced something closer to Singapore’s “social engineering” to ensure integration (Bell, *Interview 27*). In addition Sookhdeo feels that the government has partnered with the wrong people, choosing “Muslim advisers from only one section of the Muslim community”, namely what he views as conservative Muslims from the MCB rather than modernists or liberals (Sookhdeo, 2008a, 218). There certainly seemed to be a general feeling that the strategies of successive governments towards immigration and particularly Muslim immigration had been unwise.

This particularly included the charge that the government had failed to take the religious aspect of immigration into account. Glaser explained:

what I do think has been a problem from the start was that the secular state treated everything as culture rather than religion, and missed the religious dimension out, and that I think has been a big problem and I think it's that as much as anything else that has landed us in the state where we don't know what to do with Islam (Glaser, *Interview 21*).

In addition to a failure to understand Islam adequately, Taylor is aggrieved that the government has failed to explain properly the Christian roots of Britain to the newcomers: “most leading Muslims in Britain have never read the Bible and the government is spending millions on getting Muslims to understand their own version of ‘correct Islam’ rather than ensuring a working knowledge of the founding narrative of our island civilization” (J. Taylor, 2008c). Thus the Christian roots that nourished the foundation of liberal democracy have been forgotten and “a society that has believed the nonsense peddled by the interfaith bureaucrats that 'all religions are equal' or that the words 'faith and faiths are interchangeable' has had a lot to learn in a very short time”(J. Taylor, 2005a).

Insularity of Islam

It is not only the government that is deemed culpable, however. For some Islam itself is at fault for its perceived unwillingness to allow or encourage its followers to integrate. According to the *Islam in Britain* report “Islam has an inbuilt drive to protect, segregate and to a large extent

control its adherents” (ISIC, 2005, 131). Even Sudworth, his more positive views on multiculturalism notwithstanding, said:

I think in the broad trajectory of the practice of the Islamic faith there is a tendency towards being quite a self-contained faith and so the issues of segregation and parallel societies I think are particularly pertinent when it comes to Muslim communities. I think written into the origins of Islam and encouraged amongst many Muslim leaders has been a suspicion of the outside and therefore avoidance of influence from outside of Islam (Sudworth, *Interview 39*).

As has been observed (§6.4.d), this insularity is sometimes understood as disloyalty to the country, and is explored further below in considering concerns about Muslim ghettos (§10.2.b). The complaint is that Muslims put their religious identity before their national identity. Interestingly, with one exception, all of the Evangelicals interviewed – both national elite and church leaders – said that they would prioritize their Christian identity over their national identity. However, they almost all went on to say that they did not see these two as being in conflict. It would seem that such priorities are not unique to Muslims.

Philosophical roots

Lastly, many Evangelical participants are deeply suspicious of the very basis of multiculturalism. Nazir-Ali calls it “a novel philosophy” (Wynne-Jones, 2008) and Musk saw it as a device of secular humanism:

why we would think it would work in the first place is part of the lie that undermines the philosophical base for much of our country – the kind of secular humanism thing. That if we just explain to one another where we’re at and so long as we all bow down to this altar of secular humanism then we’re going to get along because we can all be tolerant multiculturalism doesn’t work I don’t think (Musk, *Interview 41*).

In fact several participants identified the root of the problem as being secularism and the vacuum that has been created by a loss of religious faith and values in Britain. For example Williams observed that:

secular liberal humanism leads to censorship and oppression, it also leaves a terrible spiritual gaping hole and what Islam offers is something that is very regulated, it’s rigid. With a rising Islamic population I can see them filling that gaping hole unless the church wakes up” (A.Williams, *Interview 30*).

10.2.B NEGATIVE OUTCOMES OF MULTICULTURALISM

So it is clear that the majority of the participants in the EPS view the policy of multiculturalism, although not necessarily the presence of ethnic minorities, as being negative and problematic. Participants see several damaging outcomes of multiculturalism which are explored below. The first is an endemic political correctness that stifles the debate of key issues surrounding immigration and religion. The second is the development of the concept of Islamophobia, which according to many Evangelicals is a tool used to suppress criticism of Islam and leads to a definite bias towards Islam in some sectors, fuelled by fear of Islamic radicalism and violence. Finally, there is concern that multiculturalism has allowed the development of “parallel communities” or even “no-go” Muslim ghettos.

Firstly, there is frustration amongst some that in today’s politically correct climate it is no longer possible to openly criticize religion, and particularly Islam, for fear of either offending the Muslim community or being censured by the liberal establishment. Referring to the Pope’s Regensburg address Carey laments that “the incident is a sad reminder that political correctness rules these days. We find ourselves forbidden to ask awkward questions” (2006). Craig was vociferous in talking about “Hazel Blears and all the rest of the lot who are busy shovelling political correctness down our throats” (Craig, *Interview 41*). He felt this had enabled Islam to get itself “very comfortably in a position where people don’t want to talk about it” (Craig, *Interview 13*). These feelings were summed up in an article in *The Sunday Telegraph* entitled *Time to Fight the Good Fightback: Christians are fed up with the assault on their religion from political correctness and Islam* which quoted Cox, Green, Nazir-Ali and Sookhdeo amongst others (O. Craig, 2006).

Nonetheless, some wonder whether political correctness has reached its limit. Glaser suspects that now “the ‘politically correct’ find themselves having to judge aspects of Islam, despite their post-modern conviction that all truth claims have equal validity” (Glaser, 2000a, 26). Edwards, formerly of the *Evangelical Alliance*, went further and suggested in an interview that Evangelical Christians “do have a responsibility to be willing to be politically incorrect in challenging fundamentalism wherever we meet it” (Jesus Army, 2003).

Secondly, there is particular concern that the concept of Islamophobia (§6.4.c) is sometimes used

inappropriately as a tool to enforce political correctness. Nazir-Ali points out that whilst this phobia describes “an unreasonable fear of all Muslims it is very important to distinguish that from a reasonable fear, for example, of people who are committed to terrorism to achieve their aims” (2002, 72). Sookhdeo claims that “the concept of Islamophobia has been used in recent years as a way of shielding Islam and Muslims from criticism” (2008a, 201). Many are also adamant that there should be free debate and an openness to hard questions.

Others, however, do recognize the reality of Islamophobia and some Evangelicals have even accused one another of being Islamophobic. For instance, McRoy suggests that “some popular books by Evangelicals on Islam tend to be Islamophobic and/or inaccurate” (2007) and in another article claims that “some evangelicals – notably Christian-Zionists – have helped to promote Islamophobia” (2001). Andrew Smith too is concerned: “sometimes Christians have told me about negative experiences they have had with Muslims and I have felt very uneasy. Sometimes it is blatant racism, or Islamophobia” (2009, 22). However, the strident voices “totally reject the charge of Islamophobia - which is often just a word used to put off people from being critical of Islam while Muslims remain free to criticize anyone they choose” (Dye, n.d.).

Thirdly, some Evangelicals directly link political correctness and Islamophobia to a perceived bias within certain sections of the British establishment towards Islam and against Christianity. The *Islam in Britain* report believes this to be the result of a deliberate policy by Muslims to portray themselves as victims and to:

place Islam and Muslims beyond criticism, thus achieving a privileged status in the UK. A measure of their success is that political correctness seems to be especially concerned with Muslim issues, largely ignoring the real problems of other minorities and often avoiding discussion of important issues criticism of Islam is considered unacceptable although Christianity is openly attacked and disparaged” (ISIC, 2005, 65, 73).

Many examples of this frustration could be given. In expressing its concern about the appointment of a Muslim as head of BBC religious broadcasting, CCFON wrote that “our Government appears to make concessions to the Muslim community, in contrast to its marginalization of Christianity and the rights of Christians” (2009). Craig was “angry” when *Kingsway International Christian Centre*, one of the largest churches in Britain, was forced to move out of its building in East London and then was refused planning permission to rebuild, at the same time as *Tablighi Jama'at* were being

granted permission to build a “mega-mosque” in the same area (2008) (§6.2.b). In one last example *Christian Voice* claimed that the organizers of *Jerry Springer the Opera* were “too cowardly to have a go at Islam. They know that Christians do not resort to violence and they think they will get away with it” (Christian Voice, 2009). In fact Evangelicals suspect that they are doubly disadvantaged. Not only do they feel unfairly treated in comparison with Islam, they also believe that they are portrayed as being bigoted and unrespectable compared to other “faces of Christianity” (Riddell, 2004b, 182). All this is causing resentment and a determination to reassert the Evangelical Christian position:

it seems certain that no other faith would be subjected to such strictures and, indeed, to the benign neglect to which the churches have become accustomed. A place for Christians in the public square must be reclaimed (Nazir-Ali, 2009).

Lastly, Nazir-Ali made headlines in 2008 when he claimed that “no-go” areas existed in parts of Britain where it was dangerous for non-Muslims to enter. He suggested that multicultural policies had facilitated Muslims “living as separate communities, continuing to communicate in their own languages and having minimum need for building healthy relationships with the majority”(Nazir-Ali, 2008d). Amidst a storm of criticism the bishop had to defend himself and issued a statement clarifying that he was not referring to all Muslims but to “the particular impact of Islamic extremism” and had in mind the kind of “parallel lives” described by the *Cantle Report* following the Oldham riots of 2001 (Nazir-Ali, 2008c).¹³² These claims were not new, however. The *Islam in Britain* report had already warned that there was a danger of the “fragmentation of British society, the creation of Muslim-controlled enclaves, and riots and civil strife” (ISIC, 2005, 53). Other Evangelicals also agreed with the bishop. Riddell said that Nazir-Ali “was onto something” and “was a brave man to bring it into the public arena” (Riddell, *Interview 45*) and McRoy pointed out that churches have been attacked in Muslim areas (McRoy, *Interview 52*). Sookhdeo too came to his defence and was quoted as saying:

Muslims are being told not to integrate into British society, but to set up separate enclaves where they can operate according to *shari’a* law ‘cleansing’ Muslim-majority areas of non-Muslims had already begun, with white residents urged to leave and churches threatened (Wynne-Jones and Sawyer, 2008).

¹³² See Cantle (2001) ‘Community Cohesion’, available at <http://resources.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Publications/Documents/Document/Default.aspx?recordId=96> (accessed 6 April 2011).

Sookhdeo sees the development of such Muslim areas as being commensurate with the Islamic doctrine of sacred space mentioned above (§9.4.d) and claims that “migrant Muslim communities in the West are constantly engaged in sacralizing new areas” by buying private homes, then building mosques, changing local place names and also by marching (2008a, 52).¹³³ Solomon and Al-Maqdisi similarly argue that “the first foundational principle for the creation of a successfully visible Islamic society is to be *separate* and *distinct*” (2009b, 18 emphasis in original). They believe that this is the outworking of the Islamic concept of *hijra* and is part of an alleged Islamic conspiracy to take over the West (§10.4.c).

This contentious issue was neatly illustrated by an incident that happened in Birmingham a few months after Nazir-Ali’s remarks. A Muslim police community support officer ordered two Christian evangelists to stop handing out tracts in the predominantly Muslim area of Alum Rock and threatened them with arrest (see Harrison, 2008). Many Evangelicals were outraged. *Christian Voice* declared that the “Muslim no-go area ‘will be challenged’” and organized a “Gospel outreach” in the area during which they reported that “despite the crude attempt to create a Muslim ‘no-go’ area for Christians, we found people were more than willing to take literature” (Christian Voice, 2008b, 2008c). However, in his blog Sudworth counselled caution and questioned why the *Telegraph* had chosen to run this story just months after the earlier controversy. Whilst defending the freedom to preach one’s religion he wondered whether Christians would be “so anxious to defend the freedoms of Muslims, dressed in religious garb to give out Muslim tracts, warning of the prospect of hell for Christians” (Sudworth, 2008a).

This even-handed approach was also demonstrated by other participants in their reactions to the debate about no-go areas. Several expressed understanding for why immigrants might choose to live together:

it is not always easy to live in a country not your own, so you want to live in areas where you have people who come from your own country or from countries similar to your own. So I can understand that people want to stick together to help each other. I’m not saying that this is

¹³³ He describes Muslim Sufi marches celebrating the birthdays of Muhammad and various saints and links these to sacralizing the territory. This is reminiscent of the way in which some Evangelicals have occasionally marched to “claim the ground” (see Kendrick & Hawthorne (1993)).

necessarily something useful in the long term but from a human point of view I can understand that (Moucarry, *Interview 89*).

Moucarry, along with Glaser (*Interview 45*), went on to highlight the problem of “white flight”:

I have no doubt that there are some white people who as soon as the area in which they live becomes less white, they tended to leave this area and to go to somewhere else because they don't want to send their children to the same school. So they are actually contributing to the creation of these ghettos. So I think that it's very unfortunate that we have these ghettos in Britain but we should not blame only Muslims or immigrants because we are all part of this process (Moucarry, *Interview 89*).

Finally, Andrew Smith, whilst aware of the existence of Muslim areas in his neighbourhood, suggested that there may be:

all sorts of areas (which) Muslims would feel are 'no go' areas for them, you know, quite nice middle class areas, and would feel unsafe and certainly some of the big white outer council estates (where they) would be very nervous about going (A.Smith, *Interview 47*).

This highlights what Taylor believes to be the real problem. She believes that:

the issue for the Church in the multicultural millennium is not so much the 'Islamization' of a once-Christian culture as the emergence, with state collusion, of discrete territories where vastly different norms prevail, shut off and sometimes resentful, a breeding ground for ferment and a target for hostility (J. Taylor, 2005b, 107).

So Evangelical Christian leaders are clearly concerned about multiculturalism and the effect it has had on the religious landscape in Britain. Many would agree with Riddell who said: “I support multiculturalism but it has to be multiculturalism that has social cohesion as a very core part of its public discourse” (Riddell, *Interview 15*). However, the fear for some was expressed by Jay Smith:

multiculturalism as an ideal is brilliant. Multiculturalism works providing all cultures are willing to assimilate. Multiculturalism doesn't work when there is one culture that refuses to assimilate. Islam has never assimilated, and never will assimilate (J.Smith *Interview 19*).

The unwillingness of some Muslims to integrate is seen by some Evangelicals as a disturbing and threatening trend in Britain:

the failed policies of immigration, multiculturalism and political correctness, together with an apparent abhorrence of the traditional Christian values our nation was built on, have opened the door to an invasion of a radical ideology intent on turning Britain into a fully-blown Islamic state, a *khilafa*. Just as the last century saw the death of the British Empire, some senior politicians believe we are witnessing the death of the British nation in this one (Dye, n.d.).

10.3 THE “ISLAMIZATION” OF BRITAIN¹³⁴

This concern is typical of those Evangelicals who suspect that some Muslims have initiated a deliberate process of what they call the “Islamization” of Britain.¹³⁵ Solomon and Madqisi fear that relatively “harmless changes” in a society may have “explosive potential” (2009b, 78). They allege that the concessions and provisions which Muslims demand as part of the *shari‘a* are all part of a deliberate attempt to Islamize society. Such participants often suspect a conspiracy and see what they believe to be symptoms of this in: the life of Muslim communities – including the very visible issues of clothing, diet, the prayer call and the building of mosques; education; media; Islamic finance; and demands for *shari‘a*.

10.3.A MUSLIM COMMUNITY LIFE

Some consider that Muslim women in some parts of Britain are adopting stricter dress codes than necessary as part of a deliberate attempt to assert Islam publicly (Sookhdeo, 2008b, 97). They believe that there is a deliberate progression in a community from wearing the *hijab* to wearing

¹³⁴ Note two booklets written by Sookhdeo and published by *Barnabas Fund* since this research was completed. *The Way Ahead: returning Britain to its Christian path* (Sookhdeo, 2010c) and *Slippery Slope: the Islamisation of the UK* (Sookhdeo, 2011) both warn of the perceived dangers discussed in this section. Significantly, the second booklet was distributed free in the February 2011 edition of the *Christianity* magazine.

¹³⁵ See for example the title of the Pilcrow Press booklet *The Islamization of Britain and What Must Be Done to Prevent It* (Dye, 2007). Note that the authorship of this booklet is not clear. The foreword is written by Colin Dye, pastor of Kensington Temple, London, but no other author’s name appears in the publication. Some of the text appears in an online article apparently written by Dye (‘Khilafa or Kingdom?’, <http://www.pilcrowpress.com/khilafa-or-kingdom> (accessed 24 March 2009)) but other parts of it appear on another website and are ascribed to Sam Solomon (see ‘Moderate Islam?’, <http://europenews.dk/en/node/12574> (accessed 20 March 2009)). For the purposes of referencing I presume it to be written by Dye.

the *niqab* thus signifying increasing Muslim dominance (Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, 2009b, 76). Craig was not concerned about the *hijab* but saw the “ominous” *niqab* as “a visible sign of separation and division which they quite quietly go round wearing” (Craig, *Interview 41*). Nazir-Ali, however, is less concerned about clothing and likens the *burqa’* to a nun’s habit and other religious dress in the Middle East which is merely a mark of modesty (2002, 58).

The provision of *halal* food for Muslims is also of concern to some participants. Sookhdeo believes that the *halal* system is a deliberate attempt at “the creation of an Islamic consciousness” (2007b) which at the very least is divisive as it stops Muslims from visiting the homes of non-Muslims (2006, 73). Dye claims that the *halal* food market is the fastest growing food market in the world and is worth \$4 billion per annum in Britain alone. He is concerned that in some areas of the country *halal* food is becoming a monopoly and forcing the unwanted “adoption of a form of religious ritualism in Britain” (Dye, 2007, 27).¹³⁶ Solomon sees these visible trends in both dress and diet in a very negative light and equates them to a Muslim demand for *shari’a*: “when the Muslims demand the right of the *hijab* they are literally demanding that part of *shari’a* be implemented, so it is with *halal* meat, be it for school meals, prisons or hospitals”.

On the contrary, Bell saw these things in an entirely different light. He remarked that “the British openness and civility is there, which says we will cater for Muslims in our schools with *halal* school meals, for how the girls dress for PE, the stuff of life, and that’s what makes me proud to be British” (Bell, *Interview 51*).

Another very public aspect of Muslim community life is the *adhan* (call to prayer) from the mosque. Whilst Knell was willing to countenance a once weekly publicly broadcast call to prayer in predominantly Muslim areas, he did feel that it was anti-social (Knell, *Interview 45*), a point emphasized by Nazir-Ali when he points out that artificial amplification is not necessary and is of course only a recent innovation (2008d). Others were concerned that it was an ideological statement and was highly “symbolic” (A. Williams, *Interview 26*). “If it was a hooter or a buzzer I wouldn’t mind, but it’s not, it’s an ideology. It may be a language that most people can’t

¹³⁶ *Christian Concern for Our Nation* has more recently picked up this theme. See ‘Growing concern as British public is misled over halal meat’, <http://christianconcern.com/our-concerns/islam/growing-concern-british-public-%E2%80%9Cmisled%E2%80%9D-over-halal-meat> (accessed 22 November 2010).

understand, but it's actually a statement about *Allah* and about Islam so no thank you" (Craig, *Interview 33*). The request for a prayer call at an Oxford mosque was something that Frog Orr-Ewing was also opposed to on his blog (2008a).

The building of the mosques themselves also excites a lot of debate amongst Evangelicals. Several authors point out that "in a free society, adherents of different faiths should have the right to set up their own places of worship" as long as they show sensitivity and do not allow the mosques to become the centres of segregated communities (Riddell, 2004b, 183). However, many are alarmed at the number of mosques, the size of some mosques, their strategic location and the role of mosques.

Dye reaffirms the "renowned British tolerance" which allows Muslims to build mosques but is concerned about "the growth in the number of mosques" despite the fact that he acknowledges that there are still many more churches (2007, 20). Belteshazzar and Abednego, in their much-quoted booklet *The Mosque and Its Role in Society* (2006), emphasize their conviction that Muslims deliberately build these mosques to be bigger and grander than all other surrounding buildings, particularly churches. They believe that "such edifices are to prove a point more than (their) actual usage or need" and suggest that "soon in almost all major British cities the mosques will be the biggest most spectacular buildings" (ibid 22, 35).¹³⁷ This point was echoed by Williams who claimed that Muslims "seek to build these symbols of dominance and power in strategic places" (Williams, *Interview 69*).

The case which has caused the most controversy has been the attempt by the *Tablighi Jama'at* (TJ) to build a "mega-mosque" next to the site of the Olympic complex (Johnston, 2006) (§6.2.b). All participants interviewed were against the building of such a large mosque in such a prominent place. The vigorous opposition has been led principally by Craig with support from CCFON, Jay Smith and many others.¹³⁸ Craig has called public meetings, written letters, posted videos and used his position on the local council to raise objections, which were eventually heeded and as of

¹³⁷ Note that this booklet also appears on Amazon as *The Mosque Exposed* authored by Solomon and al-Maqdisi. Belteshazzar and Abednego appear to be pseudonyms and it is interesting that they chose the names of two Jewish heroes who survived being thrown into the fire because of their faith.

¹³⁸ See Smith's video 'Challenging the Tablighi Jamaat's 'Olympics' Mosque', <http://www.youtube.com/user/PfanderFilms#p/u/1/UDuXmhi9ZC4> (accessed 24 June 2010).

April 2011 planning permission had not been granted. Craig made it clear that “Muslims have a right to mosques” but insists that he is totally opposed to the building of this particular mosque as it would upset the balance in the local community and could also be a centre for extremist activity (Craig, *Interview 11*).¹³⁹ The foreign funding of mosques is also problematic for some and should be more strictly controlled, particularly when the money comes from radical sources such as *Wahhabis* in Saudi Arabia (Sookhdeo, 2008a, 219).

A minority take a negative view of *all* mosques. In their booklet *Belteshazzar and Abednego* stress their understanding that a mosque is not just a religious centre but also a political centre for the Islamization of society and a military centre from which *jihad* is launched (2006). *Christian Voice* too has an extremely negative view of the mosque based on its understanding of Islam: “a mosque is regarded as an abomination in the sight of Almighty God” (Christian Voice, n.d.).

Solomon and Madqisi suggest that all of these relatively “harmless changes” in the life of the Muslim community add up to a stealthy Islamization of society. They believe that they are an example of how “the host society becomes indifferent to the religious, social and political tactics used to establish a totality of Islamic rule under *shari‘a*” (2009b, 77). Moreover, they, along with others, claim that other sectors of society are also being gradually Islamized including education, the media, finance and law.

10.3.B EDUCATION

The education of the next generation is obviously a key area of concern for any faith group and Muslims in Britain unsurprisingly have been pressing for more freedom to educate their children in ways that they consider to be consistent with Islam. The increased profile of Islam in education, however, has raised concerns amongst Evangelicals concerning the impact on the teaching of Christianity, on integration and on the accurate presentation of Islam in schools. In addition there are major concerns about the Islamic funding of higher education.

Chapman felt that it was “nonsense to say that every faith needs to have the same kind of space for teaching in RE” (Chapman, *Interview 22*). He believes the emphasis should still be on the

¹³⁹ See ‘Meet Alan Craig’, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9dn-Tgf4AY> for an example of his public campaign against the TJ mosque (accessed 12 August 2010).

Christian tradition. Others are concerned that Christianity is not presented as favourably as Islam. Sookhdeo claims that a “sanitized view of Islam” is taught uncritically and that Islam is treated “more sympathetically than Christianity” as teachers are afraid of being accused of Islamophobia (2006, 57).

There is also concern over the growth and public funding of Muslim faith schools and the role of *madrasas* attached to mosques. Dye (2007) in particular devotes 11 out of 66 pages in his booklet to education and refers to various reports that have highlighted disturbing trends in some Islamic curricula. The fear is that they lead to segregation and not integration. Cox and Marks refer to reports on how some teaching materials emanating from Saudi Arabia teach children to hate Jews and Christians (2006, 109).¹⁴⁰

A perceived Islamic influence in higher education is also a cause of concern for some. Rosemary Sookhdeo recounts how her Masters dissertation was refused by Oxford University unless she changed her position on Islam, which she refused to do. She laments that “in our universities it is now very difficult to be able to analyse and critique Islam. The day of free speech and neutrality of research is closing” (R. Sookhdeo, 2004, 144). Cox and Marks identify a problem in the sharp rise of funding from the Islamic world for British universities and especially Islamic studies departments (2006). Solomon and Al-Maqdisi even claim that “Islamic studies at all the major universities have been taken over by outright Islamists or academics with strong Islamic sympathies” preventing any critical study of Islam or textual analysis of the *Qur’an* (Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, 2009b, 89). There is also concern at the radicalization of university students and the increasing numbers joining Islamic societies on campuses (Dye, 2007, 38). This is a particular focus for Jay Smith who spends a lot of time conducting debates on university campuses and teaching apologetics to Christian students (J. Smith, *Interview 77*).

10.3.C THE MEDIA

The media are a very strong influence in any society and control of them is often hotly contested and subject to many conspiracy theories. Opinion in the EPS varies as to how Islam is faring in the media. The *Islam in Britain* report, for instance, was scathing of the British media’s representation

¹⁴⁰ Note that the BBC *Panorama* documentary ‘British schools, Islamic rules’ (broadcast 22 November 2010) repeated these allegations.

of Islam:

the Islamization of the British media has accorded Islam in Britain a privileged position not given to other religions. The British public is presented with a partial view of Islam that does not correspond to reality. Extremists are presented as moderates, criticism of negative phenomena in the Muslim community and in Islam is discouraged, and dangers to national security are played down (ISIC, 2005, 80).

Unsurprisingly, as director of the ISIC, Sookhdeo shares a similar view and feels that “there is virtually no critical attention given to the fundamentals of Islam (which) contrasts with the frequent programs questioning or ridiculing Christianity” (2008a, 219). Goldsmith perceived the media to be repeating the refrain that Islam is a “peace-loving gentle religion” and suggested that this was unhelpful (Goldsmith, *Interview 60*). Others, however, saw a different trend in the media and felt that too much air time was giving to radicals like Abu Hamza, creating an unfair impression of Islam (Musk, *Interview 81*). Still others felt that the media are doing a good job, albeit to different ends. Jay Smith felt that “the media is (sic) really holding their own and they’re actually confronting (radical Islam) a lot better than we are” (J.Smith, *Interview 83*). Taylor, on the other hand, herself a journalist, explained that she is trying to educate journalists about Islam, religion and society, and feels that the media are beginning to understand the issues better and present a more nuanced picture (Taylor, *Interview 50*).

When it comes to Muslim-produced media Sookhdeo is worried about the influence of satellite channels in Britain which broadcast Islamic programming from Asia and the Middle East. In 2003 he published an article in *The Spectator* entitled *How Television Creates Terrorists* in which he pointed out that “the national television station of Pakistan plays an important role in creating opinion among Asian Muslims in Britain” and went on to explain how some channels watched by British Muslims were radicalizing young people (Sookhdeo, 2003). Others, however, are more positive about the possible roles of Muslim media. For instance McRoy is willing to work with them and frequently writes articles which have been published in *Q-News* and *The Muslim Weekly* and has also appeared on Iranian television (McRoy, *Interview*).

10.3.D ISLAMIC FINANCE

Another cause for Evangelical concern is Islamic finance which has been growing rapidly in Britain over the last decade. Sookhdeo's *Understanding Shari'a Finance* (2008b) takes a close look at this topic and concludes that it is a strategic device being used to divide Muslims from non-Muslims and impose *shari'a* principles on society. He believes that it is a new phenomenon that has been created to "empower Islamists, while weakening moderates and progressives" by pressuring Muslims to use only *shari'a*-compliant products (ibid 38). For him:

shari'a finance is part of a wider agenda of *jihad*, in accordance with the vision of Islamist ideologists of the overthrow of non-Islamic systems and the establishment of a pan-Islamic Caliphate that will rule the earth (Sookhdeo, 2008b, 39).

Solomon and Al-Maqdisi agree with this (2009b, 89) and Nazir-Ali questions whether the future implications of *shari'a*-compliant banking have really been adequately considered by western governments (Nazir-Ali, 2008d). Dye is also concerned with the raw power that particularly Arab investors hold over western financial markets. He claims that "Britain has been held to ransom on numerous occasions" by Arab Muslim nations (2007, 25).

10.3.E SHARI'A, HUMAN RIGHTS AND BRITISH LAW

One of the most controversial questions for Evangelicals relates to the compatibility of Islamic legal codes with liberal democracy. The *shari'a* is much more than a civil or criminal legal code; it is a way of life. Problems arise, however, when the prescriptions of *shari'a* come into conflict with human rights and other legal systems in a non-Muslim society such as Britain. As Moucarry puts it Christians "believe in freedom, human rights, and democracy and we have real concerns about some aspects of Islamic law" (2007, 120). So for Evangelicals the issues particularly revolve around freedom and rights, especially for the vulnerable, for non-Muslims and for apostates.

Firstly, many Evangelicals believe that the rights of the individual, and particularly the rights of women, are not respected under *shari'a*. Azumah considers that "Muslims are not impressed by arguments that appeal to human rights" (2008, 131) and expressed concern that "Muslim women are very, very suspicious of *shari'a* because they become victims" (Azumah, *Interview 35*). This is a point made by Rosemary Sookhdeo in her writing. She acknowledges that the Qur'an and Muhammad did seek equality for women but argues that "this theoretical equality has not been

seen in practice" (R. Sookhdeo, 2004, 37). Rather "Islam is a man's world" and, with the increasing trend towards *shari'a* in the West, "it is the women and the girls who will pay the price" (ibid 127).

Nonetheless, some Evangelicals do believe that "it is quite possible to encourage Muslims, for instance, to find the roots of tolerance within Islamic tradition itself" (Nazir-Ali, 2002, 71) and Wood cited an example of an imam he knew who was actively working for women's rights within a *shari'a* court in Britain (Wood, *Interview* 39). However, the dominant view is that in *shari'a* "the concept of the absolutely transcendent god leaves no space for the individual as a free moral being" (Sookhdeo, 2009c, 50).

Secondly, Evangelicals are very concerned about the rights of non-Muslims living under *shari'a*. This is particularly true for Christian minorities living in Muslim countries and organizations like the *Barnabas Fund* and *Christian Solidarity Worldwide* are devoted to upholding the rights of such communities and reporting instances of persecution¹⁴¹. In fact McRoy suggested in his interview that, coupled with the killing of converts, this was the biggest grievance that Evangelicals have against Islam (McRoy, *Interview* 66). Historically, Christians and Jews living under Islam were given the status of *dhimmi* (§3.2.a), a system of taxes and restrictions which Dye describes as "humiliating" and "second-class" (Dye, n.d.). Although Sookhdeo acknowledges that this system is "not formally implemented by any modern Muslim majority state" he believes it has left its mark in "an enduring popular prejudice" which is the reason for much of the suffering (2006, 66).

Other Evangelicals, however, suggest that it may be possible to overemphasize instances of persecution. As factual and as terrible as such stories are Nazir-Ali presents the corrective that these cases have "to be set against other situations in the Muslim world where Christians do have the freedom to worship (we must not) tar them all with the same brush" (2002, 89). When this is not done Glaser believes that Evangelical reporting can harm Christian-Muslim relations. She asks:

where do one-sided descriptions of Islam and Muslims reinforce prejudices? Where might calls to aid suffering Christians, to defend Christian society, and to stand firm for the Gospel result in misdirected love? (Glaser, 2010a, 32).

¹⁴¹ See for example the case of Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian woman sentenced to death for allegedly insulting Islam (reported by *Christian Solidarity Worldwide*, <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=press&id=1052> (accessed 20 December 2010)).

The final concern about *shari'a* surrounds the treatment of apostates from Islam, which Riddell has called "one of the greatest obstacles in Christian-Muslim interaction in the modern world" (2004b, 178).¹⁴² Even Chapman has to admit that all the traditional schools of Islamic law prescribe death as the penalty for those Muslims who leave the faith (Chapman, 2007b, 112). Several authors quote Mawdudi who saw Islam as a one-way street; you can enter but you cannot leave. This causes Azumah to point out the irony of a religion which "enjoins propagation (but) in no uncertain terms prohibits others from undertaking the same activity" (2006, 13). Sookhdeo's *Freedom to Believe*, with a foreword by Nazir-Ali, is subtitled *Challenging Islam's Apostasy Law* and focuses exclusively on this issue with many harrowing stories of how apostates have been treated under Islam.¹⁴³ In the book he acknowledges that some Muslims are trying to move away from this traditional interpretation of the law but find this difficult, not least because it is "a fact of history that apostates were killed in the time of Muhammad on his orders" (ibid 22). More recently, however, he has expressed appreciation for a group of moderate Muslim academics calling for an end to the prohibition of *rida* (apostasy i.e. leaving Islam) (Sookhdeo, 2009d, see Suleiman, 2009). In short the treatment of apostates under *shari'a* remains highly controversial for Evangelicals.

Two events illustrate the tension that surround the *shari'a*. The first was a lecture given by Archbishop Rowan Williams on *Civil and Religious Law in England* (2008) in which he seemed to suggest that aspects of *shari'a* should be incorporated into British law. The result was consternation not just in the national media but amongst many Evangelical Christians too. Most of the participants interviewed felt that, at best, the Archbishop had been "naive" in his comments and handling of the press (McRoy, *Interview 50*, Knell, *Interview 37*). Andrea Williams of CCFON complained that "the head of the established church can't fight for our values" (Williams, *Interview 21*); Frog Orr-Ewing preached a critical sermon in his church the following Sunday (2008b); and Nazir-Ali was also an outspoken critic who believed that no extra provision was

¹⁴² For example see the *Christian Solidarity Worldwide* report 'No Place to Call Home: Experiences of apostates from Islam, failures of the international community' which gives details of the application of *shari'a* and suffering of apostates in many Muslim countries, and is available from www.csw.org.uk (accessed 2 September 2010).

¹⁴³ For other instances see the case of Abdul Rahman, an Afghan sentenced to death for apostasy, (Nazir-Ali, 2006) and Sookhdeo's (2002) report on the plight of Christians in Pakistan.

needed for Islamic law:

in my view, it would be simply impossible to introduce a tradition, like *shari'a*, into this (British) corpus without fundamentally affecting its integrity ... it is perfectly possible for religious communities to rule on personal, family and financial matters as long as this does not interfere with the workings of the law of the land (Nazir-Ali, 2008b).

As usual, however, opinion was divided and not all Evangelicals were so negative about the lecture. Several positive articles appeared on the Evangelical website *Fulcrum* (e.g. Chaplin, 2008). Whilst labelling it a “PR disaster”, Taylor went on to suggest that the Archbishop had done something “enormously courageous” as he had “dropped a bomb on multiculturalism” (J. Taylor, 2008a). Edwards recognized that it was an important debate to have for the sake of all religious groups looking for exemptions from certain laws (Evangelical Alliance, 2008). Bell, Chapman, Moucary, Musk and Sudworth were also all positive about the lecture in their interviews although mostly regretted the manner in which the ensuing debate took place. Even Jay Smith in a video, rather backhandedly, suggested that Williams’ “unfortunate references” had had the positive effect of opening the door for the media to “vent” their “simmering frustration” upon Islam which he believed to be the true target for much of the vilification that Williams received (J. Smith, 2008c).

The second incident concerning law illustrated similar opinions and tensions. In 2005-6 the then Labour government was attempting to enact a bill outlawing incitement to religious hatred which some Evangelicals interpreted as being an attempt by the MCB and other Muslims to introduce a *de facto* blasphemy law to protect Islam, something that certain Muslims have wanted ever since the Rushdie affair (Cox and Marks, 2006, 132).¹⁴⁴ Many non-Muslim groups, however, saw this as an attack on free speech and Evangelicals found themselves making common cause against the bill with secularists and comedians. *Christian Voice* claimed that the legislation was “only brought in to buy Muslim votes at the ... General Election” as “Muslim leaders see it as a Bill which will stop anyone criticizing Islam” (Christian Voice, 2005b). Craig also saw it as an attempt by Muslims to stifle debate because “that’s what they do; they’re not into democracy; they’re not into freedom

¹⁴⁴ It should be noted that the Runnymede Trust report recommended the implementation of such a law (1997, 60).

of speech” (Craig, *Interview 39*).¹⁴⁵

Certainly almost everyone saw it as a badly constructed law that would be extremely difficult to implement fairly. Lord Carey spoke against it in the House of Lords (Carey, 2005a) and McRoy compared it to a similar law in Australia that had resulted in Christians being prosecuted for supposedly insulting Islam (McRoy, *Interview 62*). That did not stop a few participants acknowledging its good intentions and feeling a measure of sympathy with it, including Bell, Chapman, Moucarry and Andrew Smith. One even wondered whether “there may have been an overreaction on the part of Evangelical Christians” (Chapman, *Interview 70*).

These positive views notwithstanding both these episodes reveal a deep concern amongst many Evangelicals over *shari’a* and legal provisions for Muslims in Britain. As Cotterell asks, “how can a country have two sets of laws, without dividing the country into two countries?” (2006, 104).

10.3.F BRITISH CONVERTS TO ISLAM

A final aspect of the feared trend in Islamization is the number of British non-Muslims converting to Islam. Compared to the issues considered above the Evangelical participants seem relatively unconcerned about this phenomenon despite the claim of a recent report that the number of converts in Britain may be as high as 100,000 (Brice, 2010). Most accept that “Muslims are expected to call, invite, non-Muslims to convert to Islam” (Cotterell, 2005) and see it as natural competition in a plural society. Andrew Smith points out that many more Christian young people are enticed by secularism (A. Smith, 2009, 11) and Riddell suggests that more westerners are converted to Buddhism than to Islam (2004b, 187).

Others are more anxious. The *Islam in Britain* report notes an increase in conversions to Islam since 9/11 due to “intensive missionary efforts” and puts the number at between 10-20,000 including celebrities, those disillusioned with western society and women marrying Muslims (ISIC, 2005, 56). This latter category is of particular concern to Rosemary Sookhdeo. She has written a

¹⁴⁵ Another similar example causing concern is the attempt of the *Organization of the Islamic Conference* to obtain a UN resolution outlawing the defamation of religion. *Open Doors* have organized a petition against such a resolution signed by over 400,000 people worldwide. See <http://www.opendoorsuk.org/resources/RTB> (accessed 20 December 2010) and also “Right to believe”, *Inspire Magazine*, Issues 54, Nov-Dec, 2010.

book (*Stepping into the Shadows* (2005)) specifically addressing the issue of western women marrying Muslim men in which she recounts the unhappy stories of women she has met – including some from practising Christian backgrounds – and warns such women about the dangers she perceives in their lack of understanding of Islamic culture. Brice’s 2010 report suggests that the number of such marriages is exaggerated and that new converts do not always receive the support they need from mosques. Goldsmith’s complaint, however, is that, in comparison to how apostates are treated, Muslims “trumpet abroad any ex-Christian converts to Islam (which) gives a misleading impression of one-way traffic towards faith in Islam” (2006, 138).

10.4 EVANGELICALS, ISLAMIC CONSPIRACY AND THE FUTURE

10.4.A HOW DO EVANGELICALS PERCEIVE MUSLIM INTENTIONS?

Given all these concerns, for Dye at least, “the process of Islamization of Britain is already at an advanced stage and is continuing to advance, seemingly, with nothing standing in its way” (Dye, 2007, 56). But is there an agenda, a conspiracy, amongst some Muslims to turn Britain into an Islamic nation? As always the participants do not agree. For Taylor there is “no such thing as an ‘Islamic vision for Britain’” (J. Taylor, 2005b, 108). Knell too, speaking at *Spring Harvest*, emphasized what he sees as the many myths surrounding the idea of an Islamic agenda, suggesting that Muslims are not nearly so united as some people fear and reminding the audience that Muslims originally came to Britain by invitation to work (Knell, 2008).

For others, though, there is clearly an Islamic programme to Islamize the West. Cox and Marks warn that Muslim extremists are deliberately “using the freedoms of democratic societies in ways designed ultimately to destroy those societies and the freedoms they enshrine”, a concern which Cox has raised in the House of Lords (Cox and Marks, 2006, 112). Furthermore Sookhdeo feels that at least the aspiration if not the methods are shared by Muslims of all persuasions:

the Barelwi majority believe in a slow evolution, gradually consolidating their Muslim societies, and finally achieving an Islamic state. The Deobandi minority argue for a quicker process using politics and violence to achieve the same result. Ultimately, both believe in the goal of an Islamic state in Britain where Muslims will govern their own affairs and, as the finishing touch, everyone else’s affairs as well (P. Sookhdeo, 2005b).

This makes the migration of Muslims to the West a serious problem and indeed Solomon and Al-Maqdisi describe it as a *Modern Day Trojan Horse* (2009b). They argue that, as Muhammad is such an important model in Islam, the *hijra* (migration) of the early Muslim community from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD serves as a model for all Muslims at all times in all places.¹⁴⁶ In fact they believe that “*hijra* is an obligatory duty on Muslims for the enhancement and the advance of Islam” (ibid 8). So for them migration is not always economically driven but is frequently religiously driven with “the primary goal of the *hijra* (being) the establishment of an Islamic state” wherever Muslims find themselves (ibid 33). This state is to be achieved through *da’wa* and *jihad* as for them “the spreading of Islam is not simply a missionary activity like that of a church but it is the establishment of a community that would rise up as the soldiers of *Allah* to establish an Islamic state” (ibid 33). They consider *hijra* to be “the most important method of spreading Islam as a way of life, meaningful religion, and a political system and consolidating it far beyond the Muslim countries” (ibid 3).

For those Evangelicals convinced of such a Muslim agenda it amounts to a conspiracy. Cox and Marks speak of “a concerted and coordinated strategic attack over a long period” (2006, 71) and refer to “the spread of the Muslim brotherhood across Europe (which) was long planned according to a document known as ‘The Project’” (ibid 93).¹⁴⁷ In an interview at the *Counter Jihad* conference¹⁴⁸ Sookhdeo claims that in 1979 a conference took place to consider the future of Islam in Europe at which it was decided that Muslims “should not integrate as individuals into society but rather as communities” (Sookhdeo, 2007b). There would then be a process whereby an Islamic consciousness would be created through women’s clothing, *halal* food, the creation of institutions and a focus on the needs of children in schools. The final stage, according to Sookhdeo, would be for the Muslims to say to the West “if you don’t give way to what we want, then we are not to blame if you are attacked” (ibid).

¹⁴⁶ They also point out that the Islamic calendar starts from 622 AD as this was the date when the status of Islam changed to a “powerful socio-religious political state” (Solomon & Al-Maqdisi, 2009, 3).

¹⁴⁷ This document was apparently found during a police raid on militants in Switzerland. Cox and Marks source all their information from the article Poole, P. “The Muslim Brotherhood ‘Project’”, 2006, *FrontPage Magazine*, <http://archive.frontpagemag.com/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=4476>, (accessed 4 September 2010).

¹⁴⁸ The *CounterJihad Conference*, Brussels, October 18 – 19, 2007, brought together over 70 organizations concerned with Muslim expansion in Europe and the keynote speakers included Bat Ye’or, Robert Spencer, Patrick Sookhdeo and Sam Solomon. See <http://counterjihadeuropa.wordpress.com/2007/10> (accessed 10 May 2010).

10.4.B CAN MUSLIMS BE TRUSTED?

Controversially these participants suspect that Muslims are using *taqiyya* as a deliberate strategic tool to achieve their ends. The Islamic doctrine of *taqiyya*, meaning “dissimulation of one’s religion” (Cowan, 1976),¹⁴⁹ and the related concept of *kitman*, meaning secrecy or concealment, are usually interpreted as being the avoidance of unnecessary suffering by Muslims through concealing their faith at a time of persecution. It is based on the example and words of Muhammad and particularly has been associated with periods when *Shi’ites* have been persecuted by *Sunnis* (Strothmann, 1987, P. Walker, 1995, Tabatabai, 1975). However, some Evangelicals believe that Muslims today are using it as a permission to conceal their true purposes in order to advance the cause of Islam.

Solomon and Al-Maqdisi claim that “*taqiyya* is practised by all Muslims” and is used to permit lying at time of war, espionage or making peace. They go on to quote Muhammad as saying that “war is deception” (Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, 2006, 25). Sookhdeo suggests that *taqiyya* is “behind the activities of many contemporary Islamists ... to convince non-Muslims that Islam is and always has been peaceful and tolerant” with the aim that non-Muslims will be “unprepared for the final onslaught” (2007a, 201). For this reason he suggests that maybe Muslims cannot be believed or trusted as they frequently use this principle to defend Islam, misrepresent motives, rewrite history and further *da’wa* (Sookhdeo, 2006, 33-7) and he includes a short section on *taqiyya* in his *Pocket Guide to Islam* (2010a). Cox and Marks also suggest that “the doctrine of *taqiyya* could apply to those who, for example, quote peaceful or tolerant verses from the *Qur’an* to show Islam as a religion of peace but fail to mention other verses which are warlike or intolerant” (2006, 99).

Some of the participants interviewed agreed. Jay Smith believed that he regularly observes this principle at work - mainly among *Sunnis* rather than *Shi’ites*:

what I call it is the public/private face of Islam. Publicly they’ll tell me exactly what I want to hear until I get to go and have dinner or tea with them and get away from *Speakers’ Corner* and when I get into *KFC* then I see their private face and their private face is exactly what I would expect. Then you see the real Islam I say this is *taqiyya* my Muslim friends they laughed and said ‘of course

¹⁴⁹ *Taqiyya* (تقية) can also mean caution or prudence and comes from the Arabic root w-q-ā (وقى) meaning to guard, preserve, shield and protect (Cowan, 1976).

what we hear in the mosque is not what we hear in public address, and we don't at all have a problem with this because we are in a context of war here' (Smith, *Interview 54*, 63).

Goldsmith agreed and said "I feel that *taqiyya* is an enormous problem in relationships, both on the personal level and on the larger dialogue level and on the political level" (Goldsmith, *Interview 40*) and put this down to a comparatively low emphasis on truth in Islam compared to Christianity. Rosemary Sookhdeo concurs as she believes that "in Islam there is not such a condemnation of lying as there is in western culture" (2005, 64). She is particularly concerned that it is common for Muslim men to lie in order to marry a woman who will be converted to Islam.

Others interviewed, however, disagreed – sometimes vehemently. Craig felt that it was not a big problem and was no different to what politicians do all the time (Craig, *Interview 37*). Riddell felt that the doctrine is utilized by some Muslims but is probably not as prevalent as some suggest and is "used in a very sloppy fashion these days" (Riddell, *Interview 35*). Moucarray was even stronger in his objection to the focus on *taqiyya*:

well I must say that there are many Christians who say all sorts of rubbish about Islam, partly because of the ignorance of Islam and partly because of their prejudice against Muslims. And they use all sorts of wrong arguments and this argument about *taqiyya* is one of them You know I have heard even some educated Christians speaking about Islam giving the right to Muslims to tell lies this is completely nonsense. Telling a lie is completely forbidden in Islam." (Moucarray, *Interview 51*).

The concern for these Evangelicals is that the emphasis on *taqiyya* from some participants in the public sphere makes it much more difficult for Christians to relate to Muslims. Chapman said:

one of the reasons why I find it so distressing is that the message that comes across to the ordinary Christian in the pew is that you can't trust these people so don't even try to, don't even try to negotiate and dialogue with them (Chapman, *Interview 62*).

It is a topic that Sudworth feels strongly about and has addressed in a couple of his blogs. He admits that the doctrine of *taqiyya* has a "basis in Islamic history" but feels that it is:

often used by the *Barnabas Fund* to cloak the efforts of progressive Muslims with a veneer of suspicion and deceit. Whilst recognizing the reality that exists within some Muslims, brandishing

this term about actually mitigates (sic) against the vulnerability that Christians ought to bring to relationships (Sudworth, 2008c).

He made a similar point in reply to the Australian Evangelical, Mark Durie, who responded critically to another blog on the topic: “dare I say that EVEN IF others are deceiving us, we are to reach out our hand in love and friendship?” (Sudworth, 2009a, emphasis in original).

One of the interviewees even pointed out that Christians do something similar when they are involved in “covert” mission in Muslim countries: “we must be careful what we say and what we do’ and all the rest of it. Everybody practices *taqiyya* to some extent don’t they?” (Glaser, *Interview 41*). Another was clearly angry about what he believed to be the western foreign policy decisions that he believed to have been made based on “lies” (Musk, *Interview 81*).

The debate concerning *taqiyya* was exemplified by the responses to the document entitled *A Common Word between Us and You* (henceforth *Common Word*) published in October 2007. This was an open letter signed by 138 prominent Muslim scholars from a wide spectrum of backgrounds. It was addressed to named and unnamed Christian church leaders worldwide and the authors suggest that the shared fundamentals of Islam and Christianity are the unity of God and love – love both for God and for neighbour. They go on to invite Christians to come together with Muslims on this common ground for the sake of world peace. After the letter was published responses came from various Christian communities, some of which have been published on the website hosted by *Royal Aal al-Bayt*, the institute in Jordan which provided the main impetus for the Muslim letter.¹⁵⁰ Some Evangelicals welcomed this approach and subsequently attended various dialogue events. Many others, however, distrusted the motives of the Muslim authors. Solomon and Al-Maqdisi accused them of *taqiyya* (2009a) as did *Barnabas Fund* (2007). This led to a particularly sharp disagreement amongst participants in the EPS which is discussed further below (§11.4.b).

¹⁵⁰ See www.acommonword.com (accessed 9 December 2010). As of 9 December, 2010 there were 71 Christian responses from various churches, denominations and individuals worldwide.

10.4.c HOW DO EVANGELICALS SEE ISLAM DEVELOPING IN BRITAIN IN THE FUTURE?

Some participants in the EPS are so concerned about Islamization and the intentions of some Muslims that they predict Britain will relatively soon become an Islamic state. The most widely-circulated prediction was made by Pawson when he reported being “suddenly overwhelmed with what could be described as a premonition that Islam will take over the country” (2003, 7). Significantly this came to him whilst he was listening to Sookhdeo speak and he considers it to be a “prophecy” that can only be tested by future events. He speculates that it will be a judgement on the western church and suggests that “unless there is a radical change (which is what repentance is), much of the church could disappear” leaving only a refined remnant (ibid 189).

Dye also believes that:

we in Britain are being faced with a prophetic choice - either we submit to the kingdom of God, or we will have to surrender to the rules of *shari'a*, which ultimately means the Islamic *khilafa*. We need to be aware that Britain is heading towards becoming a full-blown Muslim nation” (Dye, n.d.).

Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, again with reference to *hijra*, cite the historical examples of how sub-Saharan Africa, Ethiopia, Malaysia and Indonesia all became Muslim majority states within a couple of hundred years due to Muslim migration (2009b, 85-8) and Sookhdeo conjectures that this could happen to the whole of Europe if Turkey is allowed to join the European Union (2008a, 228).

Evangelicals with such concerns predict that this will come about chiefly through the demographic expansion of Muslim communities in the West. Pawson claims that Muslim families have “a much higher birth rate than other families” (2003, 73), something that Williams also mentioned (Williams, *Interview* 32). Sookhdeo believes the Muslim population already to number 3 million and he points out that the average age of the British Muslim is only 28, compared with 41 for the general population. Of these he says one third are under 16 (2008a, 58, 64). The *Islam in Britain* report goes even further and predicts that the Muslim population in Britain will be between 5 and 6 million by 2013 (ISIC, 2005, 14). Solomon and Al-Maqdisi put this down to a deliberate policy of *i'dad* (preparation) whereby they claim Muslim communities are required by their leaders to have high birth rates (2009b, 51). Perhaps the most extreme prediction came from Green. Speaking on a *Channel Four* documentary he said:

I don't think you have to be a prophet to predict that there is going to be war in this land within perhaps 30 to 40 years. If the Islamic population in this country continues to increase they will assume power and that could be the point at which people here begin to feel they have to take up arms..... people will not want to live under the yoke of Islam (Modell, 2008b).¹⁵¹

Again other Evangelicals disagree with these prognoses and see no immediate danger of an Islamic take-over. Speaking at the *Keswick Convention* Bell interpreted the demographics rather differently:

Muslim fertility rates are dropping noticeably in Europe, and dramatically in the Middle East and North Africa. Fundamentalism thrives in communities with large extended families and poverty and this pattern is diminishing among Europe's Muslim communities. A sub-replacement birthrate was one of the causes of the decline of Christianity in Europe and it looks set to do the same for Islam in Europe (Christianity Today, 2008).

In their interviews Azumah, Craig, Glaser, Goldsmith, Knell, Riddell, Sudworth and Wood all clearly stated that they did not believe that Britain would become Islamic in the near future. Bell was reassured by the vociferous public response to the controversy sparked by Rowan Williams' law lecture:

scratch the surface in this country and the answer is 'no way will Muslims take over this country and make it a Muslim state' in a sense it put paid to Patrick Sookhdeo's assertion at *Westminster Chapel* last year that Britain will be a Muslim state within 5 years, quote, unquote (Bell, *Interview 49*).¹⁵²

In fact Bell is emerging as one of the strongest critics of the Islamic takeover hypothesis, for which he was criticized by name in an unattributed article in *Barnabas Aid* (Barnabas Fund, 2010b).¹⁵³

Although Bell admits that "it is sometimes hard not to privately resent Western governments'

¹⁵¹ This may represent an evolution of Green's thinking as in 2005 he wrote: "this author believes the British establishment would not allow such a thing to happen however, events have a habit of taking politicians by surprise the long-term danger of an Islamic state in Britain may be so far off as not to be significant" (Green, 2005, 17).

¹⁵² This appears to be a reference to a national conference for church leaders organized by the *Maranatha Community* on 6 February, 2007 at the Emmanuel Centre, London. Speakers included amongst others Sookhdeo, Riddell and Solomon.

¹⁵³ Note that the web version of this article is attributed to Patrick Sookhdeo. See <http://barnabasfund.org/UK/News/Articles-research/?startno=9&Limit=4&View=2cols> (accessed 17 March 2010).

apparent support for Muslim development”, he describes fears of an Islamic takeover as “irrational” and a “logical impossibility” (2003, 7). He believes that due to the internal struggles within Islam “radical Islam may be passing its zenith” (2006b, 155) and observed that “Muslims are so disorganized they couldn’t organize their way out of a plastic bag let alone take over the nation” (Bell, *Interview 61*).

Chapman is supportive of Bell’s position. In the first edition of *Cross and Crescent* he says:

when a certain kind of Muslim rhetoric calls for a country such as Britain to become an Islamic state, we may need to do some straight speaking. There is absolutely no way that a minority Muslim community could turn any European country into an Islamic state, however much they would like to do so. But when Christians are taken in by such rhetoric and suggest that the Muslim community is actually planning to have the whole legal system in these countries abolished and the *shari’a* adopted in its place, these Christians are playing on people’s fears about ‘the thin edge of the wedge’ and ‘the domino theory’(Chapman, 1995, 38-9).

Interestingly this paragraph has been removed from the second edition in which Chapman warns that Christians need to be careful of their language but acknowledges that “some Muslims would like Islam to ‘rule the world’ and everyone in the world to become a Muslim, just as some Christians would like Christianity to ‘rule the world’ and everyone to become Christians” (2007b, 46).

10.4.D WHAT DO EVANGELICALS BELIEVE SHOULD BE DONE?

Such comments reveal something of the tensions within the EPS which will be explored further in the next chapter. However, these different assessments of the intentions of Muslims and the likely trajectory of Islam in Britain inevitably lead Evangelicals to propose very different courses of action. Some feel that the onus is on Muslims to reform Islam; others suggest that it is for the government to resolve the issues; and still others believe that it is Christians that need to act. Some even feel that the ultimate solution lies with God. Each of these approaches is expanded on below with examples of some of the specific suggestions that have been made by various participants.

Onus on Muslims

Several of the participants in the EPS place the burden of change firmly on the shoulders of Muslims in Britain and indeed worldwide. They want Muslim leaders to voice stronger and more unequivocal formal denunciations of violence (Riddell and Cotterell, 2003, 206) and believe that “the radical Muslims, who pose a threat to the world, would most successfully be dealt with by other members of the Islamic community” (F. Orr-Ewing and Orr-Ewing, 2002, 83). Several participants suggest that this will require a “reformation of Islam”. Sookhdeo is particularly vocal in calling for such a reform:

only an Enlightenment-type reform of mainstream Islam, including a complete reinterpretation of its violent and intolerant theological strands, supported by the majority of its religious and political leadership, can stop the drift to an ever more radical and aggressive Islam (Sookhdeo, 2008a, 221).

Amongst other things, such a reformation would include Muslims:¹⁵⁴

- a) Becoming more tolerant and more self-critical (Moucarry, 2007, 119).
- b) Re-interpreting the *Qur'an* (P. Sookhdeo, 2005b).
- c) Allowing the “historico-critical method (sic)” to be applied to the *Qur'an* (Musk, 2008, 220).
- d) Downgrading the importance of the *hadith* material (Riddell, 2004b, 201).
- e) Abandoning the apostasy law (Kneil, 2008, Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, 2009a, 24).
- f) Supporting and encouraging liberal and more secular-minded Muslims (Sookhdeo, 2008a, 216).
- g) “De-politicizing Islam” (F. Orr-Ewing and Orr-Ewing, 2002, 77).
- h) Accepting a clear separation between religion and state (Sookhdeo, 2007a, 436).
- i) Integrating into British society and giving up any ambition of turning Britain into an Islamic state (ISIC, 2005, 136).

In response to the *Common Word* (§10.4.b) document Solomon and Al-Maqdisi suggested seven “tangible actions” that Muslims needed to take in order to achieve such a reformation, including establishing the equality of all human beings, especially men and women, and “declaring all

¹⁵⁴ Note that in all the following pages the inclusion of a participant in a list does not imply that he or she believes the whole solution to lie in that issue or agrees with the other participants listed.

Qur'anic texts that discriminate with impunity against Christians and Jews, describing them as *kaffirs*, apostates, polytheists, children of apes or swine, (to be) void and not ever to be used" (Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, 2009a, 24). Solomon also published a pamphlet entitled *A Proposed Charter of Muslim Understanding* laying out a charter of ten articles which he invited Muslim leaders to sign (2006b). This attracted a scathing response from some Muslims including Sahib Bleher, the general secretary of the *Islamic Party of Britain*. He described the concept of the charter, which called for new interpretations of the *Qur'an* and the issuing of various *fatwas*, as "half-baked" and a "presumptuous insult".¹⁵⁵

Some doubt whether such a reform can ever happen (Knell, 2008, Cox and Marks, 2006) (§9.1.c). However, other Evangelicals see encouraging signs. Even Sookhdeo recognizes that "some Muslims have, with great courage, begun to do this" (2005b) and he particularly highlights the *Contextualizing Islam in Britain* report as an example (2009d, see Suleiman, 2009).

Onus on the West and western governments

Inevitably some Evangelical participants feel that the government and security forces should take a tough line with Muslims and particularly with radicals. In a seminar at *New Wine* Sookhdeo pointed out that historically Islam had only ever been stopped by military force and if the Muslim armies had not been forced to retreat then Europe would be Islamic today (P. Sookhdeo, 2004a).¹⁵⁶ Riddell too allows that at times "a more forceful response will be required" (2004b, 173). Indeed all the participants agree that to some extent terrorism and violence should be confronted and dealt with by the security forces.

However, whilst some support the "war on terror" (e.g. Williams, *Interview 80*) and a few even see it as part of "the long war against classical Islam" which has been going on for 1400 years (Sookhdeo, 2007a, 441), others are highly critical and are vehemently opposed to it. Musk spoke

¹⁵⁵ See his letter of January 2007 at <http://flyingimam.blogspot.com/2007/01/eu-charter-of-misunderstanding-muslims.html> (accessed 20 March 2009).

¹⁵⁶ This is a point which other participants do not dispute. For instance "the expansion of Islam ... was stopped only through battle" (Musk, 2005, 257). However, whilst this may have stopped the military advance Jay Smith is not convinced of its overall efficacy: "there is little evidence that a philosophy, or a belief, perceived by its adherents to have its source in divine revelation, can be removed by the use of violence. History has, in fact, shown that movements such as Islam have thrived and even expanded when attacked violently from without" (Smith, 2005, 372).

of his anger at the lies surrounding the invasion of Iraq and believed that, after all the West has done, "it's a miracle that there are any Muslims who are prepared to sit down with other people" (Musk, *Interview 81*). McRoy has also been a particularly forthright critic of the war and has even suggested that "only one supernatural source could have inspired the US and British governments to carry out this disaster; the Devil" (2005a).

In addition to the "war on terror" other suggestions of firm actions the British government should take include:

- a) Increasing scrutiny of Muslim organizations, finances and media (Cox and Marks, 2006)
- b) Partnering with more moderate Muslims and distancing itself from the MCB (ISIC, 2005)¹⁵⁷
- c) Ensuring that new arrivals to Britain learn English, respect the law and "accept the values of liberal democracy" (Cox and Marks, 2006, 145)
- d) Requiring new arrivals to sign something to the above effect (Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, 2009b, 93)
- e) Deporting extremist preachers and refusing planning permission for "fundamentalist mosques" (Dye, 2007, 64)
- f) Linking overseas aid to progress on human rights (Cox and Marks, 2006, 142)

Some want the government to accept that Britain should have a specifically Christian identity. Dye, for instance, wants the government to reject cultural relativism and recognize "the Christian consensus in Britain and uphold (this) in public policy matters". Although he concedes that "governments must remain neutral in religious matters", he demands that they "take an active role in reversing the Islamization trend and preventing further Islamization in Britain" (Dye, 2007, 64). *Christian Voice* goes further:

our Queen needs to proclaim a day of prayer to Almighty God for protection in the mighty name of Jesus Next, our Government should state that this was, is and shall remain a Christian nation. Christianity is the religion of the United Kingdom, and they should listen to God and begin once more to trust the Bible for lawmaking. The whole nation should repent and turn back to God, but those in power and authority have to lead the way (Christian Voice, 2005a).

¹⁵⁷ It is interesting to note that this happened to some extent with the formation of the *Sufi Council of Britain* in 2006.

However, some participants want the government, and the West in general, to take a rather more self-critical approach by admitting its own culpability. In commenting on Sookhdeo's view of the issue Chapman worries that:

the onus is all *on them* (Muslims), because it is *they* who are disturbing the peace, and have got to do something about it if they want to live in peace with us. I suggest that this way of thinking absolves us in the West far too easily of all responsibility for the past and present, and puts most of the responsibility for the conflicts and their resolution on the shoulders of Muslims (Chapman, 2005b, emphasis in original)

Musk agrees and says:

one cannot challenge the Muslim community to rethink its literalism with regard to the *Qur'an* or its sympathy towards an aggressively Islamist critical agenda, without asking that Western politicians find another way to engage with Muslims over issues of national and international justice. Such a reciprocal call is especially urgent in that, as we have seen, Muslims view the foreign policy of the United States of America as strongly religiously motivated (Musk, 2008, 222).

For these participants some of the things that the British government and the international community in the West should do include:

- a) Giving more political freedom to British Muslims so that they can "defend (their) honour politically" (McRoy, 2006, 235)
- b) Promoting exchange visits and ensuring travel for all (Nazir-Ali, 2004)
- c) Resolving the "flashpoints" in Israel and Palestine, Kashmir and Chechnya in a just way (Nazir-Ali, 2002, 68). Chapman in particular believes that resolving the Middle East situation "in a more even-handed way would go a long way – perhaps even a very long way – towards defusing the anger that many Muslims feel towards the West" (2005a, 22)
- d) Apologizing for the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement – "the ultimate cause of everything that has happened since" – and supporting the Palestinians (McRoy, n.d.-b)
- e) Withdrawing all British forces from the Middle East (S. Green, 2005, 18, McRoy, n.d.-b)

Onus on Christians

Almost all of the participants also put some responsibility on Christians to help resolve issues. As Jay Smith said commenting on Pawson's prediction of an Islamic takeover: "I think it's a danger.... (but) I don't think it's going to happen. I think by far, if we do our job right, we have an awful lot

of responsibility to make sure it doesn't happen" (J. Smith, *Interview 43*). As always though, some see this in a rather more confrontational light than others.

Ideas for Christians to confront Islam include:

- a) "Lobbying government, business organizations and other significant institutions to oppose Islamism" (Dye, 2007, 66)
- b) Engaging Muslims in ideological debate by "confronting the very foundations of Islam" (J. Smith, 2005, 372)
- c) "Rejecting traditional Muslim and Islamist demands" and supporting "the new voices of reason and moderation within Islam" (Sookhdeo, 2009d)
- d) Calling for reciprocity and better treatment of Christian minorities in Muslims countries (Carey, 2004a)
- e) Aggressively preaching the Gospel to Muslims (S. Green, 2005, 18)
- f) Re-evangelizing Britain including nominal Christians (Dye, 2007, 66, Riddell, 2004b, 188)

Others are just as aware of the issues but come to rather different conclusions about what should be done. Chapman counsels that:

if there is any sense in which Islam wants to win the world, Christians all over the world will need to work out how to respond to the political challenge – and to do so in ways that are not Islamic but distinctively Christian (Chapman, 2007b, 338).

These participants advocate:

- a) Christian leaders, particularly in America, apologizing for their insulting statements about Islam (Musk, 2008, 232)
- b) Heeding the Islamists' critiques of Western culture and addressing decadence, greed and the "empty hole in (western) religious and thought life" (F. Orr-Ewing and Orr-Ewing, 2002, 104)
- c) Learning from the Islamic worldview concept of *tawhid* and "searching out ways in which Christ can be brought back into the centre of 'what life is all about' in the West" (Musk, 2003, 266)

- d) Being peacemakers and bridge-builders (Chapman, 2007b, 407)
- e) Christians demonstrating that “they do care about people who come to this country for various reasons and they want to help in getting these people integrated into British society (Moucarry, *Interview 103*)
- f) Blessing Muslim communities (Chapman, 2007b, 395)
- g) Loving Muslims: “the only chance we have against the relentless growth of Islam is millions of people revealing through their behaviour the love of Christ” (Brother Andrew and Janssen, 2007, 252)

Onus on God

Finally, it should be said that the majority of Evangelicals also believe that God is involved in determining the future in some way. Some express this through their understanding of the sovereignty of God. Bell frequently mentions this as a reason for his confidence both that Muslims are in the West as a part of God’s plan and that they will not “take over” (Bell, 2003, 7).

Many if not all of the participants also call for prayer. Brother Andrew calls for “a prayer offensive”, a type of “good *jihad*”, and challenges people to pray for terrorists including Bin Laden (Brother Andrew and Janssen, 2007, 262). Riddell and Cotterell describe prayer as the “most potent weapon” (2003, 205); some include times of prayer in their seminars at conferences; others conclude their book or chapter with a prayer. Clearly this is an important response for Christians and gives Bell cause for hope: “destructive fear is turning into constructive prayer” (Bell, 2006b, 124).

10.4.E ARE EVANGELICALS AT WAR?

So clearly some of the Evangelical participants are extremely concerned about what they see as the Islamic agenda in Britain. Dye puts it starkly: “Now is not the time to play around with spiritual things - we are at war” (Dye, n.d.).

However, Green’s prediction of a civil war in Britain notwithstanding, none of the participants advocate using physical violence against Muslims or seeing Muslims as the enemy. In *Global Jihad* Sookhdeo has a section on “knowing your enemy” and suggests that “if an ‘enemy’ is to be identified, then the enemy is not Muslims but the classical interpretation of Islam” (2007a, 431).

Pawson is also keen to stress that “Muslims are not our enemies” but rather it is spiritual forces that need to be confronted. This should not be done through “carnal warfare” as “for Christians to use political power to impose the values and standards of their faith on unbelievers is to come dangerously near to what we have described as the ‘essence’ of Islam, the establishment of a theocracy” (Pawson, 2003, 86). For him the proper response is prayer and “spiritual warfare” that will liberate Muslims from their “bondage” (ibid 87).

Those participants with a more open view of Islam, however, find this sort of language unhelpful. Bell suggests that “secularism seems to be a far more worthy candidate for the position of hidden enemy than Islam” and tends to see Muslims as allies in the struggle against secularization (Bell, 2006b, 117). Glaser too offers a strong critique of that sort of language when she says:

we need to discern where, whether deliberately or unwittingly, Christian responses to Muslims are, first, portraying Muslims as ‘the enemy’ and, second, functionally ignoring Jesus’ call to his disciples to love their enemies (Glaser, 2010a, 32).

These are questions that have crucial relevance for Evangelical relationships with Muslims and come into sharp focus in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 11 EVANGELICAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Having mapped out how British Evangelicals conceptualize Islam and described how they are responding to the socio-political context of Islam in Britain, this chapter examines how the EPS in Britain is relating to other public spheres. It begins by exploring its interaction with Muslims themselves particularly through the Evangelical engagement in “mission” to Muslims. The second section broadens the perspective to consider what the data tells us about how Evangelicals engage with the British meso-public sphere, principally through campaigning, politics and the media. The third section looks at the EPS engagement with its own grassroots. It does this by presenting the material obtained from the interviews conducted with church leaders in London and assessing the influence that the various participants are able to bring to bear in these churches. The data presentation concludes with a consideration of some recent events and publications which highlight once again the internal tensions that exist within the EPS today.

11.1 THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE EVANGELICAL PUBLIC SPHERE TO MUSLIMS

11.1.A THE EVANGELICAL MISSION TO MUSLIMS

Chapman believes that the primary mode of Evangelical engagement with Muslims is in mission:

first and foremost there is the response of people who say, ‘look, here are people who need to be evangelized and let’s get on with evangelizing them’So the most significant Evangelical response that I can see in Britain and in other parts of the world is a desire to share the Gospel with them (Chapman, *Interview 78*).

Encouraging this sort of mission has been Goldsmith’s particular emphasis and he sees interaction with Muslims “basically in terms of witness” although definitely not “arrogant preaching” (Goldsmith, *Interview 52*. See also his *Islam and Christian Witness* (1982)). All the participants, regardless of their attitude towards Islam, agree with this sentiment to some extent as “the church is mission, and a mission-less church is a Christ-less church” (Sookhdeo, 2006, 90). Even the most liberal Evangelicals take such an approach or cease to be Evangelical by definition (§5.1). So for instance Wood, who describes himself as a “liberal Evangelical”, said “I think it’s the role of the church anywhere and everywhere to bear witness to Christ and to engage in what I would call ‘mission’” (Wood, *Interview 19*).

This does not mean that Evangelicals do not recognize the difficulty or unpopularity of such an approach. Reflecting on the post-colonial period Riddell says:

within Western societies in general, and even within some parts of the church, mission came to be regarded as controversial at best, and with downright hostility in certain quarters. It came to be seen by many as just another form of colonialism Simply put, being a missionary was no longer seen as fashionable (Riddell, 2003).

If mission to Muslims is controversial amongst western Christians it is even more so amongst Muslims themselves. Sookhdeo observes that Christian missionary work within the wider context of globalization is seen as “part of western efforts to dominate and weaken the world of Islam” (2010a, 102) and he suggests that given the history of the Crusades and colonialism:

Muslims are convinced that Christianity can win converts from Islam only by using underhand methods, inducements and subtle pressure ... Christianity is seen as an illegitimate competitor to Islam on a global level in the modern world, and Christian mission is seen as a challenge to Islam that demands a resolute response (Sookhdeo, 2009c, 63).

Despite this opposition, Evangelicals remain adamant that they have a right to share their faith with Muslims, with the proviso that they are careful to eschew any type of “cajolery, bribery, undue pressure or intimidation” (Riddell, 2004b, 135). They argue that Islam is also a missionary faith and see it as a fair competition:

if both faiths have from the beginning behaved as missionary faiths, and if Islam has a clear mission in relation to the Christian church, would it not be a strange irony if Christians now were to give up any commitment to mission, just when some Muslims are redoubling their efforts to win the West for Islam (Chapman, 2004b)?

This competition, however, is not without its dangers. Musk recognizes that for all Christians “the struggle ahead is one of witness with its nuance of ‘martyrdom’” (Musk, 2003, 266) and suggests that:

if Huntington is correct, the focal points of 'mission' – Christian and Muslim – are going to be found at such crossroads of tension or civilizational fault line during the first part of the twenty-first century. Countries like Indonesia, the Philippines and many African nations in the part of that continent that is south of the Sahara will discover themselves at the forefront of controversy over ethnic and religious commitment ... Mission is likely to be very messy, very costly (Musk, 2005, 299).¹⁵⁸

Despite the recognition of the problems, opposition and cost, however, Musk believes that "we live on the cusp of a dramatic shift in the willingness of Muslims to hear the Christian story" (Musk, 2008, xxix). Indeed there is even general optimism amongst Evangelicals about the growth in mission to Muslims: "whether we like it or not there are Muslims bit by bit coming to Christ in Britain", particularly Iranians (Glaser, *Interview 69*). Bell quotes two eminent missiologists who report growth in the numbers of Muslims converting to Christianity. David Garrison claims that, "more Muslims have come to Christ in the past two decades than at any other point in history" and statistician Patrick Johnstone suggests that, due to disillusionment with the upsurge in violent Islamism, "Osama bin Laden is responsible for more Muslims following Jesus than anyone else alive today" (Bell, 2006b, 122-3).¹⁵⁹

Evangelicals are, of course, quick to contribute such "successes" to God rather than to their own methods. "It is the work of God, the Holy Spirit, to convert people" (Nazir-Ali, 2002, 82) or as Taylor puts it:

no one 'converts' anyone. It simply isn't like that. The more you try, the less success you have – like torture. It is the infection of the Spirit that 'converts', not the pressure of the sales pitch (J. Taylor, 2008c).

This proviso notwithstanding the EPS is clearly not just engaging in discussion with other spheres but is expecting converts. Even so, there is still disagreement amongst Evangelicals as to how this mission should be expedited. Whilst there is general agreement that evangelism is likely to

¹⁵⁸ Recent events in Nigeria bear this out. For example Taylor reports Muslim attacks on Christians (Taylor (2010) At the Mass Grave of Dogo Na Hauwa, <http://www.lapidomedia.com/nigeria/at-the-mass-grave-of-dogo-na-hauwa>, accessed 21 December 2010); and *Christian Solidarity Worldwide* describes Muslim attacks on churches in Kano (<http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=press&id=991>, accessed 21 December 2010).

¹⁵⁹ Garrison's comment was taken from the *Friday Fax* email bulletin of world mission, June 2005, and Johnstone's observation was made during the *Keswick Lecture*, 2003.

include some sort of apologetics, there is a much sharper debate over the desirability of engaging in dialogue on the one hand or confrontational debate that spills over into polemics on the other.

Apologetics

Jay Smith is passionate about preaching:

I want to make sure that (Jesus) is preached out in public and I want to let every Muslim know how much I love my Lord because I believe the only relevant model is the model of Jesus Christ, but I want to be as passionate in my public pronouncement of that as my Muslim friend is in his passionate pronouncement of Islam and the prophet Muhammad's model (J.Smith, *Interview 23*).

Given such a desire to preach the Gospel Moucarry observed that apologetics – or defensive arguments (§4.3.c) – are “unavoidable if we get involved with Islamic teaching” (Moucarry, *Interview 67*). Azumah suggests that such apologetics need to be “robust” as “the aim of our response should be to correct and remove the misunderstanding (that Muslims have) as far as we are able” (2009a, 4). However, even though most agree on the necessity of apologetics some still hesitate:

there are also the people who focus very much on the apologetic. I think that's got its uses but it's got to be kept within its context and it's fine to teach Christians to deal with the Islamic apologetic – you need to do that – but to use that as a basis for relationship with Muslims or as a basis for evangelism or as a basis for dialogue is not helpful (Glaser, *Interview 67*).

Debate

For Jay Smith, though, defending the faith requires confrontational debate and he has been part of many initiatives to promote debates between Christians and Muslims.¹⁶⁰ The *Muslim-Christian Debate Website*, which belongs to the *Hyde Park Christian Fellowship* with which Smith is connected, states that:

given that Christianity and Islam share much common background, and that each makes its own (often competing) truth-claims, there comes a point where debate is necessary and right.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ See Brierly (2008) for an account of Smith's debating style and work at Speakers' Corner. (Brierly, 2008)

¹⁶¹ <http://www.debate.org.uk> (accessed 25 June 2010).

Up to 2005 Smith reckoned that he had taken part in over 30 formal debates (2005, 375) especially on university campuses.¹⁶² He has also taken part in numerous informal debates at *Speakers Corner* where he leads a team of Christians called the *Codgers* to speak and debate with Muslims.¹⁶³ Craig has now joined Smith's debating group (A. Craig, 2009b), and has taken part in several formal debates under the auspices of the *Muslim Debate Initiative*¹⁶⁴ and on *Premier Radio*.¹⁶⁵

Such debates clearly lead to an interacting of the Christian and Muslim public spheres. Not only do the participants interact during the debate but it also generates discussion or argument afterwards which is often carried out online. Sometimes this is intra-public dialogue such as that following Craig's 2007 debate with Abdur-Raheem Green on *Premier Radio's* "Unbelievable" programme about "Mosques in the UK". Green's report of the debate on his website prompted Muslims to write in expressing their views.¹⁶⁶ On other occasions it becomes inter-public with various postings on websites and blogs clearly aimed at the Other. One such example was a dispute between the Codgers and the *Muslim Debate Initiative* over the involvement of women in debates.¹⁶⁷

Some of the more irenic participants, like Moucarry, have been involved in debates as well (Moucarry, *Interview 81*). Chapman acknowledged that he had taken part in debates but added that "they've definitely been of a more dialogical nature than a polemical nature, and in my understanding that's what debates ought to be" (Chapman, *Interview 80*). And this is the crux of the issue between Evangelicals. What should be the nature of the debate with Islam? Is polemics

¹⁶² For example see his debate with Shabbir Ally 'Islam or Christianity - Which Promotes Peace?' held on 28 June 2008, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmYHnkMCUN4&feature=related> (accessed 24 July 2009).

¹⁶³ For example see the video of his debate with Adnan Rashid at Speakers Corner held on 22 June 2008 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZaQAaS_PkU&feature=related (accessed 24 July 2009).

¹⁶⁴ A Muslim initiative. See www.thedebateinitiative.com (accessed 6 April 2011).

¹⁶⁵ See for instance his debates with Adnan Rashid 'Islam or Christianity: which one provides a comprehensive solution for Britain?' held at East London Tabernacle, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4XleupL170> (accessed 13 April 2010) and with Abdurrahman Green 'Mosques in the UK: does society have anything to fear?' Unbelievable! Premier Radio, 14 October 2008.

¹⁶⁶ See http://www.islamsgreen.org/islams_green/2007/06/unbelievable_mo.html (accessed 16 March 2009).

¹⁶⁷ See <http://www.thedebateinitiative.com/#/alan-craig/4537710664> (accessed 13 April 2010).

a valid, constructive form of interaction with Muslims?

Polemics

Moucarry defined polemics as “a war of words with Islam it’s about attacking and undermining Islam” and was clear that he does not think that this is what Christians are called to do (Moucarry, *Interview 67*). Smith, however, disagrees. He says that “the Gospel by definition is confrontational” (2007a) and, in a chapter defending his right to confront Muslims, calls polemics “tough love” which uses “one’s mouth, mind, and volition” to correct Islam rather than resorting to violence (J. Smith, 2005, 372). One of Smith’s main strategies for doing this, in addition to the above debates, is the use of internet videos. Under the label *Pfander Films* he has posted over 60 short videos on the internet that can be viewed on *You Tube* and have been downloaded over 600,000 times.¹⁶⁸ Each video attracts responses posted on the website and some have provoked hundreds of comments from both Christians and Muslims. Many of these videos, which last anything from one to ten minutes, not only defend Christianity but also attack Islam. In one of the videos Smith warns:

you Muslims need to be aware, you've had it so good for so long in Europe. No-one ever refutes you in public. Now we're doing so and we're doing so in a big way. And you're realizing our refutations are pretty good now you're getting the heat of what it's like to be on the other end (J. Smith, 2007b).

Some Evangelicals support Smith’s approach. Riddell comments that, whilst “this method is highly controversial, attracting much opposition from within Christian circles, including Evangelical opposition”, in fact Smith and his associates are “the only group to be responding directly to the Muslim radical minority and its anti-Christian polemic” (Riddell, 2004a, 15, 17).

Others are rather more ambivalent. Bell said in his interview:

I would encourage people who had the gifting for polemic debate, and I feel that Jay Smith has a very valid ministry in that. He needs to do that the best he can and in the best spirit and as effectively because some Muslims need that and they’re not going to hear anything else (Bell, *Interview 73*).

¹⁶⁸ Named after the famous nineteenth century Christian polemicist in India, Karl Pfander. See www.youtube.com/user/PfanderFilms (accessed 24 July 2009).

However, in his *Friendship First Manual*, which takes a “relational” and an “apologetic approach”, he expresses his fear that a polemical approach can result in “rhetoric being shouted across the chasm” in which case “a Muslim would be better off never meeting a Christian” (Bell, 2003, 10). Azumah too is ambivalent about the polemical approach. On the one hand:

the polemical approach might be found useful because you find a situation where Muslims are standing up and they are preaching and attacking Christianity and teachings and in Islamic culture sometimes silence means consent. If there’s no-one challenging and responding back it is taken as a given that what they’re saying is the truth (Azumah, *Interview 21*).

But then he immediately went on to qualify this:

there is a place in which Christians have to learn to respond but even that I will culturalize (sic) it as more of apologetics than as polemical. The *Qur’an*, if you like to put it bluntly, is a polemical piece of work against Christians and Christianity and I just think that sometimes you are playing into their hands when we go the polemical route (Azumah, *Interview 21*).

Others are even more critical. Commenting directly on Smith’s approach Chapman feels that “he blurs the distinction between an apologetic and polemics, and does not seem to recognize the limitations of the polemical approaches that have been adopted by both sides over many centuries” (2007b, 247). Moucarry too is totally opposed to the use of polemics. He said, “I am as much against polemics as I am in favour of apologetics” (Moucarry, *Interview 67*) and elsewhere claims that:

this approach is counterproductive. It usually provokes a defensive response—Muslims becoming more radical in their beliefs—and often an offensive reaction too—Muslims attacking Christianity even more vehemently (Moucarry, 2010).

Dialogue

It is clear that both Chapman and Moucarry would favour a more dialogical approach.¹⁶⁹ Many Evangelicals, however, have reservations about inter-religious dialogue. Goldsmith pointed out that in the past such dialogue has been the preserve of liberal Christians and moderate Muslims (Goldsmith, *Interview 34*). Nazir-Ali refers to a “growing interfaith ‘industry’” which seeks to

¹⁶⁹ See for example Chapman (2003a). (Chapman, 2003a)

“minimize differences between the faiths” on the “questionable assumption” that this makes for greater social harmony (2008e, 20). Despite this scepticism, since the *Glen Eyrie Report* of the *Lausanne Movement* promoted “a methodology based on respect, sensitivity and dialogue” (Riddell, 2004b, 140),¹⁷⁰ more Evangelicals have been getting involved and overcoming what Moucarry sees as their “unwarranted suspicion of dialogue” (2010).

Admittedly for most this is a somewhat cautious, conditional involvement. Riddell calls it a “yes but” approach which maintains “red lines that must not be crossed” (2004b, 118). For him it must be a “robust” and “honest” dialogue that does not refrain from asking hard questions (Riddell, *Interview 29*). Azumah concurs and suggests that a “sustainable dialogue” is based on “appreciation and respect for our differences” not on finding common ground (2009b, 5). This, of course, includes the sharing of one’s convictions, and Moucarry insists that in dialogue “there must always be the possibility of conversion” (2001, 19). So the type of dialogue which most Evangelicals are prepared to be involved in would be what Bell called “proclamatory dialogue” (Bell, *Interview 73*). Sudworth explains it this way:

we don't need traditional evangelism or traditional dialogue: we need dialogue that includes the sharing of faith and evangelism that is prepared to listen (Sudworth, 2008b).

Such dialogue is not without its difficulties. Musk admitted that it is not always easy to find Muslims who are prepared to be involved (Musk, *Interview 85*). Chapman is more optimistic and believes that many Muslims “are tired of talking to Christians who do not know what they believe and would far rather talk to convinced Christians who will argue passionately for their convictions” (2004b).¹⁷¹

Despite the willingness of these Evangelicals to be involved, other Evangelicals, and particularly those who espouse a polemic approach, are severely critical of dialogue. Jay Smith recalled

¹⁷⁰ See www.lausanne.org/all-documents/lop-4.html for a copy of the report (accessed 23 September 2010).

¹⁷¹ This trend is also observed by American academic Joseph Cumming, who believes that “the rules for interfaith dialogue are changing”. He recalls a Muslim disillusioned with the relativism of an interfaith dialogue event saying to him: “we want to work with you Evangelicals, because we feel like we have something in common with you ... we want to be talking with Christians who take their scriptures seriously” (Cumming, 2008, 314). See also Hellyer (2008).

former Archbishop Akinola of Nigeria describing the situation in the West and saying: “all you’re doing is dialoguing. You’re dialoguing yourself to death. It’s become an industry here in Britain” (J.Smith, *Interview* 83). Sookhdeo points out that “Muslims find it hard to believe that Christians are not seeking to convert them during the dialogue process (and so) often suspect that such dialogue is a form of Christian deception” (2006, 81). He worries that Muslims will use dialogue as a means to advance the cause of Islam and that “Christians will do all the giving and Muslims all the taking” (ibid 81). He also cautions that Muslims may employ *taqiyya* (§10.4.b) during dialogue and so “any undertakings or pledges made by the Muslim side cannot necessarily be relied on, nor can any factual information given be automatically accepted as true” (ibid 82).¹⁷² Solomon and Al-Maqdisi are also implacably opposed to dialogue and suggest that:

the obligation of *jihad* with its variants and nuances does not give the Muslim any room whatsoever in dialogues - as the goal remains that of bringing the hegemony of Islam everywhere (Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, 2009a, 8).

Despite these criticisms, Evangelicals are involved in dialogue and interfaith initiatives both in Britain and internationally. For instance:

¹⁷² It should be noted that, despite Sookhdeo’s concerns, *Barnabas Fund*, in a statement about the Yale response to the *Common Word*, kept the door to dialogue open and proposed what they believed to be a “third way”:

“Currently Christian responses to Islam are many and various. Some would suggest that there are two opposing positions: one is to embrace Islamic ideals and the other is to regard Islam itself as intrinsically evil and to have nothing to do with it. But Barnabas Fund believes that there is a third way, that is, for Christians to meet with Muslims, recognizing that there are two main areas for discussion. One area has to do with Muslims and Christians living in society and the other has to do with theology and spirituality. Barnabas Fund’s belief is that the latter is not the priority in our world today. We must recognize that there are vital differences in theology between Islam and Christianity which are unbridgeable, and therefore discussions on theology can never be very productive although they can result in increased understanding and respect for each other. It is the discussion of Muslims and Christians living in society which is the priority and indeed is urgent, and from which practical and positive change can be expected. Therefore, as the Pope has set out, discussion with Muslims must include full equality, human rights and religious liberty for Christian minorities, this liberty to comprise not only freedom of worship but also the freedom to share the Christian faith and to convert to it” (Barnabas Fund, 2008).

To date I can find no evidence that *Barnabas Fund* or Sookhdeo have engaged in such a dialogue.

- Chapman, Glaser, Riddell and Taylor were involved in the *Faith and Society* dialogue in the 1990s (Glaser, 2000a);
- Wood and Andrew Smith are both involved in the CMF;
- Azumah, Glaser and Nazir-Ali have all participated in the *Building Bridges* seminars initiated by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, after 9/11;¹⁷³
- Chapman and Moucarry have both attended the *International Evangelical Christian-Muslim Dialogues*;¹⁷⁴
- and several of the participants have taken part in or been supportive of the *Common Word* initiative (§10.4.b).

It remains controversial, however. Riddell observes that “the situation will not be much helped if three groups emerge: one of Christians who refuse to work with Muslims, one of Muslims who refuse to work with Christians, and a third group of 'professional dialoguers'". He believes that ideally there needs to be "engagement between *all* Christians and *all* Muslims" (Riddell, 2004b, 192 emphasis in original).

11.1.B EVANGELICAL FRIENDSHIP WITH MUSLIMS

Engagement between the two spheres does not only happen at a formal level and many Evangelicals and Muslims relate at a personal level. Chapman’s observation that dialogue is “nothing more than two people meeting face to face and talking together” (2006) brings to mind Hauser’s comment that if only two or three meet together then “some portion of the public sphere is made manifest in their conversation” (1999, 64). However, whilst some may have a utilitarian view of friendship with Muslims, for others whatever the outcome of dialogue “the bottom line is a commitment to remain friends and good neighbours”(Sudworth, 2007, 100).

Bell in particular champions a relational approach to Muslims. Both of his main publications (2003, 2006b) are intended to facilitate Christians in building friendships with Muslims. He believes that “the biggest step in relating the Good News to a Muslim is when we step away from confrontation and towards genuine friendship” (2003, 13). Indeed the title of his second book has given rise to the term “grace approach” which is now widely used to describe a friendship oriented

¹⁷³ See Igrave, Michael (ed), *Building Bridges Series*, London, Church House Publishing

¹⁷⁴ www.bridgesoffaith.org (6 April 2011).

approach to Muslims.

Andrew Smith has also emphasized a relational approach in his youth work (*A. Smith, 2009*). He suggests that the question of how to equip Christian young people:

to build positive friendships with Muslims will continue to be a significant issue for Christian youth workers in the coming years the challenge is to find a way of speaking that is faithful to the integrity of both the Christian and the Muslim, but leaves the relationship in a good place. The philosophical way to describe this is to ask, 'How can I meet you as you without losing myself in the process?' (*A. Smith, 2009, 28, 21*).

Even those who take a more polemical approach believe that friendship with Muslims is in some way important. For instance, Cox in a book endorsement says “we must develop an appropriate response (to 9/11) which will enable us to live peacefully and in friendship with our Muslim neighbours” (F. Orr-Ewing and Orr-Ewing, 2002). Jay Smith frequently refers to those whom he debates with as his friends, including apparently the notorious radical, Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad (J. Smith, 2008b). He says that, although the relationship is argumentative, the Muslims “love that adversarial relationship because they see that I am a man of God and they see that I am as passionate as they are” (J. Smith, *Interview 7*).

It is significant to note that many of the participants in the EPS either have or have had Muslim friends. From the interviews it emerged that Goldsmith, Chapman and Musk had a lot of contact with Muslims in the past when they lived overseas but regretted that they had less contact now. Andrew Smith, Sudworth and Moucarray all currently work closely with Muslim colleagues and the latter, being Syrian, had Muslim friends whilst growing up some of whom he is still in contact with. Andrew Smith and Sudworth, along with Craig and McRoy, also live in neighbourhoods with large Muslim populations. Glaser and Riddell too reported having good Muslim friends at different times in their lives and Glaser reckons that she is currently in contact with Muslims “several times a week” (Glaser, *Interview 25*). However, for some, such as Wood and Musk, most of their current contact with Muslims comes through attending various dialogue forums. Due to lack of interview data, it was not possible to discover whether Cox, Green, Solomon and Sookhdeo have Muslim friends, although it should be noted that Rosemary Sookhdeo refers to many encounters with Muslim women and says that she has “a close relationship with a few” (2004, 13).

Of course, some of the participants are themselves from Muslim families. Azumah, who feels that "building and maintaining a relationship of trust and friendship with your Muslim friend is more important than defeating him or her in an argument" (2006, 38), said, "my Muslim family (is) still a quite closely knit family and we keep in touch, we get involved in each others' lives and family issues" (Azumah, *Interview 5*). Nazir-Ali too says that he has "never found any difficulty in making friends with Muslims and getting on with (his) Muslim relatives. Many of (his) best friends are Muslims" (2002, 79).

Sookhdeo, however, has a somewhat different attitude. Although I was unable to interview him, it seems from his writing that he is not so close to his Muslim family, a large proportion of which he claims supports Bin Laden (Sookhdeo, 2003). He sees friendship with Muslims as potentially problematic. Firstly, he explains that some Muslims will resist the approaches of Christians as they are taught to see them as infidels and so treat them in a "capricious way" (Sookhdeo, 2006, 71). Secondly, he sees friendship as problematic as he believes that some Christians "have great difficulties in critiquing Islam because of their love for Muslims in general or their friendship with particular Muslim individuals" (Sookhdeo, 2009a, 12). Solomon, also from a Muslim background, shares these concerns given the "climate of enmity" between Christians and Muslims engendered by the hatred in Islam (Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, 2010, 1).¹⁷⁵

For most participants, however, friendship with Muslims is a worthwhile goal in itself. Nazir-Ali recommends that "there's nothing like friendship to reduce prejudice" and he encourages Christians to get to know their Muslim neighbours and make friends (2002, 76). Such an approach was probably behind Andrew Smith's interesting and significant observation:

what I perceive is that the people who are living and working amongst Muslims have the kind of welcoming loving agenda, the ones who don't meet many have the fear agenda. To put it really crassly and simply my experience has been you tend to find the loving welcoming where you've met them and the fear and panic when you haven't (A.Smith, *Interview 67*).

This seems to be borne out by the above data.

¹⁷⁵ See also Modell (2008b) during which Solomon proposes "Islam = hate" as a description of Islam in a lecture to the *Lawyers Christian Fellowship*.

11.1.C EVANGELICAL COOPERATION WITH MUSLIMS

The willingness of some to risk friendship with Muslims raises an interesting question:

what would happen if, instead of constantly thinking in terms of 'them' and 'us', Muslims and Christians were to work together in facing the big issues in our society? (Chapman, 2003a, 13).

Moucarry certainly believes that they "should not merely tolerate each other but should work together, actively cooperating for the common good" (Moucarry, 2007, 120) and models this in his work for *World Vision* (Moucarry, *Interview 25*). Azumah, McRoy, Musk, Nazir-Ali, Sudworth and Wood have all expressed similar sentiments. Bell sees Muslims as "a kind of spiritual reinforcement in the battle for Biblical morality in a society where secularism is its biggest threat" (2006b, 150) and Goldsmith said:

Muslims and Evangelicals will have the same view on abortion and homosexuality and the practice of it and some other moral issues, and I think some Evangelical Christians will be a bit surprised (and) will find themselves actually supported by their Muslim friends and them supporting their Muslim friends (Goldsmith, *Interview 86*).

Others, however, have not found this to be the case. In Williams' experience of political lobbying she has not seen Muslims campaigning on moral issues:

although many people would say that Muslims stand up for these various principles I've just outlined, actually in parliament, where is the (Muslim) voice? Where is the lobby? (Williams, *Interview 28*).

She suggested that Muslims were only interested in protesting about insults to Islam. Sookhdeo too is suspicious of Muslim self interest. In the field of relief work he claims that "the norm is that Muslim agencies only help Muslims" and he fears that charitable donations could be used to fund *jihad* rather than the needy (Sookhdeo, 2006, 85). He is very critical of Christians that work together with Muslims and argues that:

it is hard to find any warrant in the Bible for interfaith cooperation. In fact it can be argued that cooperation with other faiths actually led to the decline of Israel and brought judgment upon the people of God (Sookhdeo, 2006, 84).

Despite such suspicion there are examples of Evangelicals and Muslims working together. Andrew

Smith is involved in *The Feast* and works alongside Sudworth in the *Springfield Project* both of which reach across the communities of south Birmingham.¹⁷⁶ Along with Wood, Smith is also very active in the CMF which, in addition to being involved in education and community projects, has recently issued joint Christian-Muslim statements condemning the treatment of Christian minorities in the Middle East.¹⁷⁷ In one final example, the *Oasis Trust*, part of the *Faithworks* movement, involved in education and health, has helped Muslims to set up a city academy school. In order to conform to government requirements on equalities the *Faithworks Charter* promises to acknowledge “the freedom of people of all faiths or none both to hold and to express their beliefs and convictions” and to never impose Christian faith on others.¹⁷⁸ Chalke, the movement’s founder, points out that the organization even employs Muslims.¹⁷⁹

11.1.D EVANGELICALS, MUSLIMS AND RECIPROCITY

For many Evangelicals, however, the contentious issue of reciprocity (§4.3.c) is still an enormous barrier to working together with Muslims in Britain. Many authors point out that Muslims here enjoy privileges denied to Christians living in Muslim countries. For instance, Pawson feels that in Britain “Muslims are welcome to take advantage of Western freedom to practise their religion, build their mosques and even preach inflammatory sermons but such privileges are not reciprocal in Islamic countries” (Pawson, 2003, 164). Others agree and ask the question:

should Muslims also not acknowledge that there are few Muslim countries that offer Christians, Jews or those of other religions the freedom to practice their religion that Muslims enjoy in Western societies? And should they not work to redress this asymmetry and to promote religious and other freedoms in Islamic countries? (Cox and Marks, 2006, 151).

This is a theme that Carey makes frequent reference to and indeed he says that “during my time as Archbishop this (reciprocity) was my constant refrain” (Carey, 2004a). He often mentions Saudi

¹⁷⁶ <http://www.springfieldproject.org.uk> and <http://www.thefeast.org.uk> (both accessed 22 November 2010).

¹⁷⁷ See for instance the press release concerning the death of 46 Iraqi Catholics in 2010 at <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/working-together/news/syriac-catholic-murders-in-baghdad> (accessed 22 November 2010).

¹⁷⁸ *The Faithworks Charter*, <http://www.faithworks.info/Standard.asp?id=7432>, (accessed 21 December 2010).

¹⁷⁹ According to Steve Chalke, the founder of *Oasis*, speaking at “The Big Response” event at *Woodlands Christian Centre*, Bristol, 21 October 2010.

Arabia's repression of non-Muslim religions and appeals for freedoms to be given to Christian minorities everywhere (2005b). He does not neglect to equally criticize the West though. In a speech to a Muslim audience he pointed out the disservice that a lack of reciprocity does to the reputation of religion in the eyes of the secular public sphere:

do we truly support complete freedom of religious belief and practice on a reciprocal basis in our respective societies or do we sometimes place impediments and restrictions in the way? I believe this is as pertinent for my society as it is for yours. Indeed, when we fail to honour and provide for those of other faiths within our societies we weaken the credibility of religion itself in the eyes of those who desire a secular vision for the future of mankind and who might even seek to exclude religion altogether from the 'public square' (Carey, 2004c).

Despite the logic to this argument, Riddell mentions that there are some Christian groups, such as the WCC, who have abandoned the principle of reciprocity in favour of reconciliation (2004b, 180). They argue that Christians are called to love others according to the Golden Rule of treating others as they themselves want to be treated. This would require granting freedoms whether or not they themselves received those same freedoms. Most, however, attempt to hold these two in tension. For instance, Nazir-Ali argues that:

reciprocity is not tit-for-tat. It is about the identification of certain common values, even if they have origins in different belief and cultural systems, for the sake of the peace and goodwill which is a universal seasonal theme at this time. For people of faith, it means a commitment to fundamental freedoms in every part of the world: it is because I have experience of difficulties in building churches in parts of the Muslim world that I support the rights of Muslims and others to places of worship in this country (Nazir-Ali, 2004).

Other Evangelicals uphold the Golden Rule in the hope that in so doing Muslims will voluntarily offer the reciprocal treatment: "if Christians are sincere and open in their attempts to follow the Golden Rule, they may be surprised to find that in time *some* Muslims may be willing to work on the same basis" (Chapman, 2007b, 48, emphasis in original). As Sudworth puts it:

our *goal* is reciprocity, but even *if we do not receive anything in return*, our path is one of selfless love (Sudworth, 2007, 108, emphasis in original)

11.2 EVANGELICALS AND THE BRITISH PUBLIC SPHERE

Whilst the EPS primarily engages with Muslims and Christians, it also inevitably interacts with the British meso-public sphere. Some Evangelicals are actively seeking such engagement:

the past decades have seen an increasing concern among Evangelicals to be effective in public life: partly because we feel more secure now that Evangelicals are not such a minority among Christians. It is also becoming obvious that Britain has largely lost the Christian basis for its democracy, and God is calling us to make sure that our voice is heard (Glaser, 2000a, 28).

We have already noted those participants who have recommended or demanded that the government respond to Islam in certain ways (§10.4.d). These demands, however, are mainly published in books or pamphlets unlikely to gain a wide audience in the circles of power. So some participants adopt other strategies to get their message into the wider public sphere including: lobbying and campaigning; involvement in politics; engaging with mainstream media; and developing Christian media for a wider audience.

11.2.A LOBBYING AND CAMPAIGNING

There are many different groups involved in lobbying and campaigning on behalf of Christian values. *Christian Voice* describes itself as “a prophetic ministry looking to take the battle to the Lord’s enemies” and organizes protests, leafleting, letter writing and email campaigns.¹⁸⁰ Their “gospel outreach” in the supposed “no-go” area of Alum Rock has already been mentioned (§10.2.b) and they have held other “witnesses” against Islam, homosexuality, the *Jerry Springer Opera* and the incitement to racial hatred bill (Christian Voice, 2008a).¹⁸¹

Christian Concern for Our Nation (CCFON) sees itself as a resource for Christians who want “to stand against the tide of legal and political changes that threaten the Christian values our society was built on”.¹⁸² This includes organizing demonstrations outside parliament and campaigns on

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.christianvoice.org.uk/about.html> (accessed 6 March 2009).

¹⁸¹ *Christians Witness Against Redhill Muslim March*, <http://www.christianvoice.org.uk/Alerts/alert013.html> (accessed 9 March 2009).

¹⁸² <http://www.ccfon.org> (accessed 6 March 2009).

issues such as the clear labeling of *halal* products.¹⁸³ It was clear from the interview with Andrea Williams, its director, that Solomon is the main influence with regard to CCFON's approach to Islam (Williams, *Interview 9*).

Barnabas Fund, under its director Patrick Sookhdeo, is particularly active in campaigning for the rights of persecuted Christians around the world. Its magazine, *Barnabas Aid*, frequently includes appeals to write letters and sign petitions for issues related to Muslim persecution of Christians. For instance a 2009 campaign saw over 30,000 people sign a petition seeking the abolition of the Islamic apostasy law.¹⁸⁴

The Christian Institute, whose strap line is "Christian influence in a secular world", exists for "the furtherance and promotion of the Christian religion" but, whilst it reports on issues to do with Islam, in general it has a lower emphasis on Islam than the groups mentioned above.¹⁸⁵ Representatives occasionally make comments in the media such as the observation by its director, Colin Hart, that the "police never arrest Muslims who make remarks about homosexuality" - only Christians (O. Craig, 2006).

The *London Institute of Contemporary Christianity* (LICC), founded by leading Evangelical John Stott to "envision and equip Christians", occasionally comments on news stories related to Islam but is more concerned about presenting a positive Christian voice than campaigning against Islam.¹⁸⁶ Its director, Mark Greene, comments that "Christians are not at war with Muslims – any more than we are at war with secularists".¹⁸⁷

Lapido Media,¹⁸⁸ founded by journalist Jenny Taylor, is concerned with "religious literacy in world affairs". It carries links to world-wide media stories about religion and frequently publishes

¹⁸³ *Petition against halal meat*, <http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/islam/petition-against-halal-meat> (accessed 21 December 2010).

¹⁸⁴ *Barnabas Aid*, Nov/Dec, 2009, <http://barnabasfund.org/uk/BooksResources/Barnabas-Aid-Magazine> (accessed 15 September 2010).

¹⁸⁵ <http://www.christian.org.uk/who-we-are> (accessed 15 September 2010).

¹⁸⁶ <http://www.licc.org.uk> (accessed 15 September 2010).

¹⁸⁷ *Islam and Fear in the Veins*, <http://www.licc.org.uk/node/217> (accessed 10 March 2009).

¹⁸⁸ Note that 'Lapido' means to "advocate" in the Acholi dialect of Northern Uganda. See www.lapidomedia.com (accessed 10 March 2010).

articles commenting on Islam. Whilst some of these raise concerns, others present a positive view of Islam.¹⁸⁹

The *Evangelical Alliance* (EA) is an umbrella organization representing a very considerable number of Evangelicals and occasionally comments on Islam-related issues but tends to adopt a cautious, positive, inclusive position. It is not clear, however, that this approach reflects the views of their members. An online survey conducted by the EA of reactions to the *shari'a* debate in 2008 only attracted 200 responses, but did indicate that the majority viewed Islam and *shari'a* negatively.¹⁹⁰

11.2.B POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Apart from such para-church associations and pressure groups some of the participants in the EPS are more directly involved in the political life of the nation and on occasion use their position to speak out on issues related to Islam. Craig is the leader of the CPA and until 2010 was an elected local councillor in Newham, London. He particularly used his position to campaign against the building of the “mega-mosque” (§6.2.b). He also ran for mayor of London and answered questions about Muslims during the hustings.¹⁹¹

Nazir-Ali, Cox and Carey are all in the House of Lords and have at times used that platform to give speeches concerning Islam. For instance Nazir-Ali has commented on reciprocity, religion and law, and *jihad* and terrorism (2004). Cox has also raised concerns about security, militant extremists in Britain and the implications of *shari'a* on marriage law (Cox and Marks, 2006, 80, 105,145). In addition to his role in the Lords Carey has also made various other speeches in his role as the former archbishop of Canterbury, some of which have received significant media coverage (Carey, 2004a, Petre, 2004).

Edwards too, formerly in his role as general secretary of the *Evangelical Alliance* and more recently as an equalities commissioner, has been involved in political life. He was invited to meet with

¹⁸⁹ See for instance Taylor’s blog on her 2010 visit to India (www.lapidomedia.com/india/laptop-islam (accessed 6 April 2011)) or her 2008 article on a Muslim-Jewish theatre company (www.lapidomedia.com/engage-excel-be-patient (accessed 6 April 2011)).

¹⁹⁰ www.eauk.org/public-affairs/upload/Summary-of-Sharia-law-debate.pdf (accessed 6 March 2009).

¹⁹¹ See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2MyKE1WQdE> (accessed 15 September 2010). In response to a question about the stereotyping of Muslims Craig points out the need to be able to distinguish those Muslims who have separatist tendencies from other Muslims.

political and Muslim leaders following 9/11 and over the years has been involved in various consultations relating to religion, diversity and social cohesion (Edwards, *Interview*).

Other participants too are also occasionally called upon to advise government or public bodies: Bell reported being consulted by the police (Bell, *Interview*); Solomon is described as “an advisor to British as well as European parliamentarians” (Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, 2009b, back cover); and Sookhdeo is:

adjunct professor at the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies, senior visiting fellow at the Defence Academy of the UK, and also guest lecturer at the NATO school, Oberammergau. He is a fellow of the Security Institute of the UK. He has served as cultural adviser for Iraq and Afghanistan (Sookhdeo, 2007a, back cover).¹⁹²

Clearly there are opportunities for British Evangelicals from the EPS to engage in politics and public policy.

11.2.c RIGHT WING LINKS?

In the United States, Evangelicals have a reputation for supporting right wing political policies and pursuing what Murad (aka Timothy Winter) calls “theopolitics” (Murad, 2009). Even there, however, this is clearly not always the case and the rather different approaches of Campolo and others have already been mentioned (§7.2.a). The same spectrum exists in Britain, albeit with Evangelicals exercising considerably less influence. Nonetheless, concerns have been expressed about a possible overlap between some conservative Evangelicals and right wing political parties.

For instance, speaking at *New Wine* Bell expressed his concern that “some prominent Christians in their speaking and writing are sounding closer to the BNP than Jesus” (2007). Considering the

¹⁹² Note that on the Marshall Centre website (www.marshallcenter.org (accessed 21 December 2010)) he is also listed as:

Visiting Fellow, Cranfield University, Royal Military College of Science, Department of Defence Management and Security Analysis

Consultant to Permanent Joint Headquarters

Advisor to Cranfield University’s Resilience Centre

Member of UK Counter Terrorism Policy and Strategic Issues Group

Member of the Security Institute

Specialist in the field of Islamic war and its cultural and geo-political dimensions

Consultant and lecturer on security and counter-terrorism

problem in reverse Sudworth says, “it is troubling for me that some of the extremist groups that have hit the headlines in recent weeks are using language that I hear all too frequently in church circles” (2009c).

Some of the parallels are with mainstream right wing politics. Baroness Cox was instrumental in enabling Wilders to screen his controversial film *Fitna* in the Houses of Parliament and, whilst she distanced herself from his views, she defended her invitation to him on the grounds that she was encouraging free speech and debate (C. Green, 2010). Wilders himself wrote an endorsement for Solomon and Al-Maqdisi’s *Modern Day Trojan Horse* (2009b). In another example Solomon was commissioned by the *UK Independence Party* MEP Gerard Batten to write his *Proposed Charter of Muslim Understanding* (Solomon, 2006b).¹⁹³

Evangelicals, however, are sometimes linked to rather more extreme right wing groups. On occasion radical right wing politicians talk about “Christian” Britain and quote various Christian public figures. For instance, Nick Griffin, leader of the *British National Party* (BNP), quoted Nazir-Ali and Nigerian Archbishop Okoh in an article about immigration (Griffin, 2009). In 2006 an article in *The Guardian* referred to a supposed “brief but passionate liaison between the BNP and the Evangelicals” particularly highlighting what it called an “ill-fated combination of the BNP and Christian Voice” (G. Fraser, 2006). This situation arose after the creation of the *Christian Council of Britain* (CCB) which is believed to have been launched by BNP members in opposition to the MCB.¹⁹⁴ As some of members of CCB subsequently appeared at a *Christian Voice* demonstration against “Jerry Springer-The Opera”, *Christian Voice* had to publish a piece on their website distancing themselves from the BNP.¹⁹⁵ Interestingly *Barnabas Fund* also felt the need to issue a statement denying any association with either the CCB or BNP.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ This charter was launched by Batten in the *House of Lords* in April 2007, <http://www.ukip.org/content/latest-news/123-gerard-batten-mep-launches-proposed-charter-of-muslim-understanding-in-house-of-lords-monday-29th-a> (accessed 26 July 2010).

¹⁹⁴ ‘BNP Members Involved in ‘Christian’ Front’, http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_060314bnp.shtml, (accessed 5 November 2009).

¹⁹⁵ See <http://www.christianvoice.org.uk/Alerts/alert003.html> (accessed 6 November 2009).

¹⁹⁶ See <http://barnabasfund.org/US/News/Archives/Further-response-to-the-Christian-Council-of-Britain.html> (accessed 6 November 2009).

Some Muslim supporters of the London “mega-mosque” also tried to discredit Craig by associating him with the BNP. A video was posted on the internet containing footage of both Craig and Griffin supposedly demonstrating how the CPA and BNP both “incite hatred against the Muslims in the UK”.¹⁹⁷ Various websites appeared attacking Craig and insinuating connection with the BNP.¹⁹⁸ McRoy points out, however, that the CPA “made opposition to the BNP a major campaigning issue” during elections (McRoy, n.d.-a) and Craig himself frequently expresses concern at the rise of the BNP as a reaction to the political correctness of the political elite (A. Craig, 2009a).

11.2.D THE MEDIA

A number of the participants have engaged with mainstream media in an attempt to get their message across to a wider audience. Sookhdeo has had several pieces published in British newspapers, particularly *The Spectator* (Sookhdeo, 2003, 2005b, 2005c). Nazir-Ali is frequently quoted in the press, occasionally writing articles himself (Nazir-Ali, 2008a, 2008d), and Riddell too has had a couple of articles published in the *American Spectator* (Riddell, 2008a, 2008b).

A few have appeared on television. McRoy mentioned that he had been interviewed by the BBC, CNN and Sky News (McRoy, *Interview 74*). He has also appeared on Iranian television, as has Goldsmith (Goldsmith, *Interview 70*). Craig appeared alongside Andrea Williams on the BBC chat show *The Big Questions* to discuss whether Islam is changing the streets of Britain¹⁹⁹ and Azumah appeared on the same series to discuss whether Islam encourages violence.²⁰⁰ Jay Smith appeared on the BBC’s *Newsnight* programme defending the right of Dutch politician Geert Wilders to enter the UK and screen his film, *Fitna*, which Smith did not believe should be banned.²⁰¹

All of the above were unedited live debates and the participants were able to speak for themselves and the producers gave no commentary on their contribution. Documentary makers are sometimes more biased. Green, Solomon and Williams appeared in *In God’s Name*, a

¹⁹⁷ See ‘BNP and Christian Peoples Alliance’, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pePCBxIV2M4> (accessed 15 September 2010).

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.christianpeoplesalliance.com> and <http://www.alancraig.org> were both anti-Craig sites although they misleadingly used domain names that suggested they belonged to Craig and the CPA. Both sites have since been removed after complaints (accessed 16 March 2009).

¹⁹⁹ *The Big Questions*, BBC One, 13 January 2008.

²⁰⁰ *The Big Questions*, BBC One, 13 September 2009.

²⁰¹ *Newsnight* ‘Should Wilders have been granted entry to the UK?’, BBC Two, 12 February 2009

documentary which portrayed them very negatively as anti-Muslim “Christian Fundamentalists” (Modell, 2008b). Nazir-Ali, Jay Smith and Bell were also all featured in the Channel Four *Dispatches* documentary *Unholy War* (Barnett, 2007). Bell was particularly upset afterwards and felt that the programme had misrepresented him, demonstrating some of the challenges that participants in the EPS face as they engage with the secular media (Bell, *Interview 103*). Whilst they are seeking to comment on Islam, they are also vulnerable to possible misrepresentation by secular journalists who may have their own agendas.

Of course, Evangelicals have a plethora of their own media (§5.5.b) and, whilst these are primarily designed for a Christian audience, the nature of modern media means that they are accessible to any member of the public whether through publication, the internet or radio and television broadcast. It has already been seen above that this can lead to interaction between various spheres (§11.1.a) and as will be seen below (§11.4) the ramifications for the EPS can be significant.

11.3 THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE EVANGELICAL PUBLIC SPHERE WITH THE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

The EPS clearly interacts with both Muslims and society as a whole, and different participants within the sphere have their own emphases and specialities to those ends. However, the sphere’s main thrust in the majority of what is written and said is to interact with its own constituency and to inform, influence and mobilize Evangelicals in British churches with respect to Islam. This section explores the different roles and agendas that the various participants adopt depending on their skills and approaches to Islam. It then looks at how they are seeking to equip the churches and the Evangelicals in them. The interviews with the church leaders are then examined to determine which participants, and hence which approaches to Islam, have the greatest influence within the churches. In particular the interview data interrogates the leaders’ attitudes towards Islam, their reaction to specific issues concerning Islam in public life, and their prognoses for the future vitality of both Islam and the Evangelical church in Britain.

11.3.A THE VARIOUS ROLES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The majority of the participants interviewed felt that their role was to teach Christians about Islam. Azumah, Chapman, Glaser, Goldsmith, Moucarry, and Riddell all felt this to be their most dominant role and the one they felt best equipped to fulfil. As Riddell expressed it:

my comfort zone as an educationalist (is) presenting a range of viewpoints to my students, and when I speak in church similarly, for them to make of that what they will (Riddell, *Interview 27*).

Not all would have such an open pedagogical view as Riddell. Some see themselves as equipping Christians for a specific task. Sudworth, for instance, had the explicit objective of “teaching and equipping towards faithful Christian presence that is able to love a Muslim unconditionally (Sudworth, *Interview 69*). Jay Smith had the rather different objective of training Christians to engage in debate:

I think the best thing to do to help, whenever I go on a university campus or when I go to a church, is to show them how to defend their faith (J.Smith, *Interview 77*).

Interviewees also identified other roles. Bell described himself as a consultant, Knell as a coordinator, McRoy as a commentator, and Goldsmith as an inspirer and encourager. Finally, several participants recognized the role of “warner”. Bell said that his role was as:

a warner about what could be if we don’t respond and play our part, and the agenda of a minority of Muslims and all the rest of it (Bell, *Interview 69*).

Glaser saw the warning rather differently:

a warner, yes, but not a warner against Islam as such. I think there’s enough warning against Islam. I don’t think people need that, but a warner against responding to fear and terror with fear and terror really. That’s my warning (Glaser, *Interview 59*).

The role of warning against Islam is certainly played by some of those not interviewed and they are presumably those whom Glaser was referring to. Sookhdeo, Solomon, Dye and Cox in their approach and style of writing all warn either the church or the nation about the threat that they believe Islam to pose. Pawson casts this in more spiritual language and sees himself as a “prophet” bringing a warning to the church (Pawson, 2003, 91). Certainly his premonition of an

Islamic takeover could be seen in this light (§10.4.c).

11.3.B THE EQUIPPING OF THE CHURCHES

Their perceptions of these roles clearly dictate how the participants seek to equip and influence the churches. As in any public sphere they employ a variety of methods to this end. In the light of the expressed desire to influence the church, it is interesting to note that many participants, and several of the church leaders interviewed, felt that Evangelicals in Britain are not well-equipped to address the questions that Islam poses to them. Williams felt the grass roots were “confused” (Williams, *Interview 82*) and Azumah said:

it is difficult to tell where the Evangelical church is drawing its information and resource about Islam from, beyond the media for instance. And if that is where most of them are drawing their information from I don't think that is equipping people enough (Azumah, *Interview 23*).

An open charismatic church leader agreed with this and reflected: “I think talking about the church as a whole in the country, I would say no, we're not very well equipped”. Several had not thought about the question and Warnke definitely felt his members were more influenced by the media than anything else (Warnke, *Interview*). Bell felt that the Pentecostal churches were particularly disengaged apart from some, like *Kensington Temple*, which took a “strident demonized view” (Bell, *Interview 107*). He also observed that it was difficult to engage the BMCs on this subject. Of all the church streams he felt that it is the New Churches that are leading the way in reaching out to Muslims in Britain.

So the key question becomes “*how effective is the elite of the EPS in influencing grass root members in the churches with respect to their attitude towards Islam?*”

Tellingly in reply to the question “*what is the greatest influence on your members' attitudes towards Islam?*” not one of the leaders mentioned a participant in the EPS, although it did transpire in conversation that some believed one or other of the participants to influence certain individuals within their congregation.

In terms of profile, most of the church leaders recognized the names of Sookhdeo, Cox and Pawson (see Figure 11.1 and also Appendix B) although it should be noted that not all were aware

of the latter two’s engagement with Islam but knew them only as high profile Christian figures. It was no surprise to find that Chapman, Goldsmith and Nazir-Ali were also well-known. It was perhaps surprising though that not more had heard of Bell, who is a regular speaker at conferences, or Musk, who is a prolific Evangelical author on Islam.²⁰²

Figure 11.1 – Church leaders’ awareness of the national elite

No. of leaders out of 14 recognizing the participant’s name	Participant’s name
11	Sookhdeo, Cox (3 unaware of her book on Islam)
9	Pawson (5 unaware of his book on Islam)
8	Chapman, Goldsmith, Nazir-Ali
7	Orr-Ewings, Jay Smith
6	Riddell, Solomon
5	Knell
3	Musk
2	Azumah, Bell, Taylor
1	Moucarry, McRoy
0	A.Smith, Sudworth

Of the 14 church leaders I spoke to in London 10 said that they have recommended a book on Islam, but only 5 mentioned the book title or name of more than one of the British authors included in this research (see Figure 11.2). Chapman was the most commonly recommended author followed by Sookhdeo and Brother Andrew (who is not British but is popular in this country). Ten authors were recommended in total.

Of the 11 churches that have bookshops, bookstalls or sell books online only six stocked books related to Islam. Sookhdeo’s books were displayed in four shops and Chapman, Glaser and the Orr-Ewings were stocked in just two. It was noticeable that the BMCs both online and in their shops almost exclusively sold books, DVDs and CDs by their own pastors along with a little American material. Two online stores also made Jay Smith’s audio teaching available.

²⁰² It should be noted that no specific question was asked about non-author participants such as Craig, Williams and Green although their names arose occasionally during the interviews.

Figure 11.2 – Church leaders’ book recommendations

No. of book recommendations	Author	Book
5	Chapman	<i>Cross and Crescent</i>
3	Sookhdeo Brother Andrew	Various <i>Secret Believers</i>
2	Musk Nazir-Ali Riddell	Not specified
1	Cox Goldsmith Moucarry Orr-Ewing	Not specified

National Evangelical leaders would also expect to be invited to preach or conduct training seminars in various churches. However, only 8 of the church leaders recalled inviting an outsider speaker or trainer to come to their church to teach on Islam. The most prolific trainer in these churches is Jay Smith with his emphasis on apologetics and polemics. He had spoken or conducted training at four of the churches. Goldsmith recounted in his interview that he had spoken at three large London churches but that this was prior to 2001 and he was not recalled by any of the present incumbents. Apart from Smith only Solomon, Orr-Ewing, Cox (twice each) and McRoy (once) had spoken or conducted training sessions at the churches as far as the leaders questioned could remember. This tallied with the acknowledgement by the majority of the participants that they had not been invited to speak in any London churches. Most surprising is the fact that none of the leaders reported Sookhdeo speaking at their church, although one mentioned that he had spoken at an independent event hosted in their building.

Only one of the churches mentions Islam regularly during their services. Five others said that it was never mentioned, although one of them said it may be discussed in their small pastoral groups. Five church leaders said that Islam may occasionally be referred to during a sermon and one of them, a BMC, said that this would likely be a warning of the threat that Islam poses. Otherwise only three leaders said that they put on special training events for those interested in finding out more about Islam and Muslims, and three others said that teaching about Islam is

included as an element of an existing training course for leaders and those involved in various ministries.

One interviewee mentioned that the national conference for his group of churches sometimes offers a seminar on Islam (Ash, NFI, *Interview 13*) and indeed Bell and Chapman both mentioned speaking at that conference. No data were obtained on how many church members had heard any of the ten or so participants who speak at national conferences such as *Spring Harvest* or *New Wine*. These conferences were not mentioned by any of the leaders as a big influence on their church members.

Neither was there any evidence that these churches are using or had ever used any of the courses or study guides that have been developed by the participants, such as *Cross and Crescent* (Chapman, 2003b) or *Reflecting on Islam* (Sudworth, n.d.).²⁰³

In addition to the opportunity that Evangelicals may have to hear about Islam in their churches, various Evangelical theological training colleges also teach about Islam. However, Azumah, who took over from Riddell as the director of the *Centre for Islamic Studies* at *London School of Theology* (LST) in 2009, believed that his college was the only one with a full-time specialism in Islam. LST offers undergraduate modules studying Islam, a new MA in Christian-Muslim relations and a distance learning course called the *Carey Course in Christian-Muslim Relations*.²⁰⁴ Other Evangelical training colleges such as *Moorlands*, *All Nations* and *Redcliffe Christian College* to name a few also offer optional modules in Islam. Some feel this provision is inadequate and are trying to redress the balance. Glaser sees this as one of her main roles:

I think my primary function at the moment is as teacher, trying to get Islam onto the agenda in these theological colleges and to develop a place here in Oxford (the *Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies*) where if people are training for ministry they can actually take Islam into account throughout (Glaser, *Interview*).

²⁰³ For an overview of courses designed to help Christians understand Islam see De Ruiter's unpublished D.Min. thesis *Sharing Lives* (2009), Bakke University, Seattle. For an evaluation of some older courses see Chapman's unpublished M.Phil. thesis *Teaching Christians about Islam: a study in methodology* (1993), Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations, Selly Oak.

²⁰⁴ <http://www.lst.ac.uk/smartweb/cis/courses>, (accessed 21 December 2010).

As long ago as 1989 Chapman wrote, “what is needed now is an interdisciplinary approach. The challenge facing us is to find ways of allowing Islam to impinge on almost every discipline of theology” (1989, 27). Azumah agrees with this sentiment. He wants Islamic studies to be compulsory for all LST students and argues that:

Islam asks us questions about Christians and Christianity in a way that no other religion does and to pretend that you can do Christian theological studies in the twenty-first century without engaging with Islam, it’s just not on (Azumah, *Interview 25*).²⁰⁵

It remains to be seen whether the various Evangelical colleges will heed this warning and what approach they would adopt in the presentation of Islam.

11.3.c ATTITUDES OF EVANGELICAL CHURCH LEADERS IN LONDON TOWARDS ISLAM

It was envisaged that the responses of the London church leaders interviewed would give a general indication of which way these Evangelical churches are leaning in their approach to Islam and whether they reflect the opinions held by any particular participants in the EPS. The interview questions ranged from discussing their general views on the church in Britain, Islam and mission to their responses to specific issues and events in British public life (see the interview schedule in Appendix F).

Views on “Christian” Britain

When asked whether Britain is a “Christian country” interestingly it was the BMC leaders that had the strongest reaction. They felt that it had been in the past and should still be today:

this is a Christian nation – it was founded on Christian principles. Our government, the Queen, is supposed to be the head of the church, and we have allowed Muslims to come into our country, which is a Christian country (Babatunde, *Interview 27*).

For them it is the weakness of the church that has allowed the erosion of this heritage because Christians “did not speak up when they were supposed to speak up, they didn’t do things when they were supposed to do them” (a spokesman for KICC, *Interview 28*). Another leader commented that the Christian legacy was “being eroded in the name of pluralism, acceptance and

²⁰⁵ See also Glaser (2010b).

accommodation” and believed that “we can be hospitable but we don’t have to accommodate everything” (Oloyede, *Interview 27*).

Such views amongst the BMC leaders give great encouragement to certain participants in the EPS like Jay Smith:

thank God for the Africans here. They’re the only ones that get it. I think they get it because they’ve been faced with Islam head on. The thing I love about Africans is they say exactly what they believe. They’re so politically incorrect this is a real battle coming and they’re not running away from it (J.Smith, *Interview 83*).

Cox too is supportive of the African presence and wrote a positive endorsement for Babatunde’s book *Great Britain has Fallen* (2002) which attracted some criticism in the press (Ahmed, 2002).²⁰⁶

The majority of church leaders, however, did not feel that Britain is, or indeed ever has been, a Christian country. Melliush said, “I don’t know if we’ve ever been a Christian country. I think that we’ve been a religious country” (Melliush, *St Paul’s, Interview 37*). In fact envisaging any country as being “Christian” was considered by most to be detrimental. Three of the leaders specifically mentioned the establishment of Christendom at the time of Constantine as a negative development for the church and as a model that should not be adopted again. One non-Anglican leader even favoured disestablishment although he could not see a viable way of achieving it.

It was also very noticeable that most of the leaders were wary about their churches getting politically involved. Ash’s response was typical:

I would be more inclined to say that individual Christians should be involved in politics but the church, a local church or the church as a larger organization, is not there to be a political body (Ash, *NFI, Interview 65*).

So whilst many leaders were supportive of individual members campaigning and lobbying on issues, most would agree with Brownell who said, “I don’t encourage people to sign petitions in the church. I don’t want Sundays used for politicking stuff” (Brownell, *ELT, Interview 66*). One

²⁰⁶ See also Babatunde (2005).

conservative Anglican church was particularly clear that the church's task was to preach the gospel:

I suppose we're more concerned about Christians living out their faith and sharing the Lord Jesus with friends and neighbours. Obviously politics is involved with that but there would be less of a political agenda, so it's not that you live in a world isolated from what your government decides but the emphasis usually on a Sunday would be on a Bible passage and the implications for our lives and conduct at work and with family.

Despite this though, the majority still felt that Christians should have a strong public voice and Palmer worried that "Christians are rapidly losing the art of knowing how to speak their faith into the public square" (Palmer, *All Souls, Interview 69*). Again the BMCs were particularly forceful:

We feel the Christian voice should be heard in every nook and corner of this nation and we should be involved in politics, we should be part of local councils (a spokesman for KICC, *Interview 28*).

Definitely Christians should get involved Get out there, go and vote, don't just vote, campaign. Get elected. (Babatunde, WHCC, *Interview 64*).

Most, however, were content to support the work of Christian groups like the *Evangelical Alliance* and four leaders particularly commended the work of *CCFON*. Interestingly none specifically supported the work of *Barnabas Fund* although several were aware that their members received their newsletters.

Reaction to Islam

Against the backdrop of these views of church and society the church leaders were by and large remarkably unconcerned about the presence of Islam in Britain. Brownell, despite living and working in East London, felt that competition with Muslims was "not a big issue", except maybe in the black community which he believed to be the target of Muslim proselytism (Brownell, ELT, *Interview 20*). This was reflected by a greater concern with Islam in general amongst BMC leaders.²⁰⁷ As a former Muslim, Oloyede saw Islam as a challenge and said:

²⁰⁷ Although it should be noted that Ademolake was entirely unconcerned and attributed this lack of concern to the area of Nigeria he came from where Christians and Muslims live together very peaceably (Ademolake, RCCG, *Interview 21*). He even sees Islam as a preparation for the Gospel and points to the number of former Muslims who are now pastors in black churches as evidence of this.

(they) take ground and (they) don't give it back. The way to take over is by child birth, getting involved in politics and taking strategic ground. So the whole agenda is not negotiable, Muslims are here to take over. My own opinion is you can have pets but don't have a lion cub as a pet because one day it's going to grow up and devour something you don't want it to devour The doctrine of Islam ... is a challenge in contemporary western and global diplomatic relations. It is a threat to peaceful coexistence (Oloyede, GH, *Interview 29, 31*).

Even taking the BMCs into account, however, for most leaders:

Islam is just one of a plethora of other challenges which people are facing. So I don't think it's necessarily higher on the spectrum than some other issues that people might be facing (Ash, NFI, *Interview 11*)

In fact the great majority of the leaders specifically saw the Muslim presence as a positive opportunity and, unsurprisingly for Evangelicals, all the leaders mentioned the need to share the Gospel with Muslims. Melliush said, "I think it's an opportunity. I think that the world has come to our doorstep so we have an opportunity to reach the world from our front doors" (Melliush, St Paul's, *Interview 33*). Babatunde even believed that there will be a "another Pentecost" in Britain that will send people back to their own countries to preach the Gospel and declared, "that's why our view of Muslims must change; we must see them as a major evangelistic opportunity; we must love Muslims and pray for them" (Babatunde, WHCC, *Interview 33*).

Mission to Muslims

In response to this perceived opportunity all the leaders interviewed placed a premium on communicating the Gospel to Muslims in some way. For most this needed to be done in word and deed:

the Gospel does need to be shared with words, so although we should live attractive lives and we should be visible as Christ's disciples by the way we love one another, we also have a message that He tells us to share (a conservative Anglican leader).

Indeed several churches expressly saw their focus as building the church rather than battling against other religions. A spokesman for KICC said:

we believe that as long as we continue to preach the undiluted Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and make Jesus known to people, we are seeing conversions of people from such backgrounds into the

Christian faith, and we have no particular public view of the Muslim (a spokesman for KICC, *Interview 19*).

Others did see a need for debate. One young leader in a “reformed charismatic” church thought that the general approach in his church would be apologetic and polemic with an emphasis on theology, truth and knowing the weaknesses of Islam. This would certainly be the training that Jay Smith would give at the workshops he has held in these churches. Chow, however, demurred from polemics saying “I think as far as I can see the church’s stance is not to be confrontational, so I think we would probably be more apologetic” (Chow, CC, *Interview 57*). Melluish was not even convinced about apologetics:

I don’t think we need to be defending our position but I think we need to be sharing and showing the grace of God, and I think that that’s probably what will change things. I don’t think our Heavenly Father needs defending. I think our Heavenly Father needs demonstrating (Melluish, St Paul’s, *Interview 110*).

Warnke went even further:

apologetics in the defence sense that’s not going to take you anywhere (and polemics) that’s just sheer stupidity to do that. Where do you think that’s going? What’s the point of that? How does that demonstrate something healthy or loving or kind? (Warnke, Vineyard, *Interview 95*).

In fact it is significant that almost all the leaders stressed a relational rather than confrontational approach to evangelism. So a leader in a conservative Anglican church said, “any kind of polemic should not be an angry rude kind of thing, a shouting match wouldn’t commend the Gospel” and Ashimolowo of KICC said in a TV interview, “we must reach (Muslims) in love; don’t start arguing”.²⁰⁸ Nonetheless this did not preclude him seeing Islam (as opposed to Muslims) as a spiritual enemy to be fought. He continued, “a spirit has been woken up again we need to pray against that strong man”. In another interview he described this as “a clash of kingdoms in the realm of the spirit”.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ ‘Interview with Ex-Muslim Christian Matthew Ashimolowo’, www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzIeX0YILQ4, (accessed 21 December 2010).

²⁰⁹ ‘London Church Forced Off Its Property’, CBN News, broadcast 25 April 2008, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nnr7kl9qBQQ, (accessed 8 September 2010).

The nature of Islam

Such a view reflects how some of the leaders perceive the nature of Islam (compare §9.1 for the perceptions of the EPS elite). Whilst HTB were careful to stress that Gumbel rarely says anything negative about other religions and would never refer to *Allah* as a demon, at least five others did feel that Islam's origin must in some way have been "demonic" or "satanic" but were quick to point out that they did not believe that "every Muslim is subject to the devil" (Brownell, ELT, *Interview 36*).

This association with the demonic was reflected in the leaders' views on the identity of *Allah*. Only Ademolake, in keeping with his very relaxed, open attitude to Islam, admitted that he "just think(s) of that literally and believe(s) they're talking about the same god" (Ademolake, RCCG, *Interview 25*). For the rest, Muslims at best are describing God very differently to Christians. When asked whether it was the same god Warnke replied, "no definitely not. Look at the qualities" (Warnke, Vineyard, *Interview 25*). A conservative Anglican explained the comparison in terms of the Trinity:

I would say he's someone different just because fundamental to the Christian understanding of God is he is Trinitarian - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - and fundamental to the Islamic concept of *Allah* is that he's not.

One leader, however, did acknowledge a desire within Muslims to worship the same God:

I don't think *Allah* as they present *Allah* is the God that we worship but I think the spiritual nerve that's within them that seeks to look to God is the same spiritual nerve that sits in me. So I think that their conclusion of who God is is not the same as my conclusion of who God is (Melluish, St Paul's, *Interview 68*).

These views notwithstanding the majority of the leaders recognized the diversity of Muslims and drew a difference between the religion and the people. Many agreed with Melluish that "most Muslims are God-fearing, very loving people, and very open to relationship and connection" and that there is only a "small fundamentalist arm that does cause anxiety" (Melluish, St Paul's *Interview 33*).

Again some of the BMC leaders, drawing on their experience of Islam in Nigeria, had a more negative view. Oloyede believed that radical Islam is in fact normative and claimed that "the

whole agenda, their whole world view –whether you are a *jihadist* or a moderate - is that everyone should become a Muslim” (Oloyede, GH, *Interview 35*). Babatunde agreed:

you know, they hate you I don't want to generalize, there are some wonderful Muslims, and there are some very very good Muslims, but I believe they're a threat because part of the agenda in this nation is to take over this nation (Babatunde, WHCC, *Interview 27*)

This agenda includes deception in the form of *taqiyya* and Oloyede recounted some examples from the Nigerian situation. Apart from him though, only two of the church leaders had ever heard of *taqiyya* despite the profile it is given in some Evangelical writing on Islam (§10.4.b).

Islam was definitely seen as being more political than Christianity:

obviously Islam is intrinsically political in a way that Christianity isn't because the establishment of *shari'a* is one of the great aims of Islam in spreading the message (a conservative Anglican leader).

For some this is what leads to the greater potential for violence in Islam:

the only absolute you won't kill for is that 'God is love', therefore we (Christians) are there to love people and consequently the kind of world dominance or world evangelization of Christianity is very different from the dominance which is spoken of (by Muslims), who actually in the *Qur'an* are encouraged to use force for the glory of God as they would put it. So this is again where of course Christianity and Islam, *Qur'anic* Islam, clearly stand one against the other (an open charismatic leader).

Virtually all of the leaders felt that the *Qur'an* was susceptible to supporting violence and Palmer felt that “there is a strong case that needs answering that (Islam) has got a link to violence” (Palmer, All Souls, *Interview 39*). Some believed that whilst “there is terrorism it is probably a minority sector” among Muslims (Chow, CC, *Interview 45*). However, a BMC leader said, “from the little I know those guys that practice all those (violent) things they are probably closer to the real thing in the *Qur'an*” (Babatunde, WHCC, *Interview 49*). Only Warnke totally disagreed saying, “oh my goodness! No not all. It's definitely not a violent religion” (Warnke, Vineyard, *Interview 57*) although Brownell did concede that, just like Christians, Muslims probably have a hermeneutic to handle the violence in their text (Brownell, ELT, *Interview 40*).

Issues and events

The church leaders were then all asked to respond to some recent public events related to Islam:

A Common Word

Three of the leaders were aware of the *Common Word* initiative (§10.4.b) but had only discussed it with other leaders and had chosen not to speak to the whole church about it. Two of these were very suspicious of the Muslims' motives. Three other leaders were vaguely aware of it but the rest had not heard of it. A frequent comment highlighted scepticism over whether there could be any common ground with Islam and that the best outcome of any dialogue would be peaceful social relations rather than theological agreement. For instance, Oloyede said, "social enterprise I feel is a very good place to dialogue with Muslims but not doctrine" (Oloyede, GH, *Interview 56*).

The "mega-mosque"

Whilst most of the leaders accepted the right of Muslims to build mosques in this country, all of them were against the building of the large, "mega-mosque" in East London due to its size, location and *Tablighi Jama'at's* reputed connection to radicalism. Some had encouraged their members to sign petitions against it and a few knew Alan Craig. The biggest complaint though was over a lack of reciprocity (§11.1.d). Many of them pointed out that in many Muslim countries Christians would not be allowed to build any sort of church let alone one so large. They also commented on how unfairly KICC had been treated in comparison. KICC's church building was the subject of a London Authority compulsory purchase order to make way for the Olympic site. The church was apparently promised permission to erect a new building but have since not been granted permission to build at suitable locations (A. Craig, 2008).²¹⁰ This has only fuelled anger over plans for the proposed mega-mosque.

A public *adhan*

Opinion was more evenly split on whether Muslims should be allowed to make a public *adhan*. Half of the leaders felt that if it was in a Muslim majority area then it was difficult to oppose. The other half did oppose it on the grounds of it being an infliction on others although Palmer was unsure: "I'm uneasy but I'm battling to try and work out what consistent public policy reason I can

²¹⁰ For a statement from KICC see

<http://www.inspiremagazine.org.uk/news.aspx?action=view&id=2175>, (accessed 19 January 2011).

give for (my opposition)” (Palmer, All Souls, *Interview 51*).

Shari’a in Britain

Except for Warnke who made some positive remarks, all of the leaders were concerned about the comments made by Rowan Williams on *shari’a* in Britain (§10.3.e). They felt that he had not represented the views of *their* church and that it would be dangerous to allow more than one law in Britain. This leader’s view was typical:

it would be a problem in society as a whole because every group will then begin to demand that they have their particular bit of the country where their rules exist. And I think that while we are trying to be a non-discriminating society that we ought to have an openness which is maintained by one law throughout the whole of the land (an open charismatic leader).

Incitement to religious hatred bill

The church leaders were also unanimous in their opposition to legislating against religious hate speech. They all believed that this was an erosion of freedom of speech and felt that it would eventually be used to curb their own freedom to preach the Gospel. Many of their church members had signed petitions against the bill and KICC and WHCC had joined CCFON in a demonstration outside parliament.

The “war on terror”

Most of the leaders were mildly critical of the western response to Islamic terrorism and comments ranged from “badly handled” to “double standards” to “bloody awful”. However, all concluded that something needed to be done about terrorism and so supported some sort of military response, although Melluish worried that if it became “Christian fundamentalism fighting Islamic fundamentalism(then) no-one wins and we’re all caught in the middle somewhere” (Melluish, St Paul’s, *Interview 108*).

Israel-Palestine

The leaders did not appear unduly interested in the Israel-Palestine situation and did not feel that it affected their relations to Muslims, although a couple commented that they had people in their churches who were very pro-Israel. Most were against Christian Zionism but tried to avoid

mentioning the issue in their churches. One leader felt that it was maybe an issue of concern for older members in his church but that younger members were more aware of Palestinian rights.

The future of Islam in Britain

A few of the leaders felt that there would definitely not be an Islamic takeover of Britain. However, the majority of them admitted that it was a possibility although not in the near future. A spokesman for KICC said:

if we let it, anything can happen the Roman Empire fell, people didn't think it was going to fall, and it didn't fall necessarily by a war, but people just became very lax so I think there's always a possibility in any place for there to be a change in the religious demography (a spokesman for KICC, *Interview 46*).

However, there was not undue concern and none of them seemed to give much credence to Pawson's prediction of an *imminent* Islamic takeover. Admittedly Ademolake was anxious that the church was more African than indigenous in the UK today and suggested that Christianity was likely to "fizzle out" in the next two generations (Ademolake, RCGC, *Interview 84*), but others felt that as long as Christians assumed their responsibility then there would not be a problem:

I think that we have to work to ensure it doesn't (happen) and if we need to turn the temperature up, we need to turn the temperature up, and as Christians we need to be aware of that and I'm very prepared to be a spokesman for that sort of thing in this community (Melluish, St Paul's, *Interview 114*).

A couple of the leaders also referred to the doctrine of Christ's second coming as their ultimate assurance that whatever happened politically did not overly concern them.

The future of the Evangelical church in Britain

In summary the London church leaders did to some degree reflect the same spectrum of opinions about Islam as the elite of the EPS. The BMC leaders particularly tended to demonize Islam and see it in more essentialist terms. Some of the more conservative leaders also shared this view but expressed it rather more diplomatically, being reluctant to be dogmatic. In contrast, the open church leaders typically had a more positive response and pointed to the diversity of Islam. In both cases, however, their views were more moderate than those of the elite and there did not

seem to be a direct influence from the national sphere, except in a couple of cases where Jay Smith has been involved in training. Certainly none of the leaders were overly concerned about an Islamic conspiracy to imminently take political control.

In fact the majority of the leaders were remarkably confident about the future of the Evangelical church in Britain. Although some felt that “it’s going to get worse before it gets better” (Warnke, Vineyard, *Interview 105*), this was “not primarily from Muslims but partly from the secularists” (a conservative Anglican leader). This was not to be viewed negatively, in fact the result of these challenges would be “a slimmer and a fitter church than before, more willing to stand by certain Biblical precepts” (an open charismatic leader). For Evangelical church leaders in London at least the future looks bright.

11.4 INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE EVANGELICAL PUBLIC SPHERE

This optimism is clearly not shared by all the participants of the larger EPS. In this final section I consider the internal relationships within the EPS and highlight the evident tensions between those Evangelicals who generally see Islam as a threat and those who see it as an opportunity; between those who believe that the solution is for Muslims to change and those who believe that the West needs to change. The resulting rift within the EPS is one that appears to be increasing.

Chapman warned of this danger in 1989: “the issues we are dealing with are far too serious and far too complex for us to allow ourselves to be polarized into two camps” (1989, 29). In spite of this warning most of the participants recognize that such a shift has in fact occurred:

there is a polarization amongst Evangelicals about responses to Islam: should we be confrontational or should we be irenic? (Glaser, 2010b).

Such a plethora of positions on Islam has led to great confusion, and Christians are now deeply divided. Islam has in fact become an agent of division amongst Christians both liberals and Evangelicals (Sookhdeo, 2009a, 13).

Azumah describes this division in stark terms as “a struggle for the soul of the Christian faith” (2009a, 4).²¹¹

It is not difficult to draw the lines between the different camps. With a few exceptions it is clear and a matter of public record where people stand. Moucarry suggested that Chapman and Pawson mark the two ends of the spectrum (Moucarry, *Interview 77*); Knell contrasted Bell and Sookhdeo (Knell, *Interview 63*); and Musk located Riddell and Cotterell in the middle of the spectrum (Musk, *Interview 109*). Several of the more irenic participants expressed the opinion that it was the more polemical voice that had the most influence amongst the churches. The reverse might also be true and *Barnabas Fund* believe there has been “a sea change in relations between Islam and the non-Muslim world” resulting in “a new Evangelical engagement in the interfaith dialogue movement, replacing the older, liberal involvement” – an approach that is “helping the Islamization of the West” (Barnabas Fund, 2010b) . These alignments are reflected in the way that participants:

- quote one another either supportively or critically;²¹²
- recommend one another’s book at conferences;²¹³
- share platforms at different conferences;²¹⁴
- write endorsements for one another’s books.²¹⁵

Participants on both sides clearly feel that they have suffered and been wronged because of this polarization. For example, Bell recounts how an imam once asked him, “who are you leaving

²¹¹ A phrase borrowed from Cumming (2008).

²¹² Participants are clearly aware of these critiques. For instance Riddell said “Chapman has been quite critical of some of the things that Peter Cotterell and I have written” (Riddell, *Interview 53*) presumably referring to articles like Chapman (2007a) in which Chapman suggested that Riddell and Cotterell do not give enough importance to political issues compared to textual issues.

²¹³ For instance Knell was promoting Bell’s *Grace for Muslims at Spring Harvest 2008*.

²¹⁴ For instance Cox, Riddell, Sookhdeo, Solomon all spoke at a conference organized by *The Maranatha Community* entitled *Islam: its significance for the churches and the United Kingdom today* on 6 February 2007 at the Emmanuel Centre, London.

²¹⁵ For instance Cox has endorsed books by Sookhdeo, Orr-Ewing and Riddell. Solomon and Maqdisi dedicated *Modern Day Trojan Horse* to Cox, Sookhdeo and Wilders amongst others. Chapman has endorsed books by Musk and Goldsmith, and Sookhdeo has endorsed books by Solomon and Pawson. And, maybe demonstrating his middle position and the respect in which he is held as an academic, Riddell has endorsed books by both Sookhdeo and Moucarry and himself been endorsed by Nazir-Ali.

behind on your side in order to do what you're doing?" and he had to admit that he had "left quite a few Christian friends behind to become a peacemaker" and in the process had been accused of being "politically naive, theologically liberal, or both" (2006b, 54-5). Sookhdeo too refers to the opposition he perceives from other Christians. At *New Wine 2004* he claimed that he and *Barnabas Fund* had been banned from some churches, was censored by others and had been abandoned by British Christians (P. Sookhdeo, 2004b).

These tensions between the two sides have been particularly highlighted in various public exchanges since 2001 and, in drawing the data presentation to a close, a few examples will suffice to illustrate the positions and strength of feeling on both sides.

11.4.A MEDIA ARTICLES

Sookhdeo's article *The Myth of Moderate Islam* published in *The Spectator* (2005b) attracted some forthright public criticism from Chapman. In *An Open Letter to Patrick Sookhdeo* published on the *Fulcrum Forum* (2005b) Chapman tried to avert "the danger of positions becoming totally polarized" by listing seven points on which they both agreed but then went on to criticize Sookhdeo's article for:

- suggesting that there is no such thing as moderate Islam;
- ignoring certain Islamic hermeneutics of the *Qur'an*;
- downplaying the importance of political issues;
- and stoking fear by inflating demographic statistics.

In his turn Sookhdeo published a lengthy article highlighting *Recent Changes in Christian Approaches to Islam* which criticizes leading Evangelicals such as Chapman for "giving insufficient attention to the nature, history and goals of Islam" as well as "diluting basic Christian doctrines" (2010b, 11). Several times he refers to the "new Evangelical enthusiasm" for "interfaith dialogue and *accommodation* with Muslims" (ibid 19 emphasis added) and he is particularly concerned about the effects he believes this is having on theology (reviving the heresies of Marcionism and Arianism), Christian unity, evangelism and Christian minorities in Muslim countries. He rebukes Bell for "over-optimistic" interpretations of demographic trends (ibid 12) and accuses him of implying that Muhammad was indeed a prophet and that "Islam's arrival in the world is willed and

approved by God” (ibid 16). Glaser is criticized for imputing authority to the *Qur’an* and even Brother Andrew, normally widely admired by Evangelicals of all hues for his boldness and work with the suffering church, is censured for “borrowing terms from Liberation Theology” in sympathizing with the Palestinian people (ibid 13). Of course, Chapman too is specifically criticized for sympathizing with Muslim grievances, for suggesting that Christians have more in common with Muslims than with secularists and for his participation in the *Common Word* initiative.

11.4.B A COMMON WORD²¹⁶

This latter point highlights how the *Common Word* initiative (§10.4.b) has been a vivid, if not the most vivid, illustration of tensions in the EPS. *Barnabas Fund* saw it as part of a plan by Muslim governments to “woo Evangelical Christians whom they now (view) as an important political force in the West” (Barnabas Fund, 2010b).²¹⁷ Indeed several of the participants saw it as a deliberate ploy to deceive Christians, and Solomon and Al-Maqdisi bluntly suggested that the true message of the *Common Word* was “accept Islam or face the consequences” (2009a, 4). They along with *Barnabas Fund* (2007) identified it as an example of *taqiyya* (§10.4.b) and were highly critical of those Evangelicals who signed a positive response drafted by some of the faculty at the *University of Yale* (reproduced in Volf et al., 2010):

ironically, the Evangelical response (from Yale) seems more in tune with a liberal ecumenical and inclusive interfaith approach, which comes close to accepting Islam as a legitimate way to God, Muhammad as a prophet of God and the *Qur’an* as a revelation from God (Barnabas Fund, 2008).

Sookhdeo even accuses the *Yale* authors of “*dhimmi*” behaviour “seeking to appease the Muslims because they are afraid” (2009a, 90). Others too were concerned. Dye described the signatories as “more attracted to the prize of a delusional ‘peace’ than by their duty to confront error with truth” (2009, xv) and Craig was disappointed with some “very big Evangelical names” who signed the response (Craig, *Interview* 35). CCFON saw the *Common Word* as an act of Muslim aggression,

²¹⁶ For a more in-depth discussion of Evangelical responses to the *Common Word* initiative see my forthcoming article *Love: a Common Word between Evangelicals and Muslims?* in *Journal of Political Theology*.

²¹⁷ Note that this unattributed article in *Barnabas Aid*, March/April 2010 is a shorter (~3,500 words compared to ~14,000 words) version of Sookhdeo’s online article (2010) of the same title mentioned above. This particular phrase, however, is absent from the longer version.

insisting that “no common ground can be found at the centre of the two religions”, and they issued a statement saying:

(the Evangelical signatories) should consider withdrawing their signatures. This is not without cost, however. Revoking one’s signature to a peaceable and accepting response to *A Common Word* is a rejection of the invitation to convert to Islam. This is a rejection of the most peaceable offer of conversion in our generation. It is also a refusal to submit to Islam and it gives Muslims everywhere a *Qur’anic* ground to perpetrate *jihad* against those who do so. Those who are brave enough should count the cost (Christian Concern for Our Nation, 2008).

Whilst some rejected the *Common Word* outright others gave it a cautious, conditional “yes but” welcome (§11.1.a). McRoy advised that “we can be engaged with it whilst being cautious” (McRoy, *Interview 54*) and Riddell, whilst welcoming the letter and describing it as “good” and “important”, cautioned that it needed “careful exegesis” (Riddell, *Interview 31*). Some suggested that the Muslims needed to change their behaviour or offer some token of their sincerity before a dialogue could be entered into. For instance the *Open Letter* written by the *Maranatha Community* (2008) welcomed the *Common Word* but raised the issue of the Islamic treatment of apostates and requested that a Muslim *mufti* issue a *fatwa* clarifying the approach of Islam to other religions and outlawing the use of violence. They also suggested the formation of Christian-Muslim working groups to tackle various issues.

Others were more positive about the initiative. Musk expressed appreciation that unusually the Muslims had quoted from the Bible (which they normally take to have been corrupted) (Musk, *Interview 72*) and Moucarry was pleased they had accepted that Muslims and Christians worship the same God (despite their misgivings about the Trinity) (Moucarry, *Interview 85*). Sudworth said, “for me it can only be a positive move because it’s the beginnings of a dialogue” (Sudworth, *Interview 53*). Elsewhere he asks, “are we as Christians to be mean-spirited, cynical, arrogantly waiting for ‘them to get themselves in order’ before we engage in relationship” and suggests that the *Barnabas Fund* criticism of the *Common Word* is “more than a little outrageous” (2008c). Chapman also felt that “some of the Evangelical responses were extremely ungenerous” (Chapman, *Interview 58*) and believed that “it’s not an exaggeration to say that the *Common Word* has split Christians – and especially Evangelical Christians – down the middle” (2008). He robustly defended his decision to sign the *Yale* response and said:

I don't want to be in the position of assuming that Muslims can never change their ideas or make any new approaches to Christians and Christianity I suggest, therefore, that the best way to test the genuineness of this remarkable invitation is to accept it with enthusiasm, and then, having done our homework thoroughly, start (or continue) the dialogue face to face (asking) all the hard questions we want (Chapman, 2008).

11.4.C AN EVANGELICAL "SPAT"

One final illustration will serve to demonstrate the fault lines within the EPS. In 2009 a critical review of Sookhdeo's *Global Jihad* (2007a) was posted by an Evangelical author on the Evangelical *Fulcrum Forum* (White, 2009a).²¹⁸ A robust response was published on the same website on behalf of *Barnabas Fund* (Zeidan and Hamid, 2009) which the reviewer then replied to (White, 2009b).²¹⁹ However, the exchange became particularly sharp when the original review was picked up and referenced approvingly by a Muslim blogger.²²⁰ This led to the condemnation of the review by an anonymous "white missionary" writing on an American Evangelical website.²²¹ He accused White of deliberately drawing the blogger's attention to the review and claimed that it was in fact part of a wider conspiracy to discredit Sookhdeo which had been planned at a secret meeting in 2008 attended by amongst others Bell, Chapman and Knell. Sudworth too was implicated because he recommended the review and placed a link to it on his blog.²²² At this point *Barnabas Fund* emailed their supporters to ask them to pray for their staff because of "what appears to be an orchestrated, multi-pronged attack" on Sookhdeo (Barnabas Fund, 2009). Solomon and the *Maranatha Community* were also named as "targets" that were in danger.

The whole affair attracted wider publicity when Melanie Phillips published an article in *The Spectator* referring to the incident and claiming that there was a "new axis" in Britain between radical Muslims and some Evangelical Christians who were trying to discredit other Evangelicals

²¹⁸ For a Muslim review of the book see Bajwa (2009). Bajwa (2009) Sookhdeo's Paranoia of 'Global Jihad', http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_SookhdeoParanoia accessed 11 March 2009

²¹⁹ He also commented on his own website and highlighted that the response which *Barnabas Fund* posted on the *Fulcrum Forum* differed in content to the article that was emailed to its supporters. www.benwhite.org.uk/blog/?p=628, (accessed 22 December 2010).

²²⁰ *Indigo Jo*, 'Review of Rotten Book by the Sookhdevil', http://www.blogistan.co.uk/blog/mt.php/2009/01/31/review_of_rotten_book_by_the_s#comment-667057 (accessed 20 February 2009).

²²¹ 'Talk of the Sookhdevil: British Evangelical Author Attacked for Exposing Militant Islam', www.virtueonline.org/portal/modules/news/article.php?storyid=9941&com_id=104215&com_rootid=104146&com_mode=thread&#comment104215 (accessed 18 February 2009).

²²² www.distinctlywelcoming.com/barnabas-fund (accessed 22 December 2010).

(M. Phillips, 2009, see also Tooley, 2009). She deplored the “targeting of Sookhdeo” and in speculating on the reason for such an alliance suggested that:

the answer lies in a profound split amongst Evangelicals: between Christian Zionists who love Israel and want to defend the church against the predations of radical Islam, and those who want Israel to be destroyed and radical Islam appeased (M. Phillips, 2009).²²³

The rift in the Evangelical community is clear for all to see and the unseemly “spat” has still not been resolved.

11.5 CONCLUSION

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the incident it neatly illustrated how the EPS interacts with the British – and indeed international – media and the unavoidable interconnectedness of today’s reticulate public sphere. This chapter has shown that the EPS is necessarily in relationship with not just other Christians but also with Muslims and the mainstream media. Everything that is published or said in public is accessible to all. The different micro-public spheres will inevitably collide. The following analysis, amongst other things, considers the possible outcomes of such collisions.

²²³ It should be noted that Phillips has written on a similar topic before (Phillips, 2002) when some of the same Evangelicals were criticised for apparent anti-Semitism.

PART IV – BRITISH EVANGELICALS AND MUSLIMS: AN ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 12 THE EVANGELICAL PUBLIC SPHERE

I now focus on an analysis of the empirical material presented in the light of the theoretical perspectives discussed in Part I. In particular I concentrate on answering the questions outlined in the introduction (§1.4):

1. What is the nature of the Evangelical public sphere which has formed around the subject of Islam and Muslims in Britain and how is it mediated within British churches?
2. What are the patterns of responses to Islam and Muslims exhibited within this public sphere?
3. How will these responses affect community relationships amongst Evangelicals, Muslims and government?
4. What are the likely trajectories of British Evangelicalism in the light of the Muslim presence?

The following sections address these questions one by one bringing together the data from Part III and the theory from Part I.

12.1 THE EVANGELICAL MICRO-PUBLIC SPHERE

One of the main contentions of this thesis is that the concept of a religious micro-public sphere is a useful analytical framework for studying religious discourse. My working definition (§2.5) has been that micro-public spheres are:

public discursive spaces of variable size in which individuals and groups coalesce around matters of mutual interest or concern to form an opinion through rational debate, and which together are subordinate nodes of a larger network of public spheres notionally making up the meso-public sphere in a particular society or nation.

In the following I explore how this definition corresponds to the current debate about Islam amongst Evangelical Christians and show how the data illuminate this theory. I also discuss the question of transnational influence and evaluate the EPS's influence within the British churches and the wider public. The section concludes with a short assessment of the usefulness of this approach for the sociology of religion.

12.1.A EVIDENT EXISTENCE

The earlier discussion (§2) of the work of Hauser (1999) and Warner (2005) highlighted three features of such spheres: issue, text and media, and participants.

Firstly, an *issue* of mutual concern to a group of citizens generates debate and receives publicity due to particular events (Hauser, 1999, 61). It should be clear by now that this is so in this case. All the participants are interested in or concerned by the increasing presence of Muslims and Islam in Britain which is challenging the way that Evangelicals think about both faith and society.

There is no shortage of general discussion but particular events act as triggers: they precipitate argument; provoke feeling; demand a response; and draw the sphere to the attention of other publics. So for example, the *Common Word* initiative (§10.4.b), the Archbishop's lecture on English law (§10.3.e) and a critical book review (§11.4.c) all stimulated particularly intense debate. This has spilled out from the Evangelical community and caused comment amongst Muslims and the mainstream media (§11.4.c). Clearly the EPS is active in pursuing its cause (or causes) and is seeking to influence its own constituency, as well as more general public opinion (Hauser, 1999, 77).

The second feature illustrated by the data is the great diversity of *media* deployed in the dissemination of the *texts*. Warner sees a public as "the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse" consisting of "the concatenation of texts through time" (2005, 90). The

empirical material certainly bears witness to such a concatenation utilizing virtually every type of media from the more than 40 formally published books, through chapters, articles, newsletters and oral texts to internet videos, blogs, forums and email circulation lists.

The majority of this discourse is rational and includes analyses of not just theological and religious concerns (§10.3) but of historical, social and political issues as well (§11.3). The authors are clearly aware of and critique the material generated by other publics, including the Muslim and secular spheres. At the same time, much of the discourse is highly reflexive and includes critique of parallel texts generated internally within the sphere. This entails a healthy level of self-criticism, although this is sometimes absent in the writing of those who adhere to a more Manichean view of the world.

The final element of a public sphere is its *participants*. In this case the “primary membership” (Hauser, 1999, 77), or what I have called the “national elite”, is plainly discernible. Whilst there is an identifiable core, however, the debate clearly remains “permeable” to strangers, which is one of Hauser’s key criteria for a public sphere (ibid). This is particularly true for Christians of other churchmanship but is also true for those outside the Christian community as attested to by internet responses to videos and debates, reviews of Christian books written by Muslims and indeed public debate and dialogue between Evangelicals and Muslims, both formal and informal (§11.1.a).

Notwithstanding the fact that the key participants all self-identify as Evangelicals, it is clear that there is something of a blurred boundary between an *Evangelical* public sphere as such and a wider, more inclusive *Christian* public sphere. This has meant that judgements have been made as to who is or is not an active participant of this sphere (§8.2.a). The scope of the public is all those who would consider themselves to be *Evangelical* Christians. This in itself limits the extent of the sphere as many Christians would want to distance themselves from that label. Yet amongst Evangelical Christians it is only those who have an interest in this particular issue who choose to participate and amongst these there will always be a minority whose knowledge, occupation or vocation gives them particular motivation or expertise. These form an elite which is somewhat reminiscent of Habermas’ bourgeois coffee shop circles. That said, the elite is not a static group and is never convened in its entirety. It is self-organizing and is not formally constituted, nor is it

answerable to any external body. As Warner suggests, it only “exists by virtue of being addressed” (2005, 67). Each individual participates as an autonomous actor but inevitably brings an agenda which may well be influenced by organizational allegiances or vocation. Different participants meet at conferences, speaking engagements and so on but there is no external requirement to do so. Indeed some never meet, being separated by geography, circumstance or ideology.

12.1.B TRANSNATIONAL INFLUENCE

The lack of obligation to meet, coupled with modern communications, means that the EPS is open to transnational influence and participation (§2.4.c). Whilst there may be a centre of gravity for British participants in the UK, it is impossible to isolate the British Evangelical sphere from the significant contributions made to the debate by Evangelicals worldwide. Amongst those participants resident in Britain some, such as Azumah and Riddell, have either recently arrived from or returned to their home countries. There are also those who occasionally attend conferences or write papers that are read in Britain, such as the widely circulated analyses of the *Common Word* written by the Australian Mark Durie (2008a, 2008b). In particular there is always an influence from the United States within British Evangelicalism (Guest, forthcoming). This was certainly the case during the *Common Word* debate in which the controversial response written by Evangelical scholars at Yale University (reproduced in Volf et al., 2010) was signed by some British Evangelicals (§11.4.b).

The influence of the BMCs with their African roots should also not be underestimated. Jenkins has written about the rise in importance of the church in the global south (2007b) and has suggested that it might yet have a significant impact on the church in Europe (Jenkins, 2007a). Certainly the concept of reverse mission was prevalent amongst the black leaders interviewed, who all had strong connections with churches in Africa (§5.4). They believed that black Christians would play a role in restoring Christianity in Britain.

This transnational influence, however, does not diminish the validity of talking about a “*British Evangelical public sphere*”. The ongoing relationships, the shared public space – particularly within the churches – and the issues of common concern in Britain all create cohesion amongst the participants. These men and women are obliged to interact and argue their case with one another if they want to maintain influence and credibility.

12.1.c INFLUENCE IN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

Such interaction is particularly necessary if the EPS is to influence Evangelical Christians in the UK. Yet one of the most surprising outcomes of this research is that, even though some of those interviewed felt that the church in Britain was not well-equipped to relate to Muslims, the elite of this sphere quite clearly have relatively little influence on the 14 church leaders interviewed. Given that these leaders represent a large number of Evangelical churchgoers in inner London (§8.2.b), this must be seen as a serious failure to achieve one of the sphere's major objectives.

Of the key participants Sookhdeo's was the name most recognized by the church leaders. Contrary to expectations, however, he had not been invited to speak at any of the churches in question and *Barnabas Fund* did not receive support from these churches, although individuals in the congregations were believed to be supporters. This was surprising as amongst several of the other participants it was widely felt that Sookhdeo was the most influential voice in the British churches (§11.4) (see also Igrave, 2008, 8). This is clearly not so amongst large Evangelical churches in the London area at least.

Of the other names Pawson and Cox were well known but not due to their work on Islam. Amongst other specialists on Islam it was Chapman, Goldsmith and Nazir-Ali who were the most widely cited. This, however, did not translate into invitations to speak at the churches or any sustained effort to promote their books. Few recalled recommending books at all and not many books on Islam were available in church bookshops or bookstalls. This raises the question of whether books, a favoured tool of Evangelical teachers, are an effective medium to communicate with the churches. Whilst some of the leaders clearly read widely, they had by and large chosen not to read on Islam. Whether the church members read books on Islam, or indeed whether they read much at all, is a question for further research.

The most successful participant in terms of invitations to speak and conduct seminars in London churches was Jay Smith who trains Christians to debate with Muslims. Along with his work in the universities, he had been invited to four of the churches studied and has also spoken at *Kensington Temple*. He is amongst those who make the most innovative use of alternative media. Whilst he

has not written a full book he has a lot of material on the internet and supplements his Sunday debates at *Speaker's Corner* with video material (§11.1.a).

None of the churches use any of the more traditional course material available about Islam. Three of the churches arrange special training courses about Islam and only one regularly mentions Islam from the pulpit. Otherwise, despite many saying that they felt the church should have a strong public voice, they were reluctant to be involved in anything that they deemed political, preferring to leave this to individuals or specialist lobby groups such as CCFON (§11.3.c).

In general the church leaders saw Islam as just one issue amongst many that they have to deal with. None of them believe that an Islamic takeover of Britain is imminent, suggesting that the “warners” (§11.3.a) are not very successful in convincing the churches of their fears. On the other hand, neither were these leaders engaged in dialogue with Muslims and by and large had not heard of the *Common Word* initiative. It would seem that they are either unconvinced that Islam poses any sort of challenge for the church in Britain or are simply too busy to be able to do anything to equip their congregations. Rather, the most common view amongst the church leaders was that the presence of Muslims is an opportunity for evangelism amongst people whom it would be difficult to reach in their home country. The extent of their success in this is unknown as it was too sensitive to ask questions about Muslim converts, although the BMC leaders mentioned that many African Christians are from a Muslim background.

In short, the EPS is what Fraser (1992) would call a “weak” public sphere which has no authority or decision making power (§2.4.a). It has less influence in the London churches studied than might have been expected despite some of the church leaders admitting that their members were not well-equipped to think about Islam and were mainly influenced by the mass media (§11.3.b). Whilst it is not possible to conclusively say who or what is influencing the average Evangelical church member without further research (§13.3), these findings should certainly give pause for thought for those whose aim is to influence the Evangelical grassroots.

12.1.D LACK OF INFLUENCE WITHIN THE WIDER PUBLIC SPHERE

The EPS fares no better in the meso-public sphere than it does in the churches. Relatively few of the participants have access to the mainstream media with the exception of Nazir-Ali, Cox and

Carey largely because of their political and institutional church roles, and Sookhdeo, who has had several articles published in *The Spectator* and other newspapers. These figures are also occasionally quoted by journalists but other participants are rarely mentioned (§11.2.c).

Admittedly Craig has been more successful through his role in local politics and Bell, Sookhdeo and Solomon have all been consulted by various public bodies (§11.2.b). In addition Edwards was invited to attend meetings with the government and other faith groups in his then role as general secretary of the EA. Otherwise policy makers have shown little interest in or knowledge of either the expertise of some of these figures or the debate that is taking place among Evangelicals with regard to Islam.

12.1.E MICRO-PUBLIC SPHERES AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

In concluding this discussion I want to consider the extent to which the notion of a religious public sphere is a useful tool for the sociology of religion. How does it aid the study of faith communities and the discourse within them? To what extent might this construct be a useful tool for the faith communities themselves and indeed for others wishing to understand and engage with them?

The concept of the public sphere takes seriously the socio-political dimensions of faith communities. It foregrounds the issues and concerns of religious actors over their more static theological beliefs and ecclesial practices, highlighting their role as citizens within a democratic society. The discursive emphasis teases out their diverse attitudes, opinions and reactions rather than assuming a monolithic response stereotyped by historical assumption. Spectrums and polarizations come clearly into focus and the evanescence of opinion is captured and taken into account. This emphasis is critical at a time when not just social scientists but also state and social welfare bodies need to listen to what faith communities are saying and is very much in line with the new openness towards faith-based discourse demonstrated by Habermas himself (§3.3.a). Society may discover a positive benefit by engaging with such discourse and it would expose religious discourse to public debate and ensure that it is not privileged with an immunity from rational scrutiny which would allow extreme ideas to develop in isolation (Trigg, 2007) (§3.3.b).

Secondly, the idea of multiple publics creates space for minority voices to be heard as distinct from other more powerful voices in the communities of which they are part. For instance,

Evangelicals often feel that their concerns and opinions are not adequately represented by the discourse of a larger established church, and fear that their distinctive understanding of the Christian message is not heard in the public arena. Dissenting voices of all kinds are lost if the media focus on one particular constituency within a faith community. Moderate Muslims, for example, are heard less often than their more radical counterparts. Recognition of multiple discursive public spheres might create a more nuanced picture – one that allows for intra-public discontinuities and polarities.

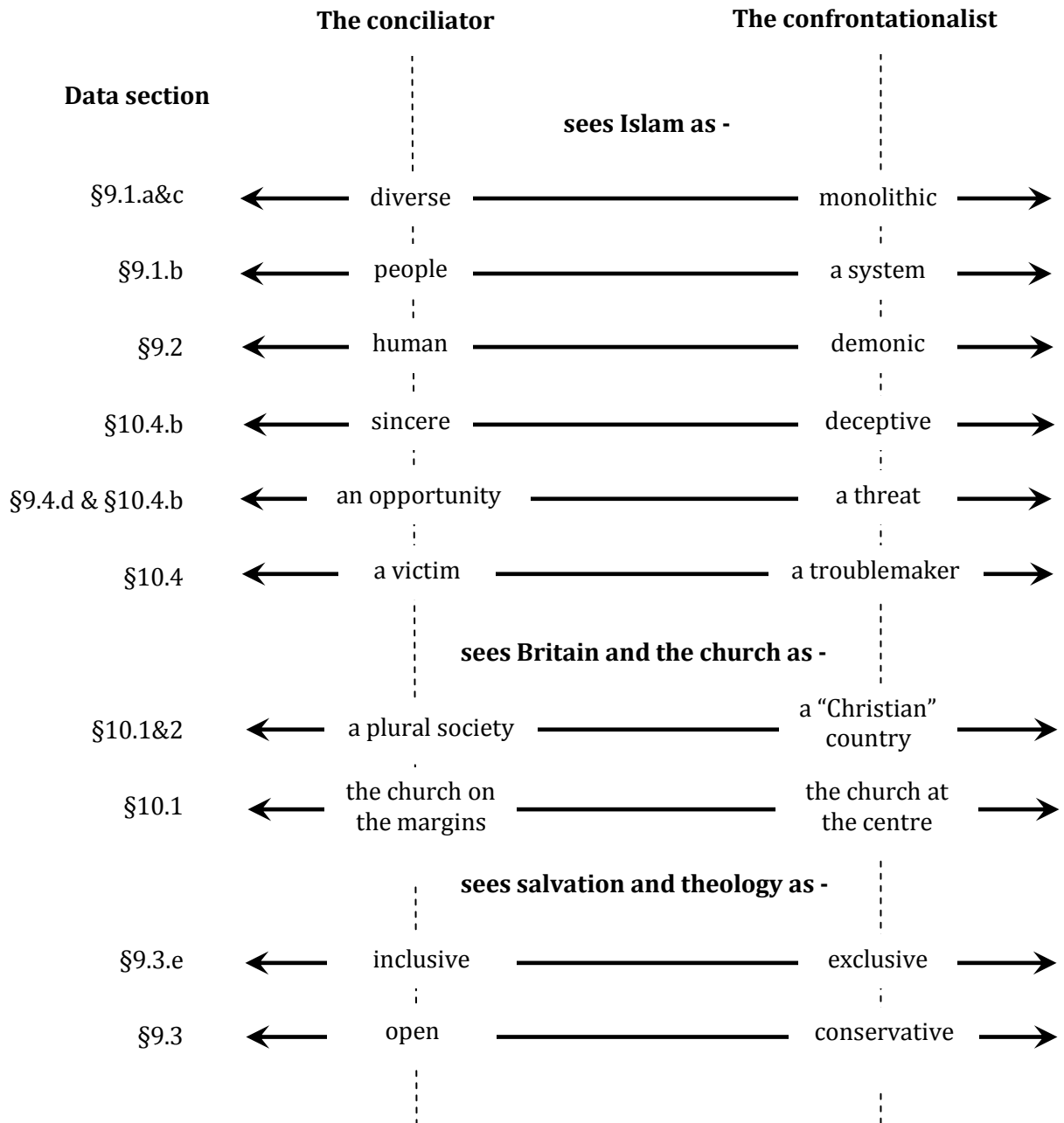
The hope of all counter-public elites is that through the publicity given to their opinions and arguments they will gain or retain an influence over the individuals and groups within their own communities and even beyond. The micro-public sphere concept facilitates an assessment of their effectiveness in this endeavour. Religiously informed debates are not simply academic exercises but have serious consequences for community relations (§12.3). Whilst the mass media, as has been mentioned, is an ever present and at times overwhelming influence, other religious actors clearly wield great influence. The extent to which this benefits the community at large depends on the quality and nature of the debate within the religious micro-public spheres.

Finally, this concept provides a model for the interaction of different groups, and assesses the nature of their response to one another. When one faith community accesses and engages with the texts of another then public spheres are not only intersecting but are generating potential for wider opinion forming. The notion of multiple micro-public spheres offers a useful analytical tool for examining this type of interaction and for understanding the place of religious counter-publics in a modern democracy.

12.2 RESPONSES TO ISLAM WITHIN THE EVANGELICAL PUBLIC SPHERE

Turning to consider the Evangelical discourse on Islam, the following section marks out the responses apparent in the data and considers the variables that might influence these responses. It then proposes an adaptation of Bennett's (2008) typology of responses and compares it with that of Lochhead (1988).

Figure 12.1 – Themes and types of responses



12.2.A MAPPING THE RESPONSES BY THEMES

Part III clearly sets out the different Evangelical responses and attitudes towards Islam in Britain today. To make the arguments more explicit Figure 12.1 presents a number of the themes running through the data and links them to the earlier sections of Part III. Each theme constitutes a spectrum and so participants do not necessarily gather at the extremes. In many cases they occupy a range of intermediate positions.

Some of the themes correspond closely to the “distinctions” presented in the *Runnymede Trust* report on Islamophobia (1997) (§6.4.c). This does not imply, however, that participants are necessarily Islamophobic and a later discussion addresses this issue in more detail (§12.3.b). Nor should it suggest that there are only two discrete, mutually exclusive positions that Evangelicals can hold, equating to the Runnymede Trust’s “open” and “closed” views or Bennett’s “confrontational” and “conciliatory” (Bennett, 2008). Indeed it is clear from the data that, whilst there is currently a high degree of polarization, some participants find themselves either on middle ground or even in “unexpected” places.

The first set of themes in Figure 12.1 focuses on how the participants view Islam and are thus drawn mainly from Chapter 9 which considered how Evangelicals understand Islam. They include the Evangelical assessment of the danger that Muslims pose to western societies. The second set of themes draws on Chapter 10 and focuses on how participants in the EPS view Britain and the role of the church within it. Clearly for some there is nostalgia for a lost “Christian Britain” and an ideological assumption of an established church at the centre of society. For others these things should never have existed as they did and are in fact to be resisted. The third set of themes again draws from Chapter 9 and focuses on the participants’ approach to Christian theology and contrasts the more conservative views with the more open. These reflect Bebbington’s assessment of the increasing polarization within British Evangelicalism between those who are concerned to uphold doctrine and those who prioritize cultural relevance (§5.3). The data suggests that the former group is more likely to take a confrontational approach to Islam and the latter group a conciliatory approach.

This parallels Hoover’s observation in the American context (§7.2.a) of a divide between what he calls “the centre right and the hard right” of the Evangelical movement (2004, 16). The difference

in Britain is that the conciliators are probably to the left of those in the United States, although it should be noted that the interviewees were not explicitly asked about their political views.

Whilst these spectra broadly fit the current polarization of the EPS they do not necessarily accurately predict where each of the participants stands on every issue. For instance, whilst the data has suggested that conservative Evangelicals are by and large more positive about the need for a “war on terror”, McRoy, who describes himself as conservative, is adamantly opposed to it. Jay Smith is from a Mennonite peace church background that rejects confrontation and yet he is polemical in his approach. So clearly each participant must be considered as an individual and the spectra should not be used to stereotype. That said they do provide a general portrait of two types of responses which I initially equate to Bennett’s categories (2008) (§4.3): confrontationalist and conciliator.

12.2.B FACTORS AFFECTING EVANGELICAL RESPONSES

Before considering these types in more depth, it should be remembered that the responses of the participants inevitably reflect their age, gender, social class, education, ethnic and cultural background, life experience and relationships with Muslims (see Appendix A). Whilst the dominant profile of the EPS is a white, middle class male over 50 years old, there is a significant presence of women and non-white ethnic backgrounds. Sudworth, Andrew Smith and the Orr-Ewings are all of a younger generation and seem particularly comfortable in a multicultural context. The women, who are widely respected by the men, are not unsurprisingly especially concerned about the perceived treatment of women in Islam.

The majority of the participants are university educated and some hold, or are working towards, doctorates in related topics. Those who take a confrontational approach, however, are less likely to have degrees related to Islam from western universities than those who are more conciliatory. This is by no means always true, and in particular Sookhdeo holds a doctorate from the *School of Oriental and African Studies* and Jay Smith is working towards a doctorate at the *London School of Theology*.

Although the majority of the participants are British Caucasians, eight of them are from non-white ethnic backgrounds and a different eight are not British by birth. Most significantly some have a

Muslim background. Pakistani Nazir-Ali was brought up in a family with both Christians and Muslims but chose to be a Christian. Three others - Azumah, Sookhdeo and Solomon - are converts to Christianity from Islam. Clearly these backgrounds along with the life experience of each participant profoundly influence attitudes towards Islam. Importantly those who are from a Muslim background and who report suffering to different degrees at the hands of their former co-religionists (Solomon and Sookhdeo) tend to a more negative response. This is similar to the experience in the American context where it is converts who provide “the inflammatory characterizations of Islam” (Kidd, 2009, 147) (§7.2). That said, Azumah is more irenic and Nazir-Ali is carefully nuanced in his approach. So whilst a Muslim background must be a significant aspect it is by no means the sole factor.

Many of the participants have spent long periods in the Muslim world. By and large these Evangelicals are more likely to be conciliatory than those who have spent little or no time living amongst Muslims. It could also be the case that it depends on where the participant has lived. Those who have lived in the Arab Middle East (Bell, Chapman, Moucarry and Musk) appear to have a more open view of Islam than those whose main contact has been with South Asian Islam, including Asian Islam in Britain (Jay Smith and Sookhdeo).

Finally, those Evangelicals who reported strong relationships with Muslims, either in the past or present, are more likely to have a sympathetic view of Islam. From the material in the public domain, confrontationalists on the whole do not appear to have close relationships with Muslims and indeed some may have suffered at their hands.²²⁴ Significantly these last two points both corroborate Zebiri’s observation that relationships with Muslims have “a philosophical and epistemological impact” on approaches to Islam (1997, 224) (§7.2.b).

12.2.C TYPES OF RESPONSES

Bearing in mind the earlier discussion of modes of interaction (§4.3), I suggest that the typology proposed by Bennett does indeed reflect the responses to Islam of British Evangelicals, provided that they are considered as the polar extremes of a spectrum. However, I also propose that these poles be modified with reference to how the views are held and enacted. In all cases it must be

²²⁴ Note that details of these relationships are lacking as I was unable to obtain interviews with all of these participants.

emphasized that these are ideal types and should not be allowed to obscure the variety and nuance that exists. Neither should they be taken to describe any particular Evangelical although some are found to fit the description more closely than others.



The following paints a broad-brush, general description of the two types:

Firstly, the *confrontationalists*:

These Evangelicals are “at war” with Islam, which they see as a threat not just to the Christian faith but to the freedom of western civilization. In their writing and speaking they focus on Islam as an ideological system and in the Orientalist tradition identify an essential essence which is “true Islam”, even if some Muslims fail to acknowledge it as such. They rely on their own reading of Islamic texts and do not draw on other theological or sociological resources, Christian or otherwise, their goal being to undermine Islam through polemical debate. Typically they do not have ongoing relationships with Muslims although they themselves may be converts from a Muslim background. Confrontationalists are concerned that there is a conspiracy amongst a large number of not just radical but even moderate Muslims to overthrow western governments, and that Muslims routinely use deceit sanctioned by *taqiyya* to achieve these ends. This, however, is a spiritual battle, as Islam is a tool of Satan and so is in opposition to the truth that resides in Christianity. Britain has been a Christian country in the past and should be so again today, but secular pluralism is destroying it and the achievements of the British Empire have been diminished by post-colonial guilt. This has left the church in a parlous state and there is a real danger of it capitulating to Islam, encouraged by liberal Christians – including some Evangelicals who compromise and dialogue with Muslims. The only solution is for Islam to change, whether through internal reformation, Christian mission or the coercion of western democratic states. Until then the battle rages and the church must be warned and put on its guard.

Secondly, the *conciliators*:

These Evangelicals focus on Muslims as people and are interested in “lived Islam”. They have a non-essentialist view of Islam and tend to talk of varieties of Islam. For them Islam is not a threat, although certainly there is a very small minority of atypical Muslims who are dangerous extremists. Conversely the presence of Islam in Britain is an opportunity not only for Christian mission but also for reversing the tide of secularism in the West. Whilst these Evangelicals ideally wish for Muslims to become Christians, they are also keen to work together with them as allies on issues of social justice and the common good. Typically they have had Muslim friends in the past, although they often regret that they are now too busy or disconnected to maintain friendships with Muslims outside of formal dialogue. They are highly educated and have specialized in a field related to Islam. They do not see Britain as a Christian country and frequently question whether such a concept is either possible or desirable. Multicultural pluralism is inevitable and so peaceful coexistence is a goal worth pursuing through dialogue, albeit a robust dialogue that does not shy away from addressing difficult issues. This may include engaging in apologetics to defend theological truths and evangelism remains a primary concern, although these Evangelicals are inclusivists and tend to foreground issues of justice and peacemaking. After all Christians and Muslims have to live together whether or not they convert one another, and confrontationalists are making this more difficult.

As made clear above, these two ideal types do not necessarily exist in their pure forms. Some participants – on both sides - are ideologically driven in their approach and discern essential, universal principles at work. They find it difficult to engage with those of a different opinion and when they do interact it tends to polarize their positions. Others are rather more pragmatic and take a moderate stance allowing for ambiguity and complexity. They are more likely to look for practical solutions and are quicker to see the good in the Other and the Other’s point of view. They are characterized by a “yes but” approach which engages in dialogue but expects tokens of goodwill and practical progress. They are willing to make concessions for the sake of an imperfect peace.

These tendencies lead me to propose two terms to modify the ideal types: “dogmatic” and “pragmatic”. Whilst there are no fixed boundaries, four possible combinations of Evangelical response to Islam result (Figure 12.2):

Figure 12.2 – A typology of Evangelical responses to Islam

		Response to Muslims	
		Confrontation	Conciliation
Manner of response	Dogmatic	Dogmatic confrontationalist	Dogmatic conciliator
	Pragmatic	Pragmatic confrontationalist	Pragmatic conciliator

I do not intend to place any of the participants in these categories, although some obviously tend more than others to the dogmatic positions – especially on the confrontational side. Such labeling would, however, be invidious. It would also be unfair as they probably take up different stances and feel more strongly about some issues than others. It is also more than likely that the participants are in a state of flux and that their positions change over time. This is not a longitudinal study and data have only been collected over a short period from 2001 to 2010. For instance, I have not attempted to answer the question of whether attitudes changed as a result of 9/11. If a before and after comparison were made, however, it might well show that some participants have become more polemical and more pragmatic or less pragmatic since that date. A few examples will suffice to illustrate the point and will be mentioned later as topics for possible future research (§13.3).

I have already noted that Sookhdeo was more welcoming of Asian migrants in Britain in his earlier writing (§7.3 footnote) than in the writing reviewed in this thesis. He was more positive about Muslims, suggesting that “the Muslim’s ethic is displayed in the character and life of Jesus”, and was critical of polemics as “we should not be negative in our approach, demolishing the other person’s religion” (Sookhdeo, 1977, 5, 6). He went on to declare that “our attitudes to the immigrant are very important. If they betray a hint of coolness, of prejudice, of superiority or

patronage, then our work is nullified” (ibid 58). Clearly a shift has taken place and it would be interesting to discover what has prompted this change.

A *Church Times* article suggests that Nazir-Ali too has experienced a “transformation” in a similar period (A. Brown, 2006), although such a change may be more in the public’s perception than in his actual approach. His early books (1983, 1987) contained a strong emphasis on Christian-Muslim dialogue and he is by no means opposed to this now. However, since certain comments in the press (Nazir-Ali, 2008d, Maher, 2008) he has been seen as taking a harder line against Islam. Again more in-depth inquiry would be needed to ascertain whether any change has indeed taken place and what has motivated it.

Finally, it should be noted that both Musk (1992, and 2003) and Chapman (1995, and 2007b) brought out significantly updated editions of earlier books following 9/11. Both included new material on political Islam and Islamic terrorism in direct response to global events. Both also bore altered titles. As noted (§9.4.a) the new title for Musk’s book was *Holy War* and Chapman’s subtitle was subtly changed from “responding to the challenge” to “responding to the challenges of Islam”, in recognition of the diversity of contemporary Islam.

12.2.D COMPARISONS WITH OTHER TYPOLOGIES

The types and modifiers I propose are similar in some respects to those suggested by Lochhead (1988) (§4.3) but also have significant differences. Whilst both attempt to move away from binary extremes, the proposed typology is specifically constructed to portray the Evangelical community whereas Lochhead’s is a rather more general classification.

Obviously Lochhead’s *isolation* category is not applicable to the participants in the EPS as they are all by definition engaged with Islam and Muslims and want to encourage others to do likewise. His second category, *hostility*, on the other hand corresponds very closely with the confrontationalist position. For Lochhead this is when the Other is seen as a threat, a deceiver and an agent of war (1988, 13) which obviously describes the picture that some participants paint of Muslims. The term “confrontational”, however, is not necessarily negative and is therefore less judgemental than the term “hostility”. This has the benefit of assuaging concerns about physical violence. Admittedly some of these Evangelicals would support state violence in order to counter a military

threat (and indeed see the “war on terror” to be such a legitimate use of force) but none of them would countenance the use of violence by private citizens – although Green’s comments about the possibility of future civil unrest should be noted (§10.4.c).

Lochhead’s third category, however, is more problematic and cannot be directly equated with the pragmatic label. *Competition* is axiomatic to Evangelicalism. It is part and parcel of the so-called Great Commission to “make disciples of all peoples” (Matthew 28.19). Lochhead admits as much when he says that “the competitive attitude toward other religious communities underlies almost all popular treatment of the subject by conservative Christian Evangelicals” (ibid 20). But then he goes on to add the words “that are not explicitly hostile”. It seems to me, however, that hostility is still a form of competition. The only difference that Lochhead can offer is that, whilst they both focus on the differences, the “competitors” acknowledge the legitimacy of the Other being “in the same business”. The pragmatic modifier, on the other hand, captures the realism of those who recognize that, despite their competitive orientation, fairness is incumbent upon all. These participants seek to deal equally with people on all sides be they Christians or Muslims.

Lochhead’s final type is *partnership*. Again whilst there are similarities, there are many differences and the conciliators may stop well short of what Lochhead had in mind. They do talk more about similarities between Christianity and Islam than do the confrontationalists but they always retain the element of competition or else they would cease to be Evangelical. They ultimately cannot prioritize similarities at the expense of what they hold to be truth and would certainly not subscribe to “the essential unity of all religions” (Lochhead, 1988, 23). Notwithstanding this, there is a desire to work together, which could be described as partnership (see §12.3 for a discussion of bridging capital), and there is a new engagement in dialogue, which Lochhead believes to be imperative. Conciliator remains a better description though as it embraces the problematic history of the relationship, recognizes that there needs to be give and take on both sides and anticipates that it will be an ongoing process, not least because competition is set to continue.

It is also worth reflecting on Smith’s (2002) findings amongst American Evangelicals (§4.3.d). His four categories of responses to cultural pluralism do correspond to some extent to the typology presented here. Those in *opposition* to pluralism, for instance, would equate closely to dogmatic confrontationalists. However, none in this study could really be said to be *ambivalent*. The

participants were rather characterized by having strong opinions, despite the occasional admission of uncertainty. Of the other two categories *realistic acceptance* would maybe equate with pragmatic conciliation and *enthusiastic tolerance* with dogmatic conciliation. However, whilst Smith found this last group to include the large majority of American Evangelicals in his study, it is not at all clear that dogmatic conciliators would form the largest group within the EPS or amongst the church leaders, unless it were an enthusiasm for the evangelistic opportunities that Muslims present.

Thus this adaption of Bennett's typology can be seen to reflect other typologies – both general and context-specific. However, the typology presented here is particularly tuned to the British Evangelical context and could therefore prove useful for future work.

12.3 COMMUNITY RELATIONS: EVANGELICALS, MUSLIMS AND GOVERNMENT

Given these types and the ongoing competition implicit in the Evangelical-Muslim relationship what are the implications for community cohesion and relationships? The following section looks at the degree to which the two communities are in competition with one another and with wider society. It also raises the question of whether Evangelicals are Islamophobic – and for that matter whether Muslims are “Christophobic” (Centre for Islamic Studies, 1999).²²⁵ The section closes with a discussion of the social capital that Evangelicals contribute to social cohesion.

12.3.A UNENDING COMPETITION

It is not only Evangelicals that see themselves as being in competition. Many Muslims feel themselves to be in competition with the West and are in some cases no less missionary-minded than Evangelicals. Although there are few reliable statistics, they seem to be relatively successful amongst young black men in Britain, some of whom have church backgrounds (§11.3.c, see also Reddie, 2009). Therefore it is amongst the BMCs that one might expect there to be the greatest concern about Muslim activity. Yet the BMC leaders, including those from a Muslim background, whilst they were keen to see Muslims converted, did not see Islam as a threat and focused on their own ministries rather than trying to counter the efforts of Muslims.

²²⁵ Whilst the report cited uses the term Christophobia with relation to Muslims, Jenkins (2007a, 39) uses this term with reference to the secular elite of Europe.

Given the inevitable tensions that such conversions create, the CMF's joint statement on ethical witness goes some way towards addressing the issue of competition.²²⁶ In it Christians and Muslims recognize that both are missionary faiths but try to agree on a minimum best practice. The ten points include some that address particular Muslim concerns. For instance, the promise that both sides will:

speak of our faith without demeaning or ridiculing the faiths of others (Point 6)

assuages Muslim concerns over blasphemy and the denigration of Islam. Other points are maybe more pressing for Evangelicals. In particular the promise that:

whilst we may feel hurt when someone we know and love chooses to leave our faith, we will respect their decision and will not force them to stay or harass them afterwards (Point 10)

is perhaps aimed particularly at addressing the contentious issue of the treatment of apostates who leave Islam. It was interesting that at the London launch event for the statement one of the Muslim speakers himself pointed out that this promise was un-Islamic and was unlikely to be respected by the Muslim community. For a Muslim to become a Christian was, for him, an unacceptable retrograde step. This clearly illustrates that this particular topic will continue to be a source of conflict between Evangelicals and Muslims unless the prohibitions on *ridda*, advocated by all the traditional schools of *shari'a*, are conclusively abandoned. In short, Evangelicals accept that there will be competition but they want a level playing field. Whilst both Christians and Muslims have signed the CMF document, it remains to be seen whether these guidelines will find broader acceptance in the respective communities.

This competition, however, is wider than just Evangelicals and Muslims. The data have clearly revealed that both these groups are also in competition, and even conflict, with government, secular liberals and other parties. This is the sort of complex interaction that Gorski calls a "socio-political conflict model" (2003, 116) (§4.2.b). This broader context must always be borne in mind when considering Evangelical responses to Islam.

²²⁶ www.christianmuslimforum.org/images/uploads/Ethical_Guidelines_for_Witness.pdf (accessed 22 December 2010).

12.3.B BUT ARE EVANGELICALS ISLAMOPHOBIC?

So are Evangelicals Islamophobes? One Muslim community worker I talked to perceived Evangelicalism as:

an aggressive brand of Christianity intent on conversion, especially of Muslims particularly anti-Muslim in its outlookstrongly associated with George Bush.

From such a viewpoint, the shared competitive spirit and the desire to encourage conversion may render all Evangelicals equally “anti-Muslim” in Muslim minds. Nevertheless, this study has shown that not all Evangelicals share the same view of Islam and not all of them are afraid of it or see it as a threat. It is not true that all Evangelicals are Islamophobic.

At the same time some clearly do fear Islam. This is something of a paradox for those whom the Bible commands to “fear not” (Matthew 10.28) and to “love your enemies” (Matthew 5.44). These Evangelicals would fulfil most of the criteria of the “closed” view equating to Islamophobia (Runnymede Trust, 1997). They would, nevertheless, almost certainly reject the Islamophobic label. They are highly critical of the *Runnymede Trust* report and reject the concept of Islamophobia altogether seeing it as a tool used by Muslims to gain protection from all criticism (§11.2.b). This is something that the report itself specifically sought to rule out by making clear that:

in a liberal democracy it is inevitable and healthy that people will criticize and oppose, sometimes robustly, opinions and practices with which they disagree (Runnymede Trust, 1997, 4).

Maybe it is one of the failings of the report that in practice it is difficult to distinguish between “legitimate criticism and disagreement” and a full-blown phobia. Confrontationalists would argue that their concerns and criticisms are justified because the dangers they see in Islam are real. It is not part of this research to pass a judgement on whether or not they are right. On the one hand, as the saying goes “just because you’re paranoid does not mean to say that ‘they’ are not out to get you”. In other words more confrontational Evangelicals may – and in some cases clearly do – have some very legitimate concerns. On the other hand, there is a very fine line between raising legitimate concerns and provoking fear.

All the participants in the EPS profess to love Muslims and want others to love them too. However, when an ordinary Evangelical Christian finishes reading a book or listening to a seminar, do they go away fearful of meeting a Muslim or inspired to engage and break down barriers? This is the litmus test of whether the participant's message is merely robust or Islamophobic; whether it promotes love or hatred.

12.3.C SOCIAL CAPITAL: BONDING, BRIDGING AND LINKING

With this in mind, and given the present polarization within the EPS, the ongoing competition between the communities and the accusations of Islamophobia, what are the implications for community cohesion? Clearly there is a great deal of social capital (§3.4.b) tied up in the Evangelical community's networks, buildings, leadership, voluntary service and financial resources. But how will that capital be put to use? It could be a tremendous force for good but also a significant force for harm.

If it is true that a religious group constructs and maintains its collective identity by "drawing symbolic boundaries that create distinction between themselves and relevant outgroups" (C. Smith, 1998, 143), then the confrontational approach is likely to significantly strengthen the "ingroup commitment" of Evangelicals at the expense of their relationship with Muslims. A shared intolerance of the Muslim "outgroup" and the stoking of fear that they are "predators" in the evolutionary stakes (§4.2.c) would ensure that tensions remain high and that there is a minimum of contact between the two communities. So this approach runs the risk of strengthening internal "bonding capital" but at the same time increasing the isolation of the Evangelical community (§3.4.b).

The conciliatory approach, however, increases the potential for "bridging capital" between the communities (§3.4.b). Those that engage in dialogue and who see Muslims as potential allies are more likely to build strong relationships and may be willing to enter into partnerships over certain issues. This is already happening in some cases (§11.1.c). For instance, some Evangelicals have expressed the hope that Muslims will join them in the struggle against increasing secularism and believe that Muslims will be supportive on ethical issues. Others, however, have voiced doubt that Muslims are interested in campaigning on such issues and accuse them of focusing exclusively

on Muslim self-interest (§11.1.c). Dogmatic confrontationalists, of course, resist involvement in such partnerships as a matter of principle, and even those who are more pragmatic may be wary of joint ventures and place conditions linked to reciprocity on any engagement.

Finally, it is worth considering the Evangelical-Muslim relationship in the light of the present talk of the “Big Society”. The government is keen to partner with civil society and to benefit from the social capital tied up in faith communities. Indeed some Evangelical groups are already involved (§11.1.c). This is an example of “linking capital” (§3.4.b) and it is likely that other Evangelical groups will want to benefit from the funding that such partnerships attract. As already seen though, this comes at a price. Equality legislation means that other faith groups must be treated equally and welfare initiatives cannot be used to preach the gospel. Bretherton warns that the government advances may not be so much a “gift horse” as a “Trojan horse” (2006b, 391). Doubtless other Evangelicals will see it as a compromise which can only dangerously undermine the church. They worry that in their desire to be involved in social action some Evangelical churches will erode the boundaries and so liberalize before succumbing to their final demise. This is a familiar story (§4.4) and raises the question of the future of Evangelicalism in Britain.

12.4 POSSIBLE FUTURES

Drawing on the work of Smith (1998) and Guest (2007), I above (§4.4) summarized three possible strategies by which religious groups could attempt to maintain their religious strength in a pluralist society: rejection of surrounding groups leading to the formation of an isolated counter community; accommodation with other groups possibly leading to assimilation and ideological pluralism; a middle position of “engaged orthodoxy” (C. Smith, 1998). Bearing in mind the different contexts – American and British – within which these theories have developed, this section discusses whether in the light of this study any of these processes are evident in British Evangelicalism and whether there are any implications for the future of that movement.

12.4.A REJECTION AND RETRENCHMENT

Confrontationalists clearly exhibit some of the traits of what Berger calls “retrenchment”. They tend to dig in and emphasize their distinctive characteristics, thus isolating themselves from Muslims (§4.4). In essentializing Islam as violent and demonizing *Allah* as a counterfeit god they

draw the sharp boundaries that Berger (1992, 41) once argued are needed for survival. As discussed above, they create a clear outgroup against whom they can construct an oppositional identity. This identity is important as, on the one hand, these Evangelicals do not feel that they themselves are taken seriously in public life and feel marginalized and mistreated by society. On the other hand, they resent politically correct multiculturalism, which they accuse of uncritically accommodating other religions in what should be a “Christian country”. Thus Muslims provide a focus for their grievances on both counts. Muslims are successfully making themselves heard in the public arena, and are also apparently the beneficiaries of unfair positive discrimination and concessions not available to other faith communities. For some “separatists” (Hunter, 1987) - or “isolationists” (Lochhead, 1988) - the reaction to all this could be a *defensive* retrenchment, a withdrawing from all other groups into a social ghetto. Whilst such an approach is almost certainly to be found amongst some British conservative Evangelical churches (Ipgrave, 2008), no evidence of it was found during the interviews and neither was such a response found within the EPS. Perhaps this was due to the fact that I selected only larger Evangelical churches in central London which tend to be more confident and engaged with society.

For the confrontationalists in the EPS, however, the retrenchment is *offensive*, expressing itself in activism and campaigning to redress the perceived imbalance and injustice. In short it is leading them to emphasize difference and take their fight into the public square. This would suggest that the presence of Muslims may be pushing these Evangelicals to move to the right on Stark & Finke’s normal distribution of religious niches (Figure 4.1), thus increasing both strictness and the degree of tension with society as a whole. This would emphasize their sectarian isolation and suggest that, whilst according to secularization theory they might maintain their identity and strength in the short term, in the longer term they are unlikely to grow. If true, this would be an interesting development as it would mirror a similar shift that appears to be happening in the Muslim community with the increasing radicalization of a minority of, particularly, young Muslims who are in a high degree of tension with society (§6.4).

On the other hand it could be argued that the confrontational Evangelical message is in tune with a sizeable section of the British population today who are equally concerned about issues such as immigration and Islam. Indeed the debate about Islam in the EPS as a whole is a remarkable reflection of the same debate taking place within British society. Confrontationalist concerns

about immigration and radicalization resonate with the message of certain right wing groups which are gaining in popularity at present not just in Britain but across Europe (§11.2.c). There may be a case for suggesting, therefore, that this group will find itself in *decreasing* tension with certain parts of society. Whether or not this would make their religious message more appealing to the general population remains to be seen. More likely the reverse could occur and some Evangelical Christians may be drawn towards the more extreme political groups. This may have been the thinking behind the formation of the CCB (§11.2.c).

Talk of a “Christian” Britain notwithstanding, it should also be pointed out that some who adopt a confrontational approach to Islam would also favour a complete separation of church and state, not least as a bulwark against political Islam. For instance the *Islam in Britain* report urges British Muslims to accept such a partition (ISIC, 2005, 135). At times it even seems that some would prefer ideological secularism to ideological Islam. For instance, Ipgrave comments that:

there are points at which (the *Barnabas Fund*) argument comes close to the position that it is better to have a wholly secular society than one in which Islam has influence. Thus Sookhdeo offers a significantly 'privatized' view of religion (Ipgrave, 2008, 8).

12.4.B ACCOMMODATION AND CAPITULATION

This again is a reminder that the Evangelical-Muslim encounter takes place in a wider socio-political context involving political, ideological and cultural conflict as well as religious difference (Gorski, 2003). Thus Evangelicals are not just engaging with Muslims but also a host of other socio-political actors. For confrontationalists, however, the struggle includes those Evangelicals whom they deem to be too liberal and open towards Muslims. They are concerned that these Christians are engaged in “cognitive bargaining” (§4.4). The weaknesses they perceive in the conciliators include: a propensity to self-criticism; a refusal to place blame on Muslims; and a willingness to make concessions. They fear that these could all lead to accommodation and boundary erosion. Specifically, the conciliators’ willingness to dialogue with Muslims and to countenance the idea that the two faiths share the same god could signal a liberalization of the faith, which confrontationalists believe will inevitably end with “cognitive surrender” to Islam, secularism and ideological pluralism.

Were this to happen it would again be in line with secularization theory which suggests that as a religious group seeks common ground with other groups it inevitably dilutes and compromises its own identity, thus fatally weakening itself (§4.2.a). Such a move is signalled by a move to the left on the Stark & Finke bell curve eventually leaving the moderate position of reduced tension to dissolve in a low tension sell-out to liberalism. Bruce (2003) believes that such a shift is already underway amongst Evangelicals, and particularly charismatics, and will prove to be the death knell of the new churches.

Again, however, this is not necessarily the case. Certainly if conciliators move too far to the left on the issue of Muslims then they risk losing their support base, which typically expects to be in a degree of tension with society and other groups. Indeed, if that tension is lacking then Evangelicals may feel that they are not being true to their calling which involves an expectation of suffering. On the other hand, conciliators could also risk losing support within society more generally by being seen to embrace a group that is already relatively unpopular and in a high degree of tension with society. Thus they could find themselves once again moving right and in increasing tension with society over their support and care for for a widely unpopular Muslim community.

12.4.C THE MIDDLE GROUND AND ENGAGED ORTHODOXY

Such considerations should make us wary of definitive predictions about the relative longevity of either of these groups and Smith in the American context has argued that the above scenarios are not inevitable (§4.4). He believes that it is possible for a religious group to occupy the middle ground and yet maintain their distinctive faith. Remembering that it was formulated for the American context, could Smith's concept of "engaged orthodoxy" and his subcultural identity theory of religious strength apply to the engagement of British Evangelicals with Muslims? And if so to whom does it apply: confrontationalists or conciliators? Dogmatists or pragmatists?

Smith's theory states that:

in a pluralistic society, those religious groups will be relatively stronger which better possess and employ the cultural tools needed to create both clear distinction from and significant engagement and tension with other relevant outgroups short of becoming genuinely countercultural. (C. Smith, 1998, 118)

It is evident that Muslims are acting as such an outgroup for British Evangelicals today. All Evangelicals are employing at least some of the cultural tools mentioned by Smith (§4.4) – emphasising boundaries, ultimate truth, moral superiority, evangelism, displaced heritage and so on – although these describe the confrontational rather better than the conciliatory approach. All groups are likewise seeking to utilize various media, new technologies and the meso-public sphere itself, although again some are doing so rather more effectively than others (§11.2.d and §12.1.d). At the same time it is obvious that, whilst confrontationalists are good at creating “clear distinction”, conciliators are better at creating “significant engagement”. The point of Smith’s theory, however, is that *both* of these are necessary conditions for continued strength: distinction and engagement.

This would suggest that the pragmatic rather than the dogmatic approach may be the obvious way for Evangelicals to ensure their continued strength. On the one hand, it would ensure that they do not become an isolated countercultural community, but, on the other, it would ensure that they do not lose the “tension” with Muslims that will prevent them from sliding into accommodation and compromise. The pragmatists’ desire to enter into a constructive dialogue which both supports *and* critiques the place of Muslims in society could strengthen their standing within the meso-public sphere and indeed provide a positive model for others struggling to engage in a discerning debate about Muslims in Britain. Thus British Evangelical Christians could become part of what Davie sees as the necessary process of creating “a space in European societies in which a serious discussion of religious issues is able to take place in a constructive and forward-looking way” which includes finding a “middle way between relativism and fundamentalism” (Davie, 2010, 53).

12.4.D LIKELY TRAJECTORIES

It is possible that the Muslim presence will force Evangelicals to become more counter-cultural and isolated. There is also the possibility that Evangelicals could compromise and so fail to maintain any distinction from a liberal Christianity that some believe to be in terminal decline. Both the confrontationalist and the conciliator fear that the other is gaining the ascendancy within the British Evangelical community and is thereby dragging the church either to irrelevant obscurantism or to assimilated dissolution. It could even be argued that given the controversies

since 2007 and the *Common Word* (§11.4) the EPS has already effectively divided into two camps. Whether or not the rift can be healed remains to be seen. However, the question is how this divide will affect the Evangelical church more generally. Will it cause yet more fission within an already fractious movement?

From the results of this research, it seems that, at the present time, few if any of the participants in the EPS have sufficient influence with the London Evangelical church leaders interviewed to catalyze such a fissure. This is not to say that it could not happen elsewhere. In particular, it may be possible in less cosmopolitan areas where there is little contact with Muslims but fears run high. In London, however, the church leaders do not appear to be overly concerned about Islam and treat it as just one amongst the many issues – both negative and positive – that they have to deal with. Certainly it has not yet excited the sort of tensions seen, for instance, over the charismatic movement, sexual orientation or gender issues. Mainstream representative bodies, such as the EA, do not seem inclined to raise the profile of the debate about Islam. This may well be because they see it as potentially divisive and do not want to risk destabilising the Evangelical community. The EPS will have to work hard if they want to attract the leaders' attention and increase their own influence amongst church members.

The potential does exist, however, for the EPS to engage with the meso-public sphere and contribute constructively to the debate about Islam in Britain *whilst maintaining their orthodoxy*. In order to do this they will have to earn the right to be heard through the quality of their rational argument and also through their example of practical engagement with Muslims on the ground.

This means that Evangelicals will have to adopt a pragmatic approach that accepts the pluralization of society but does not settle for parallel communities; that does not essentialize Islam but promotes rational debate about Islamic texts and history; that works for reciprocity but does not gloss all Muslims as oppressors of minorities; that emphasizes equally the dangers of Islamic radicalization and also the rights of ordinary Muslims who have no interest in world domination; that promotes not fear and isolation but love and engagement.

CHAPTER 13 CONCLUSION

13.1 LOOKING BACK: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THIS THESIS

The introduction (§1.3.b) highlighted a lack of research into British Evangelicalism in general but more specifically an almost complete absence of research into Evangelical-Muslim relations in Britain. This thesis is intended to fill that gap. By reviewing over 40 books published in this country since 2001 I have provided a comprehensive overview of contemporary British Evangelical approaches to Islam. The data presented in chapters 9, 10 and 11 are supplemented by an annotated bibliography in Appendix C which should prove a useful resource for practitioners and future researchers alike.

In addition to the formal published material I have analyzed texts from a wide range of other media including magazine articles, newspapers, conference audio recordings, videos and internet websites, blogs and forums. I have brought this data together with material from fieldwork interviews conducted both with the national elite of the EPS and church leaders in London. I believe that the resulting synthesis has created an accurate and revealing “snapshot” of Evangelical thought on Islam and Muslims in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

My focus, however, has been not so much on belief – although this is clearly important both for the participants and for myself, nor on policy – although I make some comments about this below; rather I have focused on attitudes and relationships with all the implications that these have for social cohesion and the well-being of communities. Thus the theoretical and analytical approach that I have chosen for the treatment of the data differs somewhat from previous studies of interfaith relations. These have customarily been conducted either within a theological or a public policy framework. It is my hope that this primarily sociological approach will bring a new insight to the study of Christian-Muslim relations in Britain.

In particular I have illustrated that it is not possible in this age of globalized media for a faith community to maintain an isolated internal discourse about other faiths. Through what I believe to be my unique instrumentalization of the concept of religious micro-public spheres I have sought

to emphasize that such communities have to understand themselves as a small part of a much wider “montage of publics” (Hauser, 1999) and thus as a tiny, but not insignificant, part of the process of public opinion formation in this country. It is an approach that could be replicated in the study of other faith communities.

Of course the research did not always proceed as anticipated. As mentioned I was unable to secure interviews with some of the participants who adopt a more confrontationalist approach (§8.3). This was a real disappointment although not a great surprise. However, although it would have helped to put a human face to their voice and would have filled some of the gaps regarding their backgrounds and theological views, the abundance of texts that these participants contribute to the public domain meant that I had no shortage of material.

In the event I do not believe that the study has been significantly diminished by this omission, in fact it may have been enhanced. The fact that several of the more confrontational participants declined to be interviewed is itself informative in several ways. Firstly, as I have already discussed (§8.3.b) it highlights the security concerns of Evangelicals. The death threats along with the real danger faced by many converts from Islam give pause for thought. There is clearly a violent and oppressive element in some Muslim traditions, be it religiously or culturally motivated. This is a significant ongoing factor that has to be addressed primarily by the Muslim community. Secondly, it emphasizes the sensitivity of the debate within the EPS. Some individuals were reluctant to talk to me or to talk about certain topics for fear of exacerbating the problems and souring relationships. This is clearly a contentious issue for British Evangelicals. Lastly, it reflects the perception that some participants may have of my own views and allegiances. Whilst at the outset I do not believe that I was well-known to any of those taking a more polemical approach, it may have been the case that they associated me with a more irenic position and so felt me to hold a partisan position.

At the same time I was unable to broaden my enquiry to the Evangelical grassroots. My original intention had been to explore the views of not just elite participants and church leaders but also those of ordinary members of Evangelical churches (§8.1). However, attempts to conduct focus groups or to use questionnaires proved impractical within the time constraints of a doctoral thesis and will have to await future research. This means that I have no empirical evidence about

Evangelical opinion more generally, other than by extrapolating from the comments of the church leaders. For this reason I have avoided making comments that appear to totalize the Evangelical community and have restricted my observations to the elite EPS and London church leaders.

13.2 LOOKING FORWARD: FUTURE RESEARCH

By and large, however, I believe that this thesis makes a significant contribution to knowledge in both the study of Christian-Muslim relations and the sociology of religion, and I hope that it will be used by both academics and practitioners alike. There is certainly considerable potential for it to be used as the basis for further research in this area. For instance, the study could be widened to look at Evangelical churches across Britain and not just in the capital. There are many churches situated in other cosmopolitan cities that no doubt have a wealth of stories to tell about community relations with Muslims. Equally there are even more Evangelical churches in much less cosmopolitan settings than London which would have virtually no contact with Muslims. How would this affect their views and approaches? A study of the contrast between the urban and less urban settings would be illuminating.

A second piece of work might explore the attitudes and responses of grassroots Evangelicals. It seems likely, but remains unproven, that the major influence on most Evangelicals is the mass media. Exploring this would lend itself to a more quantitative enquiry. Ideally an organization like *Christian Research* or the EA would conduct a questionnaire amongst church members in order to determine what influences the ordinary Evangelical in their thinking about Islam. Are they reading the books and attending the seminars described in this thesis? Or are they driven by the latest editorial in the *Daily Mail*? Are they interested in Islam or do they simply not care? Where are they on the confrontation-conciliation spectrum?

Thirdly, an extremely interesting piece of work would be to compare British Evangelical writing before and after 9/11. In theory this could be extended back to the Protestant Reformation in order to produce a comprehensive work bringing Zebiri (1997) up to date. This would provide a parallel to Kidd's (2009) review of the American Evangelical literature.

It would also be well worth conducting a mirror image of this research amongst British Muslims to look at their responses to Evangelical Christians. This would build on the work of Goddard (1996, 2004) and apply it more specifically to the Evangelical wing of the Christian church. Whenever I met Muslims during my research I tried to ask them for their reaction to the word “Evangelical”. I had expected a degree of ignorance but in fact most have had a definite opinion ranging from diplomatic to more forthright responses approximating to “Evangelicals are anti-Muslim”, “pro-‘war on terror’” or “out to convert us”. This suggests that this may well be a fruitful topic of research.²²⁷

Finally, it would be valuable to consider how broader trends and changes in British Evangelicalism may affect the future of its relationship with Islam. Bebbington reflects on the increasing polarization within the movement between those more conservative Evangelicals who embrace a “logo-centric modernity”, and charismatics and open Evangelicals who display “a postmodern delight in variety, authenticity and relevance to felt needs” (2009). Which will be best equipped to respond to Islam? Will more traditional ecclesiastical structures be better equipped to relate to Muslims than the new “emerging” churches with their minimal emphasis on structure and tradition? Will those with a more conservative view of theology and ethics win greater respect from Muslims than those who adopt a more open approach? In a competitive market place will Islam prove more in tune with the spiritual and moral aspirations of twenty-first century society than either of these groups?

13.3 LOOKING OUT: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

It is hoped that this research will be of benefit to a variety of different communities, both academic and non-academic alike. For sociologists the concept of micro-public spheres could become an analytical tool for the study of religious discourse and could prove a fruitful avenue of investigation with other faith groups. To this end my article *Micro-public Spheres and the Sociology of Religion* (McCallum, 2011) opens up the concept for debate within the discipline.

For government and policy makers this research should act as a timely reminder that, as others have argued before me (Habermas, 2006, Trigg, 2007), the religious voice needs to be heard in

²²⁷ I believe that Phil Rawlings has begun doctoral work on this topic at Chester University.

public, both for the benefit of rational debate but also for the sake of holding religious communities accountable for the discourse within them. The debate within such groups is a part of the “reticulate public sphere” (Hauser, 1999) which forms public opinion in this country. Indeed the debate about Islam within the Evangelical community, properly appropriated, could be a significant resource for those in public life when trying to decide, for instance, which Muslim organizations to partner with or how to incorporate religious demands into public policy. Davie (2007) argues that issues debated within the church are often those that society itself is struggling to come to terms with. The discussion concerning Islam within the EPS reflects the range of responses within society in general and would be instructive if it could be accessed by a wider audience.

For Muslims I hope that this research will highlight the range and nuanced nature of responses to Islam within the British Evangelical community. Not all Evangelicals are like the stereotypical American Evangelical and certainly not all are anti-Muslim. Both amongst highly educated authors and ordinary Evangelicals at the local church level there are those that understand the diversity of Islam and want to partner with peace-loving Muslims for the good of society. That good, however, is bound to include an invitation to a robust debate about religious freedom and the rights both of Christian minorities living in Muslim lands and of those who choose to leave Islam and embrace another faith. Reciprocity and fair competition is likely to remain an important touchstone for Evangelicals of all persuasions.

Finally, I believe that the Evangelical community and the EPS, in particular, should find much here to stimulate further debate and reflection. Some may be uncomfortable that “one of their own” has objectivized his coreligionists. I may be accused of bringing “dirty laundry” into the public arena or even of creating a security risk. For this reason I have taken care not to publish personal details not already in the public domain and I do not believe that this research significantly increases the risk to anyone’s personal safety. In particular I have chosen not to write about mission work amongst Muslims or about converts from Islam. I believe strongly, however, that no faith community in today’s globalized world can ring-fence its discourse. The church especially is not meant to. It is no accident that the New Testament writers referred to their associating together as the *ekklesia*, the gathering together of citizens in the marketplace to discuss the affairs of the city (§2.2). A Christian micro-public sphere by its very existence is inextricably connected

together to other public spheres, as some notable recent examples have demonstrated (§11.4). Evangelicals have to be aware that whatever they write, say or teach today will be heard and interpreted tomorrow by journalists, politicians, security services and, maybe most importantly of all, by Muslims. It is, therefore, incumbent upon all who contribute to the public sphere to assess critically how their contribution will be understood by these different audiences and whether or not it contributes constructively to the common good and to the greater cohesion of British society, in addition to the goals and ambitions of the Christian church.

In particular participants in the EPS might reflect on how their words may be interpreted and used by political groups and especially those of the extreme right. Evangelicals often share right wing concerns over immigration, identity and culture and as has been seen such groups do draw on statements by Christian leaders in order to support their own agendas (§11.2.c). Evangelicals must take care to distance themselves from xenophobic politicians and to not put arguments into their hands.

In this regard the discussion concerning *taqiyya* and the trustworthiness of Muslims (§10.4.b) is particularly important. Some Evangelicals are creating the impression that lying is sanctioned in Islam and that no Muslim can be trusted. This is an extremely disturbing trend as it leads to a breakdown in trust. If one always suspect that one's interlocutor is lying then it becomes impossible to conduct any meaningful dialogue. It is imperative that Evangelicals research further the theology and tradition surrounding the Islamic principle of *taqiyya* and come to a clear understanding of how to take it into account.

Participants in the EPS may also want to reflect on the degree to which their voices are heard not only in the meso-public sphere but also in the churches. Generally, with a few exceptions, the voices heard in the mainstream media are those who have a platform because of their political or institutional church roles. Others, however, are attempting to engage a broader public in more diverse ways. Glaser at the *Oxford Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies*, Taylor at *Lapido Media* and Jay Smith with *Pfander Films* are all endeavouring to enter the debate in creative ways. Such resourceful thinking will be required by anyone hoping to make a wider impact.

More surprising has been the lack of influence the EPS has amongst church leaders, at least in London. It may well be that traditional media are not going to impact busy contemporary Evangelicals. Perhaps new strategies must be developed in order to equip church leaders juggling multiple agendas. An over-reliance on book publishing and conventional broadcasting may also fail to capture the imagination of a new generation of Evangelicals who rely more heavily on the latest technologies and are looking for experiential engagement rather than didactic instruction. Here too the EPS may need to think creatively about how it wants to convey its message to the churches.

13.4 LOOKING IN: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

At the start of my doctoral journey I would have described myself as a conciliator. A follower of Christ? Certainly. A Christian? If understood correctly. An Evangelical? Only with conditions attached to an unpopular label. Certainly my friendships with Muslims in Tunisia had given me an appreciation for their culture and it was hard to see them as a threat. After all, the popular revolution of 2011 notwithstanding, Tunisian Muslims are, by and large, a peaceable people and I regularly go back to visit my colleagues and friends.

Now as I move on to the next stage of the journey I am maybe more pragmatic. My research has convinced me that there are some tough questions to answer – for both Christians and Muslims. It is not possible for Evangelicals to absolve themselves of political responsibilities; neither is it possible for Muslims to ignore that which is perpetrated in the name of Islam. For progress to be made confrontationalists and conciliators, dogmatists and pragmatists, Christians and Muslims need to come together, draw from one another's strengths and find grace for one another's weaknesses in order to develop a vision for how people of all faiths and none can coexist in this country.

I end my journey by returning to the large gathering of Evangelical Christians mentioned at the beginning of the introduction and imagining what a different event it could have been

.... the speaker is receiving a standing ovation. The talk has covered not just the basics of Islam and the challenges posed by political Islam, but also the shortcomings of Christian and Western responses to Islam. Christians need to be aware that the Muslim community in the UK is struggling to come to terms with living in a non-Muslim country and Christians need to find practical ways to help. At the same time a local mosque school is teaching unacceptable anti-Christian propaganda. Something needs to be done. The speaker shakes hands with an imam who has pledged to help. During the seminar the imam spoke about the difficulties his community is facing in countering the radicalization of its young people. The audience clearly found his contribution moving. They have never heard a Muslim speak before. Together the Christian speaker and the imam announce a plan for a joint Christian-Muslim appeal to fund the rebuilding of a church destroyed by a Muslim mob in Pakistan. The audience rises to its feet

.... The imam has departed and as people leave the seminar, they are chatting about the difficulties that have been raised and are discussing what could be done. Some seminars in town? A joint project? A letter in the paper? A meeting with the local MP? Whatever happens, a conversation is needed with their friends from the mosque.

Back in the auditorium the confrontationalist and the conciliator stand united in one person on the empty stage, reflecting on the seminar. "Have I been accurate and fair? Have I addressed the difficult issues as well as encouraged people to befriend Muslims? Did the imam feel welcome? Have I spoken with both grace and truth?"

APPENDIX A: KEY PARTICIPANTS IN THE EPS (FOLD OUT COPY IN REAR POCKET)

Azumah, John	<i>Interview</i>	40 mins in his office at London School of Theology
Director, Centre of Islamic Studies, London School of Theology	<i>Ethnicity</i>	African Ghanaian
	<i>Church</i>	Presbyterian, Evangelical
	<i>Background</i>	An academic from a Muslim family in Ghana, came to UK in 2007
	<i>Media</i>	Books, academic papers, TV ('The Big Questions')
	<i>Concerns</i>	Christian witness to Muslims, African context, academic engagement
Bell, Steve	<i>Interview</i>	81 mins in his office in Milton Keynes
British Director, Interserve	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Afro-Caribbean
	<i>Church</i>	Conservative, charismatic Anglican from a Pentecostal background
	<i>Background</i>	10 years in Egypt, 20 years in Christian mission leadership in UK
	<i>Media</i>	Books, conference speaking and seminars
	<i>Concerns</i>	Breaking down prejudice and stereotypes so that Christians can build 'grace relationships' with Muslims
Chapman, Colin	<i>Interview</i>	84 mins at his home near Cambridge
Retired, former lecturer and missionary	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British (born in India)
	<i>Church</i>	Open Evangelical Anglican
	<i>Background</i>	Lived in Egypt and Beirut, lecturer at several colleges, dialogue events
	<i>Media</i>	Books, articles and speaking
	<i>Concerns</i>	Helping Christians understand and build good relations with Muslims, justice, honesty about the failings of Christians and the West, especially concerned with the Israeli/Palestinian conflict
Cotterell, Peter	<i>Interview</i>	No interview
Retired	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British
	<i>Church</i>	Unknown
	<i>Background</i>	20+ years as a missionary in Ethiopia, 19 years at <i>London School of Theology</i> , 6 as principal.
	<i>Media</i>	Books and articles
	<i>Concerns</i>	Teaching - theology, comparative religion and Christian mission

Cox, Caroline (Baroness)	<i>Interview</i>	No interview
Member of House of Lords, Patron of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, founder of HART	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British
	<i>Church</i>	Unknown
	<i>Background</i>	18 years in Lords, political engagement and advocacy work
	<i>Media</i>	Public speeches in Lords and elsewhere, one book
	<i>Concerns</i>	Rights, freedom and protection of liberal democracy, plight of Christian minorities, slavery in Muslim countries
Craig, Alan	<i>Interview</i>	45 mins in his London office
Local politician	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British
	<i>Church</i>	Conservative “but open” Evangelical Anglican
	<i>Background</i>	Local politics and recent public debating
	<i>Media</i>	Blog, internet video, debates, political arena
	<i>Concerns</i>	Radical Islam and groups such as TJ, particularly involved in campaigning against the East London mega-mosque
Glaser, Ida	<i>Interview</i>	55 mins in her Oxford office
Academic Director, Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies, Oxford	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British, Jewish father, nominal Christian mother
	<i>Church</i>	Anglican, non-sectarian Evangelical
	<i>Background</i>	Teaching in Malaysia and elsewhere, Christian theological training
	<i>Media</i>	Books and articles
	<i>Concerns</i>	Theological reflection in the presence of Islam, being truthful about Islam
Goldsmith, Martin	<i>Interview</i>	70 mins in his home in Hertfordshire
Retired missionary and associate lecturer at All Nations Christian College	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British Jew
	<i>Church</i>	Open Evangelical
	<i>Background</i>	10 years as a missionary in SE Asia and lecturer for 30+ years at All Nations Christian College
	<i>Media</i>	Public speaking and books
	<i>Concerns</i>	Holding the middle ground and encouraging witness and mission to Muslims
Green, Stephen	<i>Interview</i>	No interview
National Director, Christian Voice	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British
	<i>Church</i>	Unknown
	<i>Background</i>	Campaigning against Islam amongst other moral campaigns
	<i>Media</i>	Public protest, tracts, website
	<i>Concerns</i>	Recreating Britain as a “Christian country”, campaigning for Christian laws, opposing the building of mosques

Knell, Bryan	<i>Interview</i>	70 mins at my home in Yeovil
Church Relations Director, <i>Global Connections</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British
	<i>Church</i>	“Mainline” Evangelical – charismatic “in belief although not in practice”
	<i>Background</i>	Working in the UK with students and Christian organisations
	<i>Media</i>	Public speaking, networking
	<i>Concerns</i>	Coordinating a positive response to Islam in the UK, mobilising churches to reach out to Muslims
McRoy, Anthony	<i>Interview</i>	82 mins at his home in East London
Lecturer at <i>Evangelical Theological College of Wales</i>, religious journalist and commentator	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White Irish Catholic
	<i>Church</i>	Conservative “born again” Evangelical, Brethren and Baptist
	<i>Background</i>	PhD in Islamics, living in East London, short visits to Muslim countries
	<i>Media</i>	Magazines (Christian & Muslim), internet, TV/radio, one book
	<i>Concerns</i>	Researching and commenting on Islam in Britain and the Middle East
Moucarry, Chawkat	<i>Interview</i>	83 mins at his home
Director of Interfaith Relations, <i>World Vision</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Syrian Arab from Roman Catholic background
	<i>Church</i>	Liberal Evangelical with no clear denominational identity
	<i>Background</i>	PhD Sorbonne, teaching <i>All Nations Christian College</i> , work with World Vision
	<i>Media</i>	Books, speaking, debates
	<i>Concerns</i>	Building bridges with Muslims, improving theological understanding
Musk, Bill	<i>Interview</i>	90 mins at his home in Tulse Hill, London
Area Bishop for North Africa	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British
	<i>Church</i>	Open Evangelical Anglican
	<i>Background</i>	Several years living in Arab world, pastoral and mission work
	<i>Media</i>	Books and speaking
	<i>Concerns</i>	Educating people to think fairly about Muslims, critically examining Christianity in the light of Islam
Nazir-Ali, Michael	<i>Interview</i>	Off the record interview
Former Bishop of Rochester	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Asian from Muslim-Christian family
	<i>Church</i>	Evangelical Anglican
	<i>Background</i>	Many years as an academic, bishop, General Director of CMS
	<i>Media</i>	Books, press releases, speaking, media interviews
	<i>Concerns</i>	Theological integrity, robust dialogue, rights and freedom, Christian basis of British society and values

Orr-Ewing, Frog & Amy	<i>Interview</i>	No interview
Frog is a vicar. Amy is Director of Training, Ravi Zacharias Trust	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British and white Australian
	<i>Church</i>	Open charismatic Anglican
	<i>Background</i>	Amy lived in Birmingham, both studied theology, visited Afghanistan
	<i>Media</i>	One book, Amy conference speaking, Frog preaching & blog
	<i>Concerns</i>	Militant Islam and apologetics
Pawson, David	<i>Interview</i>	No interview
Freelance Bible teacher	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British
	<i>Church</i>	Unknown
	<i>Background</i>	Little knowledge or experience of Islam, Bible teacher
	<i>Media</i>	Books and videos
	<i>Concerns</i>	Predicting a coming takeover of Islam in Britain and challenging the church to greater commitment and faithfulness
Riddell, Peter	<i>Interview</i>	45 mins by skype call to Australia
Dean, Centre for the Study of Islam and Other Faiths, Bible College of Victoria, Australia	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White Australian
	<i>Church</i>	Anglican, dislikes labels, prefers “Christian” to “Evangelical”
	<i>Background</i>	Academic, PhD in Islamic, specialist on SE Asia
	<i>Media</i>	Books, articles and lectures
	<i>Concerns</i>	Intellectual engagement with topic of Islam and the challenge facing the Muslim world which is at a “crossroads”
Smith, Jay	<i>Interview</i>	75 mins at British Library, London
American missionary, Hyde Park Christian Fellowship, London	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White American
	<i>Church</i>	<i>Brethren in Christ</i> (Anabaptist)
	<i>Background</i>	Brought up in India, 5 years in Senegal, over 20 years in London
	<i>Media</i>	Debate (especially Speakers’ Corner), video, YouTube, internet
	<i>Concerns</i>	Countering radical Islam by polemic debate, historical criticism, Christian apologetics, evangelism
Solomon, Sam	<i>Interview</i>	No interview
A freelance “senior lecturer, researcher, human rights activist and advisor”	<i>Ethnicity</i>	From a Middle Eastern Muslim background
	<i>Church</i>	Not known – although closely associated with Kensington Temple
	<i>Background</i>	“Trained in Shari’a law for 15 years”
	<i>Media</i>	Speaker and author, videos can be found on YouTube
	<i>Concerns</i>	Teaching Christians by revealing the “true face” of Islam and actively seeking the reformation of Islam

Sookhdeo, Patrick	<i>Interview</i>	No interview
International Director, Barnabas Fund	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Guyanese from partial Muslim background, came to UK in 1960s
	<i>Church</i>	Anglican
	<i>Background</i>	PhD from SOAS, director of Barnabas Fund, campaigning for suffering church
	<i>Media</i>	Books, <i>Barnabas Aid</i> magazine, speaking, writing in newspapers
	<i>Concerns</i>	Islamization of Britain and the threat of political Islam, the suffering church in Muslim countries
Sookhdeo, Rosemary	<i>Interview</i>	No interview
Author, speaker (wife of Patrick)	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White New Zealander
	<i>Church</i>	Anglican
	<i>Background</i>	30 years ministry amongst Muslim women
	<i>Media</i>	Books and public speaking
	<i>Concerns</i>	Women in Islam and female converts to Islam
Smith, Andrew	<i>Interview</i>	43 mins in his office in Birmingham
Director, Youth Encounter, Scripture Union	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British
	<i>Church</i>	Open Evangelical Anglican
	<i>Background</i>	22 years as a schools and youth worker in Birmingham
	<i>Media</i>	Youthwork material, training seminars
	<i>Concerns</i>	Helping young Muslims and Christians to understand one another, equipping Christians to understand Muslims
Sudworth, Richard	<i>Interview</i>	65 mins at his home in Birmingham
Ordained Anglican, PhD student and partner with Christian Mission Society	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British
	<i>Church</i>	Charismatic open Evangelical Anglican
	<i>Background</i>	Lived in North Africa and Muslim area of Birmingham, community projects, pastoral ministry
	<i>Media</i>	Book, blog
	<i>Concerns</i>	Christian integrity and witness, good community relations, robust Christian engagement in public life
Taylor, Jenny	<i>Interview</i>	30 mins interview at Westminster Central Hall
Journalist and director of Lapido Media	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British
	<i>Church</i>	Anglican, “contemplative charismatic” Evangelical
	<i>Background</i>	A professional journalist with a PhD in religion and society
	<i>Media</i>	Newspapers articles, blogs, website
	<i>Concerns</i>	Secularism and loss of religious values and literacy leading to public policy which has allowed radical Islam to grow.

Williams, Andrea	<i>Interview</i>	55 mins in her London office
Director, <i>Christian Concern for Our Nation and Lawyers' Christian Fellowship</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White European descent from Italian parents
	<i>Church</i>	Conservative (but open) Evangelical Anglican
	<i>Background</i>	Lawyer and campaigner. Mainly influenced by Sam Solomon.
	<i>Media</i>	CCFON sends out weekly emails, runs a website and produces reports. Williams has appeared in several TV documentaries.
	<i>Concerns</i>	Campaigning for Christian-based laws and religious freedom.
<hr/>		
Wood, Nicholas	<i>Interview</i>	68 mins in his office in Oxford
Baptist minister and Fellow of Regent's Park College, Oxford	<i>Ethnicity</i>	White British
	<i>Church</i>	Liberal Evangelical Baptist
	<i>Background</i>	Dialogue groups, Joppa Group, Christian-Muslim Forum
	<i>Media</i>	Book, occasional articles in <i>Baptist Times</i>
	<i>Concerns</i>	Interfaith dialogue, developing a theology of mission

APPENDIX B: LONDON EVANGELICAL CHURCHES (FOLD OUT COPY IN REAR POCKET)

Codes used for EPS participants in table below					
JA	Azumah, John	SG	Green, Stephen	AS	Smith, Andrew
SB	Bell, Steve	BK	Knell, Bryan	JS	Smith, Jay
CC	Chapman, Colin	AM	McRoy, Anthony	SS	Solomon, Sam
PC	Cotterell, Peter	CM	Moucarry, Chawkat	PS	Sookhdeo, Patrick
CCx	Cox, Caroline	BM	Musk, Bill	RS	Sudworth, Richard
AC	Craig, Alan	MNA	Nazir-Ali, Michael	JT	Taylor, Jenny
CD	Dye, Colin	O-E	Orr-Ewing, Amy & Frog	AW	Williams, Andrea
IG	Glaser, Ida	DP	Pawson, David	NW	Wood, Nicholas
MG	Goldsmith, Martin	PR	Riddell, Peter		

Name Denomination London Location Size Leader Affiliation			Participants heard of CCx = the participant is known but not re Islam	Trainers/ Speakers Invited to church	Authors in book shop or recom- mended
All Souls Langham Place	<i>Interviewee</i>	Hugh Palmer - Rector	SB MNA CC OE	Some from outside	None
Anglican	<i>Membership</i>	All ages, mainly white but 60 nationalities, middle class, professional	CCx DP MG PR BK PS	JS based at All Souls	Recom'd CC CCx
Central	<i>Church'ship</i>	Conservative Evangelical, exclusivist	CM JS BM JT		CM BM MNA PR PS
Large (~2000)	<i>Attitude</i>	Careful, diversity of Muslims, struggling to work out view			
Hugh Palmer	<i>Training</i>	Occasional mentions in sermons, regular training courses			
EA	<i>Campaigning</i>	Some have signed petitions	Total 14	-	
Chinese Church	<i>Interviewee</i>	Peter Chow, mission secretary	MG		N/A
Non-denom. Central, West & South Large (1-2000 in 7 congregations) Pastor Ong EA	<i>Membership</i>	95% Chinese, mainly under-50	BK		Recom'd MG PS
	<i>Church'ship</i>	Evangelical	PS		
	<i>Attitude</i>	Leaders see that Islam may be a threat to outreach in some areas. Islam is not evil			
	<i>Training</i>	Little said except maybe by guest speaker at annual mission conference			
	<i>Campaigning</i>	Might make members aware of EA issues but action is left to individuals	Total 3	-	

Christchurch NFI	<i>Interviewee</i>	Simon Ash, a full-time leader	JA		CCx	N/A
New Frontiers Central Medium (600) Dave Stroud EA	<i>Membership</i>	Young, mainly white, students + professionals	SB		AO-E	Recom'd O-E
	<i>Church'ship</i>	Charismatic, reformed Evangelical, Exclusivist	CC		Ravi Zacharias Trust	
	<i>Attitude</i>	Islam not a big issue to be afraid of	CCx			
	<i>Training</i>	Nothing specific in congregation but opportunity for seminars at NF leadership conferences	MG			
	<i>Campaigning</i>	Left to the individual to be politically involved. Not the role of the church.	MNA			
			DP			
			Total 8	-		
East London Tabernacle	<i>Interviewee</i>	Kenneth Brownell, leader	CC		AMc is member + trainer	PS
Baptist East Small (1-200) Kenneth Brownell EA, FIEC	<i>Membership</i>	All ages, ethnically diverse (35 nationalities), more working class	CCx		JS MG	Steer
	<i>Church'ship</i>	Conservative, reformed Evangelical, exclusive but allowing extra revelation	MG			
	<i>Attitude</i>	Islam is an opportunity not a problem	BK			
	<i>Training</i>	Regular seminars either on evenings or Saturdays	AMc			
	<i>Campaigning</i>	Nothing during church time but some members do sign petitions	MNA			
			AO-E			Recom'd
			DP			CC
			PR			PR
			SS			PS
			PS			
			JS			
			Total 12	-		
Glory House	<i>Interviewee</i>	Jonathan Oloyede one of the founders and former leaders. Now leads <i>City Chapel</i> (~100). A former Muslim	CCx		CCx	None
Independent Pentecostal East Large (3500) Albert Odulele	<i>Membership</i>	Mainly African, all ages,	BK		SS	Not known
	<i>Church'ship</i>	Pentecostal	SS			
	<i>Attitude</i>	Radical Islam is normative and has an agenda.	SS			
	<i>Training</i>	No special training. The expansion of Islam mentioned in sermons. Most have friends and family who are Muslims so know something about Islam	PS			
	<i>Campaigning</i>	Prayer and evangelism rather than petitions and protests	JS			
			Total 5			

Holy Trinity Brompton	<i>Interviewee (telephone)</i>	Graham Tomlin, Dean of St Mellitus College + a leader	CC MG		MG O-E David Marshall	CC PS O-E IG
Anglican	<i>Membership</i>	All ages, white, middle class, professional	O-E PS			
Southwest	<i>Church'ship</i>	Reluctant to use labels				
Large (3-4000) (200 staff)	<i>Attitude</i>	No particular approach to Islam but would tend to be irenic. Attitudes of members would be very mixed				Recom'd CC
Nicky Gumbel	<i>Training</i>	Never mentioned in sermons, theology course includes Islam				
Alpha	<i>Campaigning</i>	Not involved in petitions etc	Total 4			
"An Evangelical Charismatic Church"	<i>Interviewee</i>	Anonymous	CC CCx MG	DP PR JS	JS	N/A
Non-denom.	<i>Membership</i>	All ages, classes and ethnicities	BK BM MNA	SS PS		Recom'd CC MNA
Southeast	<i>Church'ship</i>	Open charismatic Evangelical, inclusivist				
	<i>Attitude</i>	Islam an opportunity	O-E			
Medium	<i>Training</i>	Their training course includes sessions on Islam				
EA, CT	<i>Campaigning</i>	No	Total 12			
Kingsway International (KICC)	<i>Interviewee</i>	"A spokesman for KICC"	CCx MNA DP SS			Own books but none on Islam
Independent Pentecostal	<i>Membership</i>	80% African, + some Afro-Caribbean, "many - maybe 30%" - from Muslim backgrounds				None
East	<i>Church'ship</i>	Pentecostal				
Large (9000)	<i>Attitude</i>	Aware of Islam but focus on preaching the Gospel				
Matthew Ashimolowo	<i>Training</i>	None. Occasional mention in preaching				
	<i>Campaigning</i>	Occasionally join protests and send out emails. Usually leave to individuals	Total 4			

Redeemed Christian Church of God	<i>Interviewee</i>	Simeon Ademolake, pastor of Harvest Chapel + local councillor	CCx SS	None	N/A None
2-300 churches in London Harvest Chapel ... East Small (30)	<i>Membership</i>	80% Nigerian, mainly families			
	<i>Church'ship</i>	Pentecostal Evangelical			
	<i>Attitude</i>	Muslims are not rivals but an opportunity.			
	<i>Training</i>	None with no plans to start. Focus on Christian teaching.			
	<i>Campaigning</i>	Encouraged the church to pray about the "mega-mosque"	Total 2		
"A conservative Evangelical Anglican"	<i>Interviewee</i>	"a leader of the church"	JA CC CCx	People within church	CC IG PS Steer Others
Anglican - Large (1500) - Reform + Gospel Partners Trust	<i>Membership</i>	All ages, mainly white middle class (but increasingly less so), lots of students, more ethnicities now	MG MNA OE		Recom'd CC
	<i>Church'ship</i>	Conservative Evangelical, exclusivist	PR PS		
	<i>Attitude</i>	Near a Muslim area and aware of Islam as a threat and an opportunity	JS JT		
	<i>Training</i>	Occasional 5-10 mins slots in services, some training courses			
	<i>Campaigning</i>	None	Total 10	-	
"A central London church"	<i>Interviewee</i>	"a young leader in the church"	CC CCx		BA O-E
Independent Central Medium (3-500) - EA	<i>Membership</i>	All ages, mixed class and ethnicity	BM		Recom'd BM BA
	<i>Church'ship</i>	Reformed charismatic Evangelical, exclusivist	DP PR		
	<i>Attitude</i>	Generally low awareness of Islam. Emphasis on apologetics and polemics	PS JS		
	<i>Training</i>	Regularly mentioned in sermons but no training provided			
	<i>Campaigning</i>	None	Total 7	-	

St Paul's Ealing	<i>Interviewee</i>	Mark Melliush, senior pastor	CC	BA	Not known
Anglican West Medium (800) Mark Melliush New Wine, EA	<i>Membership</i>	30s-50s, mainly white but mixed nationalities and class	CCx MG	JS	Recom'd BA
	<i>Church'ship</i>	Charismatic Evangelical	MNA		
	<i>Attitude</i>	Islam and diversity are opportunities.	O-E DP		
	<i>Training</i>	Occasionally discussed in small groups. Brother Andrew visited.	PR PS JS		
	<i>Campaigning</i>	They encourage people to sign petitions and write letters.	Total 9	-	
World Harvest Christian Centre	<i>Interviewee</i>	Wale Babatunde, senior pastor	CCx MNA	SS	None
Independent South Small (200) Wale Babatunde	<i>Membership</i>	30s-50s, mainly African (Nigerian), working class	DP SS PS		Wale has his own book on decline of UK
	<i>Church'ship</i>	Charismatic Evangelical, exclusivist			
	<i>Attitude</i>	Upset at the loss of Christian character of UK. Muslims are an evangelistic opportunity			
	<i>Training</i>	Some sessions in their training course but no training for general members			
	<i>Campaigning</i>	Protests outside parliament, writing letters, signing petitions	Total 5	-	
Vineyard, Greenwich	<i>Interviewee</i>	Dan Warnke, leader	DP PS	None	None
Vineyard South Small (80) Dan Warnke EA	<i>Membership</i>	White middle class, below 50, lots of students and singles		Friend from Muslim background	Recom'd BA
	<i>Church'ship</i>	Open charismatic Evangelical			
	<i>Attitude</i>	Islam not a threat, could be positive in terms of justice and development issues			
	<i>Training</i>	None			
	<i>Campaigning</i>	Not against other religions but on justice issues	Total 2	-	

APPENDIX C: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF EVANGELICAL BOOKS AND BOOKLETS 2001-2010

Azumah, John (2008), **My Neighbour's Faith: Islam Explained for African Christians** Hippo Books, pp176.

As an African Azumah has written this book for the African context. However, although it contains many African examples and frequently quotes African Muslim writers, it is still highly relevant and applicable to any other context. He urges Christians to take the challenge of Islam seriously – especially in the seminary – but is cautious about trying to define what “true Islam” may be. For him this is an intra-Muslim debate. What does concern Christians is what Islam teaches about them and he devotes a chapter to the *Qur’anic* teaching about people of other faiths, which he sees as progressing from positive to negative as Muhammad moved from Mecca to Medina. He also assesses Islamic teaching on *jihad* and concludes that “the notion that *jihad* is a spiritual struggle or a last resort in self defence is purely a post-modern apologia and is hardly borne out by mainstream Muslim scholarship”. Despite these negative mainstream interpretations Azumah remains positive about Muslims. Although modernisers are only a small fringe group he is hopeful that there can be reinterpretation of these texts as “the *Qur’an* is made for Muslims and not Muslims for the *Qur’an*”. He goes on to examine the variety of Christian responses to Muslims and also addresses some of the difficult theological questions that Islam poses. Always mindful of Christians suffering in some Muslim majority countries, Azumah believes that whilst it is essential to seek good relations with Muslims this should never be at the expense of Christian integrity and solidarity.

Bell, Steve (2003), **Friendship First: the manual**, Market Rasen, Friendship First Publications, pp84.

This is a very practical book written in an attractive, easy-to-use magazine style and its target audience is the 'ordinary Christian' who wants to reach out to the 'ordinary Muslim'. Bell explains the basics of Islamic faith and practice, but clearly points out the diversity that there is within Islam worldwide. The sections on barriers to Muslim's receiving the Gospel include several helpful tables comparing western and eastern culture, and Christian and Muslim theology. Other barriers are historical - from the Crusades through the State of Israel to the Gulf War - and semantic. The last part of the book includes many anecdotes and presents ideas and advice for building relationships with Muslims and for discipling believers from a Muslim background. The appendices include a useful glossary and a more in-depth discussion of whether Allah can be considered to be the God of the Bible.

Bell, Steve (2006), **Grace for Muslims**, Milton Keynes, Authentic Media, pp190.

Bell strongly believes that the presence of Muslims in the West is part of God's sovereign plan and represents not a threat but a significant opportunity for the church in Britain. This increasingly influential book is partly autobiographical and recounts the author's time in Egypt and his subsequent work in trying to educate British Christians in the need to extend grace to Muslims. Christians need to understand Islam as an Arabised form of Judaism which can in fact prepare Muslims to receive the Gospel. He sees the real enemy to faith in the West as being godless secularism and believes that Muslims can be allies for Christians seeking to restore Judeo-Christian values. He finishes the book with advice on how to form grace relationships with Muslims and tells of his dream for a multicultural church in Britain.

Brother Andrew and Al Janssen (2007), **Secret Believers: What Happens When Muslims Turn to Christ?**, London, Hodder & Stoughton, pp278.

Brother Andrew is the well-known Dutch author of *God's Smuggler*. What is less well known is that he has spent much of the last few years travelling in the Middle East. The majority of this easy to read and yet challenging book recounts the story of converts to Christianity in a Muslim country. Although fictional, the story is based on real-life situations known to the authors and makes sobering reading as they recount the challenges, persecution and eventual martyrdom faced by these faithful believers. Remarkably after such an account the message of the remainder of the book is not that Christians should fear Muslims or be resentful, but rather it is a challenge to a "good *jihad*" that would bring hope to the Muslim world. Andrew presents four challenges to the church today: "to love all Muslims by giving them the Good News, to forgive when we are attacked, to live lives totally committed to Jesus Christ, and to engage in the real war - the spiritual war". He suggests that the only hope for the world is if millions of Christians learn to love Muslims with Christ's love. This will certainly be costly but he challenges Christians to pray - and pay the price.

Chapman, Colin (2005), **'Islamic Terrorism': Is there a Christian response?**, Cambridge, Grove Books, pp28.

This short booklet looks at some of the reasons for the violence and terrorism inspired by Islamism today. Being very careful to define terms, it looks at the grievances and goals of Islamists and the various reactions of other Muslims to the violence used by some. Chapman sees two broad Christian responses to this violence which may be summed up as either 'the problem is with them' or 'the problem is with us'. The former exemplified by Riddell & Cotterell (*Islam in Conflict*) and Sookhdeo (*Understanding Islamic Terrorism*) focuses on the inherent violence of the *Qur'anic* text and Islamic history, whilst the latter focuses more on political grievances. Whilst he believes that we should seek to

understand the motivation of such terrorists, Chapman makes his own condemnation of violence clear and calls Christians to grapple with the hard questions, to be more self-critical and to be passionate about justice.

Chapman, Colin (2007), **Cross and Crescent: Responding to the Challenges of Islam**, 2nd edition, Nottingham, Inter-Varsity Press, pp432.

In this completely revised second edition of his popular textbook, Chapman includes new material on political Islam, 'Islamic terrorism', the *Qur'anic* view of Christians and advice on how to explain Christian beliefs about Jesus. The aim of the book is to improve relationships between Christians and Muslims by helping Christians to understand Islam and to enter into dialogue with Muslims. It explores the fundamental differences between the two faiths and seeks to address controversial issues. The author gives serious consideration to Islamist grievances and suggests that "terrorism itself is not the root of the problem; it is usually a reaction to a perceived injustice". He examines the other questions and concerns that Christians have about Islam and Muslims but reminds the reader that "Muslims often think the same" about Christians - western 'Christian' support for violence in Israel, Afghanistan and Iraq being among the prime examples. For Chapman personal relationships are the "absolute priority" and Muslims must be approached first and foremost as fellow human beings.

Chapman, Colin (2008), **The Bible through Muslim Eyes and a Christian Response**, Cambridge, Grove Books, pp32.

"This booklet attempts to articulate what Muslims generally think about the Bible, and to suggest a Christian response to these views". Chapman's hope is that it will result in dialogue - relationship, discussion, listening and working together - between Christians and Muslims. The booklet lays out in parallel on facing pages the approaches of Muslims and Christians to such concepts as revelation, prophethood, translation of scriptures, the human condition, forgiveness and salvation. It highlights arguments Muslims commonly cite against the trustworthiness of the Bible and suggests possible respectful Christian responses.

Cox, Caroline and John Marks (2006), **The West, Islam and Islamism: Is Ideological Islam Compatible with Liberal Democracy?**, 2nd edition, London, Civitas Institute for the Study of Civil Society, pp237.

This book contrasts the epistemology of the 'ideological mode' of Islamism with the 'academic mode' of western liberal democratic societies, and draws parallels with the threat that Marxist communism posed to the free world in a previous generation. Using careful definitions the authors stress that the majority of Muslims are peaceable and law-

abiding, but suggest that the greatest challenge facing the Muslim world – and the West - today comes from the increasing number of radical Islamists within its own ranks. They detail the strategies and tactics being used by Islamist organisations which abuse the freedoms of western societies in order to promote their own agenda. These include the deliberate employment of deception (*taqiyya*), intimidation, infiltration and front organisations. The book ends with a challenge to western societies to get tough on Islamists, deporting them if necessary, and a challenge to Muslims to accept the values of liberal democracy and stand up against Islamism. Overall the book does not give much hope that moderate Muslims will succeed in reforming Islam as in fact the Islamist understanding of traditional interpretations of the *Qur'an* and *Sunna* is, according to the authors, the truest to the original texts.

Dye, Colin (2007), **The Islamisation of Britain: and what must be done to prevent it**, Pilcrow Press, pp73.

The authorship of this booklet is unclear. The foreword is written by Colin Dye, pastor of Kensington Temple, London, and some of the text appears in an online article ascribed to Dye (*Khilafa or Kingdom?*, <http://www.pilcrowpress.com/khilafa-or-kingdom>). However, other parts of the text appear online ascribed to Sam Solomon (<http://europenews.dk/en/node/12574>). The booklet claims that the Islamisation of Britain is "already at an advanced stage" and it expresses particular concern over the penetration of Islam into the spheres of British politics, law, economics, education and the media. Quoting surveys and statistics it casts doubt on the notion of "moderate Islam". For sure there are many "moderate Muslims" but there is little evidence for "moderate Islam". It is the radical version of Islam, as exemplified in the violent verses of the *Qur'an*, which is normative and now espoused by as many as 40% of British Muslims. The booklet concludes with proposed solutions for the reversal and prevention of Islamisation to be adopted by the government and the church.

Glaser, Ida (2005), **The Bible and Other Faiths: what does the Lord require of us?**, Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, pp253.

This book is not specifically about Islam but is a very helpful exploration of the resources that the Bible offers for understanding other faiths. Parallels may be seen in the Samaritans or the other religions of those days. Muslims may be like the righteous Gentiles who found salvation. Perhaps most helpful of all, Jesus' relationship with the religious Jews of his time is seen as a model for Christian responses to Muslims. Glaser also points out that Jesus challenged the link between religion and political power and warns Christians against coveting the power that other religions may have. Blessing will only come to a multifaith world through God's people, whom He has chosen, living in a dynamic relationship with the living God as a witness to all.

Glaser, Ida (2010), **Crusade Sermons, Francis of Assisi and Martin Luther: What does it mean to 'take up the cross' in the context of Islam?**, Oxford, Church Mission Society, pp34.

In this short pamphlet Glaser contrasts the approaches of Crusade preachers such as Jacques de Vitry with Francis of Assisi and Martin Luther. The Crusades focused on a literal holy war against the presumed enemies of Christ, much like some modern Islamic conceptions of *jihad* today. Luther also saw the Turks of his day as a threat but insisted that only the emperor should physically fight, leaving the church to a spiritual warfare of prayer. Francis' approach was rather different, however, as he took Christ's command to discipleship and love of enemies so seriously that he and his followers were prepared to 'go amongst Muslims' - even under Islamic law. This reflected Jesus' love for his enemies at the cross and his total disinterest in a political agenda of power. His kingdom is of a different kind. The challenge to C21st Christians is which theological model they will draw on. Will their one-sided preaching play on xenophobic fears like the Crusade sermons and insist on defending a political entity? Or will they follow in the true way of the cross, going amongst and loving those that may seem at times like enemies?

Goldsmith, Martin (2009), **Beyond Beards and Burqas: Connecting with Muslims**, Nottingham, Inter-Varisty Press, pp158.

This is a gentle, easy-read that mixes stories from Goldsmith's long experience with illustrations of key issues in relation to the Christian-Muslim encounter. Each of the 11 chapters shares a personal anecdote or story from which he then draws out a couple of theological or sociological observations. The book considers the difficulty of explaining theological concepts to Muslims such as the trinity, the sonship of Christ and knowing God. It also touches on the sensitive issues of violence and the problem of Muslim treatment of apostates from Islam. Goldsmith comes across as having a sensitive respect for Islam whilst at the same time being unafraid to highlight problem areas. His chief concern as always is that Christians should take up the challenge of mission and share their faith, and there is encouragement that Muslims are indeed becoming Christians in spite of, or maybe even because of, Muslim extremist violence. He observes that most converts from Islam share three experiences in common: they have a relationship with a Christian friend, have read the New Testament, and have experienced a supernatural miracle. Goldsmith strongly encourages Christians to be bold and confident - but not confrontational - in their relationships with Muslims.

Green, Stephen (2005), **Understanding Islam**, Surbiton, Christian Voice, pp24.

A very badly written, 24-page pamphlet, or 'briefing paper', from Christian Voice, a campaign group that describe themselves as 'Christianity with testosterone ... looking to take the battle to the Lord's enemies'. There are almost no references or citations apart

from to one book from America titled 'Prophet of Doom' (Winn, 2004). Green clearly spells out his belief that Allah is none other than Satan masquerading as an Arabian moon deity. The *Qur'an* is a human repackaging of 'yarns', 'garbled versions' and 'plagiarised poems' from Jewish literature and is full of errors and anachronisms. As the later violent verses abrogate all earlier peaceful verses Islam is essentially 'a way of war' and martyrdom is the only sure hope Muslims have of paradise. The solution to all this is for the British government to return the country to its Christian heritage and for the Queen to announce a day of prayer, whilst Christians must witness and evangelise Muslims. 'Anyone who does not like that state of affairs is free to leave'.

Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity (2005), **Islam in Britain: The British Muslim Community in February 2005** Pewsey, Isaac Publishing, pp150.

This report by the *Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity*, directed by Patrick Sookhdeo, seeks to paint a snapshot of the British Muslim community in February 2005. It is motivated by concern over what it sees as the increasing segregation and Islamist radicalisation of the Muslim community which has been allowed by Britain's multicultural policies. It cites many sources, mainly from the media, as it looks at such issues as *shari'a*, Islamophobia, political correctness, *taqiyya* (dissimulation), politics, education and finance. In all of these areas the report discerns a disturbing "gradual Islamisation" of Britain. Its recommendations stress the need for good community relations but also the need for an open, critical discussion which recognises the reality of the trend to Islamism. In particular the British government should be careful in relating to the Muslim Council of Britain, which the report believes to be non-representative and sympathetic to radicals. Muslims themselves need to be encouraged to develop 'a new, liberal form of British Islam' that would seek to integrate into British society and renounce all aspirations of separatism and Islamic political power in Britain.

Marshall, David (2006), **Learning from How Muslims See Christianity**, Cambridge, Grove Books, pp28.

In this booklet Marshall, in the spirit of Cragg, asks whether Christians have anything to learn from the Muslim critique of Christian theology, praxis and socio-political engagement. Whilst maintaining confidence in the Christian message to Muslims, he suggests that Islam challenges Christians to "take a fresh look at the cross" and maintain a proper balance between incarnation and transcendence. He also muses on the questions that Islam may pose to Christians who are increasingly adopting informal forms of prayer. Having drawn an interesting parallel with the Christian-Marxist encounter, Marshall goes on to point out that the inherently political nature of Islam means that Muslims today understand Christianity either to be implicated in western political processes or to have failed in its mandate to shape society. Particularly in the British context the presence of Muslims challenges Christians to rethink the connection between faith and politics.

McRoy, Anthony (2006), **From Rushdie to 7/7: the radicalisation of Islam in Britain**, London, The Social Affairs Unit, pp236.

This book written for the *Social Affairs Unit* is a re-writing of McRoy's PhD thesis from *London Bible College* and springs from his concern that "some expressions of Muslim radicalism are now the dominant and guiding forces in British Islam". He endeavours to lay aside his Christian standpoint and take an impartial, academic look at the causes of Muslim radicalisation in Britain since the 1980s. He looks at the various crises that have affected the Muslim community and particularly looks at *jihad* and democracy within Islam. The last part of the book looks at the history and policies of a selection of Islamic organisations in Britain which he classifies as being either participationist or rejectionist. Despite all the socio-political grievances of Muslims and the "theological underpinnings" of radicalisation that he mentions early on, in the final analysis he believes the real underlying cause of Muslim violence, whether it is the Rushdie Affair or 9/11, to be *izzat* and *ghairat*, that is honour and the desire to defend their religion from offence and desecration. This suggests that the West should "quit the Muslim world" or "expect more outrages like 7/7".

Moucarry, Chawkat (2001), **Faith to Faith: Christianity and Islam in Dialogue**, Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, pp327.

As a Syrian Arab from a Roman Catholic family Moucarry writes about Islam with a great deal of understanding and empathy, and is convinced of the need for Christian-Muslim dialogue. This book, which grew out of his studies at the Sorbonne, seeks to build bridges between the two faiths. It looks at the key theological differences, including different views of scripture, the person of Christ and Muhammad's claims to be a prophet, but also acknowledges that there is common ground. Whilst Islam is not Good News, there are things that Christians can learn from Muslims. He also looks at some contemporary issues including the problem of the state of Israel and Muslim immigration to the West. He calls for Christians to respond not by withdrawing but rather by demonstrating God's love for all.

Moucarry, Chawkat (2004), **The Search for Forgiveness: Pardon and Punishment in Islam and Christianity**, Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, pp373.

In this book based on his Sorbonne PhD, the author sets out to give his readers a new insight into Islam through an exploration of the topic of forgiveness. Good use of Muslim sources and clear tables enable Moucarry to highlight the diverse theological approaches of Sunni, Shi'i, Sufi and other Muslim theologians throughout history. Whilst always looking for common ground, he also carefully draws out the contrasts between Christian and Islamic understandings at each stage. If in Islam God's forgiveness is based on mercy

at an eschatological judgement, then in Christianity it is based on His love demonstrated in an historical act of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Moucarry, Chawkat (2007), **Two Prayers for Today: the Lord's Prayer and the Fatiha**, Tiruvalla, India, Christava Sahitya Samithi, pp136.

This short book compares Christianity and Islam by comparing what the best known prayer from each teaches us about the nature of God, His glory and our needs. In so doing Moucarry takes the *Qur'an* seriously and engages with how Muslims themselves, including some radical ideologues, understand these concepts. We all have much to learn from the two prayers but in the final analysis it is the Lord's Prayer that reveals God in His most fundamental relationship to mankind as "Our Father". The author also includes a chapter discussing whether Christians and Muslims are talking about the same God, and another looking at the relationship of religion to power. Although he is prepared to be critical of the West, especially in its secularism and its foreign policies, he is also concerned about some aspects of *shari'a* and its denial of rights, and believes that Christians should work together with Muslims for freedom, human rights and the common good. Indeed Christians are in a unique position to be bridge builders between Islam and the West.

Musk, Bill (2003), **Holy War: Why do some Muslims become fundamentalists?**, 2nd edition, London, Monarch, pp320.

The title of this updated edition of Musk's 1992 *Passionate Believing* was changed at the publisher's behest. It reflects the events of 9/11 and includes two new chapters on the histories of the *Taliban* and *Osama bin Laden*. In what he considers to be his most important book, Musk tries to help westerners enter into the Islamic fundamentalist mindset and sees an irony in the fact that it is maybe closer to the Biblical worldview than much of western secular humanism. He looks at the influence of some of the most important Muslim thinkers from *al-Afghani* to *Mawdudi*, *Qutb* and *Khomeini*, reflecting on the anger that many of them felt towards the West as a result of imperialism and globalization. He sees in Islamism and the Islamic doctrine of *tawhid* (God's oneness) an implicit critique of the shortcomings of the western secular worldview and a challenge to Christians to become more public about their faith. Christianity, however, is not to be equated with Islam. Quoting Lesslie Newbigin he points out that whilst Muhammad chose the way of power in conquering Mecca, Christ chose to suffer and die in Jerusalem. Thus there is ahead a struggle for Christians to witness, "with its nuance of 'martyrdom'", as they seek to put Christ back into the centre of life.

Musk, Bill (2005), **Kissing Cousins?: Christians and Muslims Face to Face** Oxford, Monarch, pp480.

Musk writes this sympathetic book with the aim of trying to change attitudes and helping Christians to see the similarities that they share with Muslims as their 'cousins'. He examines themes such as prophethood, text and power in the two faiths and tackles the 'big question' of whether Allah is the God of the Bible. The answer lies in the continuity/discontinuity tension between Islam and Christianity which he suggests may reflect the same tension that the early church experienced with Judaism. Musk also deals openly and honestly with the history of conflict between the two faiths including Islamic imperial expansion, the Crusades and the competition created by their shared sense of 'mission'. After culminating with a comparison of respective views of humanity and Jesus Christ he ends by echoing Cragg's call for an openness and humility towards Muslims and a renewed sense of 'neighbourliness' with cousins.

Musk, Bill (2008), **The Certainty Trap: Can Christians and Muslims Afford the Luxury of Fundamentalism?**, Pasadena, CA, William Carey Library, pp257.

This book is a challenge not just to Muslims but to Christians as well to rethink how they understand their respective scriptures. Whilst the *Qur'an* is not the sole cause of Islamist violence, a growing literalist, *jihad*-oriented interpretation of the text is winning support and presenting a significant challenge to the traditional understanding of the majority of Muslims. However, Christian fundamentalism provides no less of a challenge and Musk suggests that Christianity too is in 'a struggle for its own soul' and he is particularly critical of the support of some American Christians for both Zionism and the 'war on terror'. He examines issues of revelation, transmission, exegesis and interpretation in both Islam and Christianity and concludes that it is essential today that both a 'hermeneutic of certainty' and a secularist 'hermeneutic of suspicion' make way for healthy doubt and critical re-evaluation. Throughout, however, he maintains a strong conviction of both the trustworthiness of the Biblical revelation, rightly understood, and also the need for Muslims to hear the Gospel. Indeed, he believes that 'we live on the cusp of a dramatic shift in the willingness of Muslims to hear the Christian story' and that a post-7/7 world provides a unique opportunity for Muslims to rethink their 'unhelpful certainty'.

Nazir-Ali, Michael (2002), **Understanding My Muslim Neighbour: Questions and Answers on Islam and Its Followers**, Norwich, Canterbury Press pp96.

This is a very helpful, basic introduction to thinking about the place of Islam in the modern world. It was written shortly after 9/11 as an informal conversation answering questions people were - and still are - asking about Islam. Nazir-Ali describes Islam fairly and uncritically from a Muslim viewpoint. Whilst sketchily covering the basics of the origins, beliefs and practices of Islam, he stresses the great diversity and variation within the

Muslim world and its history. In answer to some of the controversial, difficult questions he gives measured, balanced responses that look to break down misunderstanding and reduce fear. The answer to Islamophobia is after all "education, education, education" - on both sides. Whilst extremist Islamic terrorism may be here to stay and needs to be dealt with, its causes are to be found in specific injustices in various parts of the world to which solutions should be sought whilst supporting the voice of moderate Muslims. In all this Nazir-Ali is very deliberate in being non-sensational in his arguments. In short, this book does what it says on the cover: it encourages Christians to understand their Muslim neighbours.

Nazir-Ali, Michael (2006), **Conviction and Conflict: Islam, Christianity and World Order** London, Continuum, pp192.

This book is a scholarly engagement with theological and sociological texts from many sources, including both Christian and Muslim thinkers. Against all expectations religion is making a global comeback. Whilst admitting that religion can and does "go wrong", the author believes that religion has a key role to play in world affairs. To this end a dialogue between the religions is "almost indispensable for world peace today" and indeed governments should be able to draw on the fruit of such dialogue in their policy making. At the same time, Christians must come to such dialogue with Muslims as realists. Nazir-Ali looks at historical and contemporary grievances and explores the concepts of *shari'a*, *jihad* and extremism, not hesitating to raise problematic issues such as religious freedom, apostasy, reciprocity and the *dhimmi* status of minorities. However, he does so in a non-judgemental style that does not accuse or demonize Islam and indeed recognizes the role that the West itself has played in "assisting in the emergence of an internationally linked Islamist movement". He finishes on an optimistic note as he believes that God is at work in the world and that self-criticism can lead to spiritual renewal.

Nazir-Ali, Michael (2008), **The Unique and Universal Christ: Jesus in a Plural World**, Paternoster Press,

In this typically erudite book Nazir-Ali examines the Christian understanding of the uniqueness of Christ particularly in the presence of Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. He reflects on the Christian basis of the Enlightenment values found in western societies and points to Christ as their well-spring. Civic pluralism, evident in such ambiguous terms as multifaith and interfaith, is inevitable and not undesirable. Theological pluralism, however, is another matter and is to be seriously questioned. Nothing good comes from "fudging" important issues and Christian distinctiveness is to be maintained. He goes on to explore the nature, work and lordship of Christ in scripture and considers how this affects the relationship of the Christian faith to other religions, especially in its evangelistic mission. The book finishes with a brief reflection on the Homogeneous Unit Principle, contextualization and the extent to which a follower of Christ can remain within their own

culture. Whilst sympathetic to some newer missiological thinking, he is particularly concerned for a sound ecclesiology and an integrity that would not look like deception to Muslims and thus "make the apostasy worse". Such "fads" will not further the enduring "missionary task of the Church".

Newbiggin, Lesslie, Lamin Sanneh, et al. (2005 (1998)), **Faith and Power: Christianity and Islam in 'Secular' Britain**, 2nd edition, Eugene, OR, Wipf & Stock, pp177.

Reflecting back on the 1998 publication of this book the 2005 edition remarks on the prophetic character of the book in the light of the events of 2001 and subsequent years. It features Newbiggin's last published work, a typical call for a renewed Christian confidence and vision for society in the face of failing secularization. In this Christians should be provoked by Muslims who are doing a better job at challenging secularism in the public arena. Sanneh too sees the Muslim presence as an opportunity for "stocktaking". In exploring Newbiggin's approaches to a pluralist society he reaffirms the need for the separation of state and religion but also suggests that a society which in the past has drawn on Christian resources has now to replenish itself. Taylor adds a critique of multiculturalism taking the Bradford riots of 1995 as a case in point. She criticises the "cult of silence" which refuses to criticise Islam and unacceptable cultural practices, and explodes the myth that the state can be neutral on moral and religious issues. Presciently she suggests that the demand for *shari'a* will be "inevitable" but must be resisted whilst continuing to enable Muslims to take a full intellectual part in public life. In all this the church will need to learn to be a "bridge builder". The final word goes to Newbiggin who challenges Christians to fully engage in seeking the "good of the city" of which they are a part with no embarrassment at asking for a privileged place for Christian principles, which are in the long run the only possible guarantors of the religious freedom for all which we have come to cherish.

Orr-Ewing, Frog and Amy Orr-Ewing (2002), **Holy Warriors: a fresh look at the face of extreme Islam**, Carlisle, Authentic Lifestyle, pp117.

This book is largely inspired by the authors' story of how they met with some leaders of the Taliban on a visit to Afghanistan, an experience which seems to have stirred a mixture of concern and compassion. After a standard introduction to Islam and an academic engagement with the concept of fundamentalism, they particularly focus on the issue of *jihad* and conclude that the more peaceful verses in the *Qur'an* have been abrogated by later more belligerent verses. The central issue for them is that the *Qur'an's* emphasis on eschatological judgement is not accompanied by any assurance of salvation – apart from in *jihadi* martyrdom. Therefore, for them, it is not economic or socio-political issues that drive Islamist violence but rather it is theology. Whilst they are careful to stress the diversity that exists within Islam, they accept that such 'Islamisms' today are creating a

clash of civilizations which poses a threat to the West with all its shortcomings. This should not be confused, however, with a threat to Christianity, as Christians have always suffered under different tyrannical regimes. The important thing is to rise to the challenge of seeing Muslims find assurance of salvation in Christ.

Pawson, David (2003), **The Challenge of Islam to Christians**, London, Hodder & Stoughton, pp196.

This book has become well-known for its prediction that Britain will be taken over by Islam in the near future. Pawson claims to have had this 'premonition' whilst listening to Patrick Sookhdeo speaking and after further research felt that events and trends confirmed his fears. The author admits that he knows little of Islam but relies on the writing and research of others. Sadly it is impossible to check any of his sources as the book contains no references, footnotes or citations for any of its quotes. However, the main thrust of the book is not about Islam, which clearly worships a different god, but rather about Christianity. The challenge of Islam will refine the church in Britain with maybe only a remnant remaining. To prepare the church Pawson feels very strongly that God gave him three words: reality, relationship and righteousness. The second half of the book expounds these in relation to the Gospel and he finishes with a challenge to the church to be bold in its witness.

Riddell, Peter (2004), **Christians and Muslims: Pressures and Potential in a Post 9/11 World**, Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, pp254.

This book benefits from an excellent table of contents which allows it to be used as a resource for questions concerning Christian-Muslim relations. Building on the foundation of *Islam in Conflict* Riddell addresses many of the tough questions that need to be asked and yet does so with respect, sympathy and balance. In addition to considering Islam's place in contemporary international affairs and British society today, he also gives a very helpful overview of Christian-Muslim interaction taking into account the responses and approaches of the different Christian traditions (which he labels liberal, traditional and evangelical) and transnational organisations (such as the WCC and WEA). The last chapter addresses over 30 specific questions including 'So what is Islam?', 'Is Islam a religion of peace?' and 'To which Muslims should Christians be talking?' His answers to all these questions are nuanced and take into account the diversity that is found amongst Muslims. He stresses a two-pronged approach that engages with Muslim as people and Islam as a system and counsels that "we should be wary of those Christians who take a blinkered approach" focusing on only one of these aspects. Different types of Muslims (modernizers, traditionalists and Islamists) call for different approaches ranging from dialogue to polemical debate. Indeed the only Christians engaging with radical Muslims are the 'debaters' and Riddell ends by stressing that "those committed to dialogue should not delegitimise the efforts of the debaters, nor should the reverse occur".

Riddell, Peter and Peter Cotterell (2003), **Islam in Conflict: past, present and future**, Leicester, Inter-Varisty Press, pp231.

“Islam stands at the crossroads”. This is the central thesis of this very helpful book examining “the titanic struggle taking place between moderates and radicals for the hearts and minds of the Muslim masses in the middle”. The authors achieve a clever balance of academic rigour and readability as they survey Islam and particularly its approaches to violence from the early days, through empire and decline to today’s highly charged interaction with the West. Whilst western foreign policy and contemporary international conflict play their part, the real root of Islamic violence “derives from a potent cocktail of ingredients that go far back in time, to the beginning of Muslim-Christian historical contact and the very Islamic texts themselves” and not least to the violent example of Muhammad himself. The answer to such violence and ‘westophobia’ will have to come from moderates within the Muslim community who encourage a new hermeneutic of Islamic scriptures that would proscribe violence and encourage peaceful coexistence. In the meantime Christians should be compassionate and pray, but quite what their involvement with supporting a military response to radicalism should be is not so clear.

Smith, Andrew (2009), **My Friend Imran: Christian-Muslim Friendship** Cambridge, Grove Books,

A short booklet about encouraging Christian and Muslim young people to form friendships. Based on Smith’s experience of running Scripture Union’s Youth Encounter and the record of actual conversations with young people, it takes a realistic view of the difficulties but also the positive benefits of such relationships. This is not a one way process for the purpose of mission however. Christians have to be prepared to be influenced by and learn from Muslims. Some see this as a dangerous risk for young people to take but Smith points out that few have such concerns about contact with secular young people, which in reality leads to many more Christian young people ‘falling away’. The generation growing up today will only have increased contact with people of other faiths and this booklet is a timely call for churches to prepare their young people for the challenge.

Solomon, Sam (2006), **A Proposed Charter of Muslim Understanding**, Pilcrow Press, pp28.

This booklet was commissioned by UKIP MEP Gerard Batten and is presented as a charter for Muslim leaders to sign in order to acknowledge their commitment to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. It calls for 'ulama to issue *fatwas* concerning respect for non-Muslims, freedom of belief and rejection of violent *jihad*. Its most striking demand is for a re-interpretation of 17 *Qur’anic* verses which are felt to be an "inspiration for hate and terrorism" including several which make reference to the Christian doctrine of the

trinity. It is envisaged that all Muslims who breach the charter would be denounced and excommunicated from the Muslim community.

Solomon, Sam and Elias Al-Maqdisi (2007), **The Mosque Exposed**, Charlottesville, VA, Advancing Native Missions Press, pp40.

This booklet has also been published as *The Mosque and Its Role in Society* under the pseudonyms Belteshazzar and Abednego. It was written in response to the plans for a large "mega-mosque" to be built in East London. Having emphasized that Islam is an all-encompassing religio-political system, the booklet outlines the historical role of the mosque as not just a place of prayer and preaching but also a political headquarters and a launch base for *jihad* which, with reference to the writing of Mawdudi, it sees as "the driving principle" of Islam. This, along with what the authors see as the obligation of *hijra* (migration) and the employment of *taqiyya* (dissimulation), which is "practised by all Muslims, Sunni and Shi'ites alike", is all part of the drive to expand Islam. The building of mosques, which "soon in almost all major British cities will be the biggest most spectacular buildings", is seen as an assertion of the supremacy of Islam in the world. The booklet concludes by citing a number of modern *fatwas* about the role of the mosque and the exclusion of non-Muslims from it.

Solomon, Sam and Elias Al-Maqdisi (2009), **The Common Word: The undermining of the church**, Charlottesville, VA, Advancing Native Missions, pp110.

This short book is a specific response to and rebuttal of the letter *A Common Word between Us and You*. It is in particular critical of those Christian leaders who signed the Yale response to this document entitled *Loving God and Neighbor Together*. Indeed, in his preface, Colin Dye, pastor of *Kensington Temple* in London, suggests that these Christians seemed to be "more attracted to the prize of a delusional 'peace' than by their duty to confront error with truth". This is a sentiment shared by the authors who argue that the Muslim commitment to *jihad* and the doctrine of *al-wala wa al-baraa* (allegiance and rejection) precludes any possibility of common ground or friendship between Muslims and Christians. The Muslim discussion of God's love and love for neighbour in their letter is nothing but "skilled duplicity" and an example of *taqiyyah* (dissimulation). They urge the Christian signatories to withdraw their signatures and the Muslim authors to reform Islamic doctrine and practice. The appendices include the above two documents and also a collection of Islamic *fatwas* taken from www.islam-qa.com concerning relationships between Muslims and Christians .

Solomon, Sam and Elias Al-Maqdisi (2009), **Modern Day Trojan Horse: the Islamic doctrine of immigration**, Charlottesville, VA, Advancing Native Missions, pp137.

This book explores the Islamic doctrine of *hijra* (migration) and finds it to be the principal way in which Islam is to be spread in the world. Starting with Muhammad's model the authors suggest that *hijra* is obligatory on all Muslims and is always preparatory to *jihad*. Indeed they believe that the five pillars and everything within Islam is geared towards *jihad* and the global domination of Islam. They cite "five directives", with *Qur'anic* references, which they say have become a systematic doctrine: assemble, listen, obey, immigrate and wage *jihad*. They claim that it is for this reason that immigrant Muslim communities always strive to remain "separate and distinct" whilst seeking to establish the *shari'a* and gain political power by stealth. They cite historical examples where they believe this to have happened in Sub-Saharan Africa, Malaysia and Indonesia and warn that Islam is not a faith but a "whole encompassing political system, garbed in religious outfit". In other words Muslim migration to the West is for the express purpose of establishing an Islamic state. The extensive appendices cite examples of modern online *fatwas* regarding various related issues.

Solomon, Sam and Elias Al-Maqdisi (2010), **Al-Yahud: Eternal Islamic enmity and the Jews**, Charlottesville, VA, Advancing Native Missions, pp193.

The authors believe that in this book "the total fallacy of Islam rooted in its doctrine of enmity is exposed". They suggest that the real cause of the Middle East conflict is not land or political injustice. Rather these things are only a "smokescreen" to obscure the real cause which is Islam's deep and everlasting hatred of the Jews. They calculate that roughly 60% of the *ayas* (verses) in the *Qur'an* refer to the Jews, of which 500 are explicitly negative. They also cite the *Hadith* and *Sira* (biography of Muhammad) and suggest that this opposition to the Jews, stemming back to the seventh century, has been endemic throughout Islamic history. The doctrines of *fitrah* (all humankind are born Muslims), *da'wa* (call to Islam) and *waqf* (endowment) are all discussed to demonstrate how implacably opposed Muslims are to any concessions with non-Muslims, particularly over the issue of territory, including Jerusalem. Solomon and al-Maqdisi do not proffer any solutions to the Middle East conflict, rather they propose that the solution can only be found in what they believe to be a correct diagnosis of the cause - Islamic enmity towards the Jews. Extensive appendices deal with *Qur'anic* references, the supremacy of Muhammad and issues relating to the *Qibla*, the *al-Aqsa* mosque and Islamic *waqf*. The *Constitution of Medina* is also reproduced in both Arabic and English.

Sookhdeo, Patrick (2002), **A People Betrayed** Pewsey, Christian Focus Publications, pp424.

This book is based on Sookhdeo's PhD thesis completed at SOAS under the supervision of Dr Kate Zebiri. It is written so that people will understand the pressure which the Christian community of some 3 million people in Pakistan (2% of population) is facing. Sookhdeo believes that the process of Islamization in Pakistan in recent years may serve as an example of what may happen in other places. It includes a long discussion of both the *dhimmi* principle and laws concerning blasphemy and apostasy, and their relation to the loss of rights and discrimination experienced by Christians in Pakistan. He concludes that Christian minorities in Muslim countries are neither protected by their own government nor by the Church worldwide which is ill-equipped to understand and relate to Islam.

Sookhdeo, Patrick (2006), **Islam: The Challenge to the Church**, Pewsey, Isaac Publishing, pp125.

The book opens with a short account of Sookhdeo's personal history and his concern at the demise of elements of British society due to radical Islam. The book then seeks to inform Christians in the West about Islam and the threat it poses to the church. The author is particularly concerned about the territoriality and political intentions of Islam and fears that well-meaning western Christians do not understand the dangers of engaging in dialogue and co-operating with Muslims. After examining the basic beliefs and theology of Islam and highlighting the diversity of Muslims, he goes on to examine key issues such as *shari'a* and the suffering of Christian minorities in Muslim countries. Whilst God is love in Christianity, in Islam God is power. This has brought the West to a crossroads in its relationship to Islam, and the Church must have the courage to meet the challenge.

Sookhdeo, Patrick (2007), **Global Jihad: The Future in the Face of Militant Islam**, Pewsey, Isaac Publishing, pp669.

In this 669 page book including appendices and footnotes Sookhdeo sets out to examine Islamic concepts of *jihad* from a theological point of view against the backdrop of current radical Islamism and Huntington's infamous 'bloody borders'. He sees the cause of contemporary Islamic violence lying almost exclusively within the teachings of classical Islam and notes that historically the expansion of Islam has never been stopped except by military force. However, whilst recognising the need for western military, political and economic responses, particularly in restricting the flow of funds to Islamist groups, he sees the only real hope of winning 'the long war against classical Islam' resting on liberal-minded Muslims reforming Islam from within by rejecting the *Hadith*, reinterpreting the *Qur'an*, reversing or rejecting abrogation, and, above all, separating religion and state. Otherwise the only chance of peace will be for the whole world to be under the rule of Islam.

Sookhdeo, Patrick (2008), **Faith, Power and Territory: A Handbook of British Islam**, Pewsey, Isaac Publishing, pp360.

With a foreword by Peter Riddell, this book presents itself as an easy-to-use handbook on British Islam but also seeks to interpret that Islam and to make recommendations for the future. It is an expansion of the ISIC report on Islam in Britain and in places the text is identical. The main emphasis is on radical Islam and the Islamisation of Britain. An overview of the history and basic tenets of Islam is followed by a discussion of radical Islam and the doctrine of sacred space before an assessment of Islam in Britain today. Sookhdeo assesses 37 influential Muslim thinkers (28 of whom are Islamist in their orientation) and then catalogues many of the Muslim organisations and institutions active in Britain today. In his conclusion he suggests that Britain is facing a greater threat than any other for many centuries and notes that “there is no precedent of a non-Muslim society successfully halting the advance of Islam by peaceful means” (p229). As violence is not an option, society must decide what sort of Britain it wants. An open secular society which celebrates British heritage and values, or a segregated society based on voluntary apartheid and the threat of Islamic dominance.

Sookhdeo, Patrick (2008), **Understanding Shari`a Finance: the Muslim Challenge to Western Economics**, Pewsey, Isaac Publishing, pp114.

This book takes a brief look at the recent development of Islamic finance. The main contention of the author is that *shari`a* finance is a new invention with little historical basis in Islamic theology or practice and has been developed by modern radical Islamists as a tool in their global *jihad*. Their object is to separate Muslims from non-Muslims and to subvert western economic systems, with the ultimate goal being global Islamic dominance. There is little regulation of the sector and concerns are expressed that finance, particularly from *zakat*, may be used to support Islamic terrorism. Sookhdeo appeals to western governments to be circumspect and to introduce tougher regulation. The appendices include an overview of Islamic finance in various countries and a description of the incompatibility of *shari`a* law with human rights and western society.

Sookhdeo, Patrick (2009), **The Challenge of Islam to the Church and Its Mission**, 2nd edition, McLean, VA, Isaac Publishing, pp193.

The second edition of this book includes some corrections, updates and additions to the first edition. There is an extra paragraph stressing the need to distinguish Muslims as people from Islam as a system and the need to love not hate them. New stories and case studies have been added, particularly from the United States. There are also several added references to the author’s concern that Evangelical Christians in particular are being co-opted by dialogue and interfaith initiatives, thus losing their theological grounding

especially when they engage in contextualisation. Hopes that such dialogue will bear fruit are misguided and are leading to division in the church. He particularly criticises the Yale response to *A Common Word* and the full text of the Barnabas Fund response is included in the appendix.

Sookhdeo, Patrick (2009), **Freedom to Believe: Challenging Islam's Apostasy Law**, McLean, VA, Isaac Publishing, pp176.

This book is basically concerned with human rights and freedom under *shari'a*, looking particularly at the issues of apostasy and blasphemy. It examines the classical texts and notes that the strictest punishments are found not in the *Qur'an* but in the *Hadith*. Whilst acknowledging that there is debate in the Muslim community over these issues, the author feels that the general trend towards Islamism in the Muslim world today means that interpretations and enforcement are becoming stricter. This is a problem not just for Christians living under Muslim rule, who are vulnerable to the charge of blasphemy, or Muslims leaving Islam, who are treated as apostates and traitors, but also to liberal Muslims who are seeking to reinterpret Islamic legal understanding. Amongst the real life examples that the author relates are the stories of some of these Muslims who face opposition and even death and yet represent in his estimation the only hope for freedom of religion within Islam.

Sookhdeo, Patrick (2009), **Understanding Islamic Terrorism: The Islamic Doctrine of War**, 2nd edition(US), Pewsey, Isaac Publishing, pp278.

First published in the UK in 2004 the whole of the text of this book can be found in *Global Jihad* (2007) which is an expanded version of this book.

Sookhdeo, Patrick (2010), **A Christian's Pocket Guide to Islam**, Christian Focus Publications, pp112.

A short handbook of the origins, beliefs, practices and history of Islam. It is a mainly factual account with little comment or interpretation. It includes a short section on *taqiyya* but otherwise resembles other 'guides' of its kind. The appendices include some useful reference tables: a chronology of Muhammad's life, the development of Islamic sects and the surahs of the *Qur'an*.

Sookhdeo, Rosemary (2004), **Secrets Behind the Burqa**, Pewsey, Isaac Publishing, pp118.

This book is based on the author's MA dissertation which was controversially rejected by Oxford University after she refused to change her position on Islam. Drawing on many anecdotes from the author's relationships and long experience, the book explores the place of women in Islam and particularly in Muslim communities in the West. It acknowledges that the *Qur'an* and Muhammad did seek equality for women but argues

that “this theoretical equality has not been seen in practice”. This is demonstrated in the many *Qur’anic* passages and *hadiths* cited, although the traditional *tafsirs* for these are not presented. The book goes on to explore the issues of honour and shame, marriage, the veil and Muslim women in the West, concluding that gender equality is lacking and that “Islam is a man’s world”. With the increasing trend towards *shari’a* in the West “it is the women and the girls who will pay the price”.

Sookhdeo, Rosemary (2005), **Stepping into the Shadows: Why Women Convert to Islam**, Pewsey, Isaac Publishing, pp121.

This book is written out of concern over the many western women - including those brought up in practising Christian families - who are marrying Muslim men and converting to Islam. Sookhdeo draws on her many years of experience living and working amongst Muslim women and recounts many stories and anecdotes. There is advice on how to help family members or friends who are considering conversion and warnings about the differences between Muslim and western culture with regard to male-female relationships, children, honour and shame, and divorce. Whilst Christians “have to love and care for Muslims and share the gospel with them” they should also be on their guard and be aware of the dark side of Islam and the deliberate attempts by some Muslim men to target marriage with western women for ulterior motives. The book concludes with a well laid out table comparing doctrines such as God, Jesus, sin and salvation in the two religions.

Sudworth, Richard (2007), **Distinctly Welcoming: Christian presence in a multifaith society**, Bletchley, Scripture Union, pp160.

Although not specifically about Islam, this is a book about the relationship of Christians to people of other faiths. The author has spent time amongst Muslims both abroad and in Britain and urges Christians to respect other faiths whilst at the same time reflecting on what it means to be passionate and yet to have integrity in their own faith. Sudworth reflects on the meaning of Christian mission in a post-Christendom society and gives many practical tips for Christians working in multifaith contexts. This requires *distinctive faith* where all faith groups are true to their faith and it requires Christians to extend a risky welcome without knowing what the response may be.

Wood, Nicholas (2009), **Faiths and Faithfulness: Pluralism, Dialogue and Mission in the Work of Kenneth Cragg and Leslie Newbigin**, Milton Keynes, Paternoster, pp219.

This book is an academic engagement with the search for a theology of mission in a plural context. Wood clearly identifies two strands within Christian thinking concerning the continuity or discontinuity between other faiths and the Christian tradition. After looking

at the historical contributions of various theologians to this debate, he compares and contrasts the work of two great 20th century missionary-theologians, Kenneth Cragg and Lesslie Newbigin, as representative of this paradigm. This is a great resource for anyone wanting to get an overview of the work of these two great thinkers and there are many quotes and references. Wood finishes by emphasizing the need to keep these two tendencies in balance and to keep Christology and mission central in theological reflection and in interfaith dialogue which for him is a vital part of the witness of the church.

Zeidan, David (2003), **Sword of Allah: Islamic Fundamentalism from an Evangelical Perspective**, Waynesboro, GA, Gabriel Publishing, pp166.

As the title suggests this book addresses the topic of *jihad*. The author traces the history of what he calls Islamic fundamentalism and examines the roles of key Muslim thinkers from *Shah Wali Allah* and *'Abd al-Wahhab* to *Khomeini* and *Turabi*. Whilst claiming that the inspiration behind much Islamic violence is theologically rooted in the Islamic texts, he admits that there is "a grain of truth" behind the grievances and anger that many Muslims, not just the fundamentalists, feel towards the West. Zeidan sees some parallels between Islamic and Protestant fundamentalism, but ultimately the difference lies in what is found in the original texts and the contrast between the lives and characters of Muhammad and Jesus. Christians should not "fall for politically correct representations of Islam" as a religion of peace. However, at the same time they should not be discouraged as "Muslims around the world are increasingly disenchanted with Islam and are turning to Christ". God is in control and may even have allowed the current global situation to provoke increased zeal on the behalf of Christians.

APPENDIX D: INTRODUCTORY LETTERS

D.1 – NATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

Dear (name)

I am writing to ask you whether it would be possible to interview you as part of my PhD research. I don't think we've ever met, although (appropriate mention of mutual friends) and I have obviously read your books.

To tell you a little of my background I spent 10 years living and working in the Arab Muslim world as a university lecturer. Since returning to this country 6 years ago, I have been leading Yeovil Community Church in Somerset and have also been involved in speaking on the subject of Islam and Muslims at several Evangelical conferences (New Wine 05 and 06, Grapevine 06 and Spring Harvest 08) as well as many churches and training events. During this period I have become increasingly interested in the challenges posed to Evangelicals by the presence of Islam in the UK and the range of responses to this.

In October 07 I started PhD research at Exeter University under the supervision of Prof Grace Davie and with partial funding from the following trusts: St Luke's College Foundation, Spalding Trust, Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust, Lady Ogle Christian Trust and the Foundation of St Matthias. The research, provisionally entitled 'Evangelicalism, Islam and the Public Sphere in the UK', is looking at how the presence of Islam may be impacting Evangelicalism and particularly how it is changing the engagement of Evangelicals in the Public Sphere. I am also looking at the range of Evangelical perspectives on Islam and attitudes towards Muslims.

There are four distinct parts to my research. Firstly I will be reviewing the Evangelical public discourse with regard to Islam, particularly since 9/11. This will include looking at books, magazine articles, newspaper interviews, websites and speeches. Secondly, I will be interviewing some of the key British Evangelical leaders, writers and speakers on Islam. Thirdly, I will be interviewing church leaders from a cross-section of large Evangelical churches in London. Lastly, if time and resources permit, I will conduct a few small focus groups amongst lay members in a couple of those churches.

My main aim in these interviews will be to look at attitudes towards Islam and Muslims and how these influence participation in the Public Sphere at different levels. I am coming to the research with an open mind and, as far as possible, no particular denominational or personal bias in order to enquire what is happening in the Evangelical community with respect to Islam in the UK today.

The interview will cover the following topic areas:

- Personal history and church background
- Relevant history of interaction with Muslims
- Current churchmanship
- Views on the relationship between church, society and the state
- Views with respect to the nature of Islam and its presence in British society
- Current practical interaction or dialogue with Muslims
- Current engagement in the Public Sphere with respect to Islam
- An assessment of future trajectories of interfaith relations between Evangelicals and Muslims

The interview will be recorded and stored digitally before being transcribed for which reason I will ask you to sign a consent form which describes the conditions placed on the use of this data by the Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter. Data from the interview – either attributed to you or anonymous at your discretion - may be included in my final thesis which will be held by the University of Exeter Library and may also be used in any subsequent publications. If you would like to review a copy of the transcript and make any changes prior to the writing of the final report and/or you would like to receive a short final summary of the research then you will be able to indicate this on the consent form.

If you are willing to be interviewed I wonder whether you would be free on any of these dates:

(dates)

If none of these dates are possible, then could you please suggest another date convenient to you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Richard McCallum

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D.2 – CHURCH LEADERS

Dear (name)

I am a church leader in Yeovil, teach on Islam and am also part of Global Connections' Muslim World Forum at the Evangelical Alliance. However, I am currently doing PhD research looking at *Evangelical responses to Islam* and wonder whether I could come and interview you – or another senior member of your staff - as part of my research. The interview would be a semi-structured conversation of 30-60 minutes at a time and place of your choosing and could either be attributed or anonymous.

My aim in doing this research is to help encourage the church in Britain in its response to Islam at this crucial time and I particularly want to interview *senior leaders* of Evangelical churches in London to get an idea of their perspectives and to see how they are seeking to educate and equip their congregations. I'm not looking for 'experts' on Islam and in fact would prefer not to interview those on staff who already have a specific interest or expertise in Islam and mission.

To tell you a little of my background I spent 10 years living and working in the Arab Muslim world as a university lecturer. Since returning to this country 6 years ago, I have been leading Yeovil Community Church in Somerset and have also been involved in speaking on the subject of Islam and Muslims at several Evangelical conferences as well as many churches and training events. During this period I have become increasingly interested in the challenges posed to Evangelicals by the presence of Islam in the UK.

So in October 07 I started PhD research at Exeter University under the supervision of Prof Grace Davie provisionally entitled 'Evangelicalism, Islam and the Public Sphere in the UK', looking at the range of Evangelical responses to Islam and Muslims. I am examining how the presence of Islam may be impacting Evangelicalism and particularly how it is changing the engagement of Evangelicals in the public sphere.

I currently plan to be in the London area on the following dates although if none of these suits then I am happy to try and arrange another time. If you are willing then please let me know what works for you.

(Dates)

I do hope that we will be able to meet to discuss what I feel is an increasingly important topic at this time. I can send more information about the interview and the research nearer the time.

I hope this finds you well and look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes

Richard McCallum

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORMS

E.1 – NATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

This project is an investigation into how the presence of Islam and Muslims in the UK is changing the nature of British Evangelicalism particularly as reflected in its engagement in the Public Sphere. It will look at the variety of Evangelical approaches to and public discourse on Islam and Muslims at three levels - national leadership, local church leadership and within the congregation - utilising textual analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Confidentiality

Interview tapes and transcripts will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described on this form and in the accompanying letter. Third parties will not be allowed to access them (except in the case of legal subpoena). If you request it, you will be sent a copy of *your* interview transcript so that you can comment on and edit it as you see fit.

Anonymity

I will be interviewing you in your public role as a writer and speaker, so I should very much like to use your name and the name of your organisation in my final report. However, if you would prefer to remain anonymous then you can give a pseudonym and organisational description of your own choosing in Section 2 below. Otherwise please sign Section 1.

1. Consent with use of name: I voluntarily agree to participate in the research specified above and to allow the use of my data for the specified purposes. I am aware that I can contact the interviewer to withdraw my consent at any time.

NAME:

SIGNATURE: **DATE:**

NAME OF CHURCH OR ORGANISATION:
.....

2. Consent with anonymity: I voluntarily agree to participate in the research specified above and to allow the use of my data for the specified purposes. I am aware that I can contact the interviewer to withdraw my consent at any time.

PLEASE TICK HERE: YES **NO**

DATE:

CHOSEN PSEUDONYM:

TYPE OF CHURCH OR ORGANISATION:

I would like the opportunity to review a transcript of the interview

I would like to receive a short final summary of the research

Contact details

For further information about the research or your interview data please contact:

Richard McCallum, Tel. 01935 471649, rjm215@exeter.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about the research contact:

Prof Grace Davie, Department of Sociology, University of Exeter, Devon, EX4 4EH

Tel. 01392 263302, g.r.c.davie@ex.ac.uk

E.2 – CHURCH LEADERS

This project is an investigation into how the presence of Islam and Muslims in the UK is changing the nature of British Evangelicalism particularly as reflected in its engagement in the public sphere. It will look at the variety of Evangelical approaches to and public discourse on Islam and Muslims at three levels - national leadership, local church leadership and within the congregation - utilising textual analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Confidentiality

Interview tapes and transcripts will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described on this form and in the accompanying letter. Third parties will not be allowed to access them (except in the case of legal subpoena). If you request it, you will be sent a copy of *your* interview transcript so that you can comment on and edit it as you see fit.

Anonymity

I will be interviewing you in your public role as a church leader and I should very much like to use your name and the name of your church in my final report. However, if you would prefer to remain anonymous then you can use a pseudonym and organisational description of your own choosing in Section 2 below. Otherwise please sign Section 1.

1. Consent with use of name: I voluntarily agree to participate in the research specified above and to allow the use of my data for the specified purposes. I am aware that I can contact the interviewer to withdraw my consent at any time.

NAME:

SIGNATURE: **DATE:**

NAME OF CHURCH OR ORGANISATION:
.....

2. Consent with anonymity: I voluntarily agree to participate in the research specified above and to allow the use of my data for the specified purposes. I am aware that I can contact the interviewer to withdraw my consent at any time.

PLEASE TICK HERE: YES **NO**

DATE:

CHOSEN PSEUDONYM:

TYPE OF CHURCH OR ORGANISATION:
.....

I would like the opportunity to review a transcript of my contribution to the focus group discussion

I would like to receive a short final summary of the research

Contact details

For further information about the research or your interview data please contact:

Richard McCallum, Tel. 01935 471649, rjm215@exeter.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about the research contact:

Prof Grace Davie, Department of Sociology, University of Exeter, Devon, EX4 4EH

Tel. 01392 263302, g.r.c.davie@ex.ac.uk

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

F.1 – NATIONAL PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Preliminaries

Explaining my research: What I am doing and why.

- Evangelical Christian Responses to Islam
- Effects of Islam on Evangelicalism
- The public sphere setting
- Producing something that will help Christians think through multiculturalism and Islam

What I need from you

- As you are a major national influencer
- Your understanding of Islam
- How you have come to that position
- How you see your role as an educator
- Your aims in educating Christians about Islam?

What will happen to the data

- Digitally stored
- Used in thesis and possibly any other book
- Do they want to check it first?

Option of anonymity

- Because they are already on record in the public sphere I would like to attribute quotes
- Will ensure anonymity if wanted

Sign consent form

Check recorder

Questions

1. Background

- a) Family, places lived
- b) Faith, Church
- c) Education: theology and Islamics
- d) Taxonomy (see table)

2. Views of church and state

- a) How do you see the church in relation to secular s
- b) Christendom v Anabaptist
- c) Separation of church and state, established church
- d) Is Britain a Christian country?
- e) How do they view multiculturalism? Is there room for Islam?
- f) Role of church today

Taxonomy of Evangelicals in Britain	
Mainstream Evangelical	Charismatic Evangelical
Conservative	Renewal
Open	New Church
	Pentecostal

3. Views on Islam

- a) How would you describe your attitude toward Islam?
- b) Would you theologically be an exclusivist, inclusivist or pluralist?
- c) Would you use the word *Allah* to talk about *God*?
- d) Relevant background on Muslims: events, friends, mission, MBBs, dialogue
- e) What is the nature of Islam? Is there any good in Islam? Truth?
- f) Is Islam inherently violent?
- g) How homogenous are Muslims? Can we generalise?

4. Case studies

- a) The 2008 Shari'a debate
- b) "A Common Word between Us and You"
- c) In the light of the doctrine of *taqiyya*, can Muslims be trusted?
- d) Muslim 'no go' areas in the UK
- e) The incitement to religious hatred bill
- f) The London 'mega-mosque'
- g) The prayer call in Oxford
- h) 9/11, 7/7 and 'war on terror'
- i) How significant are views on Israel in affecting reactions to Muslims?

5. Current engagement with Islam and Muslims

- a) Current involvement with Muslims: dialogue, apologetics, polemics
- b) What types of responses do you see from Evangelicals to Muslims/Islam?

6. Role as an influencer in the public sphere

- a) What do you feel is your role and what are your aims as an 'influencer' in the Evangelical community?
- b) Educator, evangelist, warner, peacemaker or ?
- c) Who are you trying to influence? The public or just Christians?
- d) What is your recent and current involvement/? Invitations to churches, conferences?
- e) Who is most influential within Evangelical community?
- f) How can Evangelicals speak to public sphere?
- g) What has been your experience in the public sphere? Is the media fair?
- h) What publications on Islam do you have? Books? Journals? Articles?
- i) Which London churches have you worked with?

7. Future trajectories

- a) What is the role of EA?
- b) What will happen to Evangelicalism?
- c) Will Britain become Muslim?

F.2 – CHURCH LEADER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Preliminaries

Explaining my research: What I am doing and why.

- Evangelical Christian Responses to Islam
- Effects of Islam on Evangelicalism
- The public sphere setting
- Producing something that will help Christians think through multiculturalism and Islam

What I need from you

- As you are a leader of a large influential church
- Your understanding of Islam
- How you have come to that position
- How you are trying to equip your church wrt Islam
- The resources and influences you draw on

What will happen to the data

- Digitally stored
- Used in thesis and possibly any other book
- Do they want to check it first?

Option of anonymity

- Because they are already on record in the public sphere I would like to attribute quotes
- Will ensure anonymity if wanted

Sign consent form

Check recorder

Questions

1. Church Background

- How would you describe the church?
Taxonomy (see table)
- What sort of area, class, age ethnic profile of congregation
- Your own role and experience in the church
- Proximity to or contact with Muslims

2. Focus on Muslims

- How serious is the issue of Islam and Muslims in Britain?
- How do you understand the situation?
- Is it something you are concerned about? Fear? Or is it an opportunity?
- Is the church in this country in competition with Islam?
- Is the British Evangelical church equipped to cope with the presence of Islam?

Taxonomy of Evangelicals in Britain	
Mainstream Evangelical	Charismatic Evangelical
Conservative	Renewal
Open	New Church
	Pentecostal

3. Equipping the congregation

- a) What has the greatest effect on your members wrt Islam? Church or media?
- b) Have you specifically tried to train, teach or equip your members?
- c) Have you preached on Islam?
- d) Have you invited a visiting speaker or conducted seminars?
- e) Do you recommend books or other resources?
- f) Table of authors/speakers (see below). Mark which ones they have heard of etc.

4. Views on Islam

- a) How would you describe your attitude toward Islam?
- b) Would you theologically be an exclusivist, inclusivist or pluralist?
- c) When Muslims say that they worship *Allah* do you understand that they are seeking to worship the same God?
- d) What is the nature of Islam? Demonic? Is there any good in Islam? Truth?
- e) Is Islam inherently violent?
- f) How homogenous are Muslims? Can we generalise?

5. Some Case studies

- a) How did/would you react and advise the church on:
 - 1. The London 'mega-mosque' – and the building/number of mosques in general
 - 2. The prayer call in Oxford
 - 3. The incitement to religious hatred bill
 - 4. "A Common Word between Us and You" (have they heard of it)
 - 5. The 2008 Shari'a debate
 - 6. Muslim 'no go' areas in the UK
- b) What is the church's stance on Israel? Does this affect reactions to Muslims?
- c) How do you understand 9/11, 7/7 and 'war on terror'?
- d) Have you ever heard of *taqiyya*? Can Muslims be trusted?

6. Engagement with Islam and Muslims

- a) What is the best approach to Muslims: evangelistic, dialogue, apologetics, polemics, service?
- b) What types of responses do you see from Evangelicals to Muslims/Islam?

7. Church and the public realm

- a) What is the proper relationship between church and state?
- b) In what sense is Britain a 'Christian country'?
- c) Should Christians/the church have a political response to these sorts of issues?
- d) What sorts of things can Christians do? Lobbying? Parties?
- e) What role does EA have?
- f) Have you ever heard of the Christian People's Alliance?

8. Future trajectories

- a) What effect do you think Islam will have on Evangelicalism?
- b) What will happen to Evangelicalism?
- c) What effect will Islam have on Britain? Will Britain become Muslim?

Which of these speakers/authors do you recognise?
 Have they spoken in your church or had influence in other ways?
 Which of their books have you read or what event did you hear them speak at?

Name	Recognise	Spoken at church	Book read or event heard at
Brother Andrew			
John Azumah			
Steve Bell			
Colin Chapman			
Baroness Caroline Cox			
Kenneth Cragg			
Martin Goldsmith			
Tim Green			
Martin Hall			
Bryan Knell			
Richard McCallum			
Anthony McRoy			
Chawkat Moucarry			
Bill Musk			
Michael Nazir-Ali			
Frog & Amy Orr-Ewing			
David Pawson			
Peter Riddell			
Sam Solomon			
Patrick Sookhdeo			
Andrew Smith			
Jay Smith			
Richard Sudworth			
Jenny Taylor			
Nicholas Wood			
David Zeidan			
Other(s)			

APPENDIX G: CODES FOR ANALYSIS

1. The EPS

2. Opportunities for public speaking/writing

3. Background of participant

4. Interaction with Muslims

5. Church & society

- a) Britain a Christian country
- b) Establishment
- c) Christians in public life
- d) Role of the church

6. Theological issues

- a) Muhammad
- b) Qur'an
- c) Nature/origin of Islam
- d) Exclusive-inclusive-plural
- e) Dis/continuity of Christianity & Islam
- f) Same God?
- g) Islamic denials of Christian doctrine
- h) Apocalyptic & dispensational views

7. Missiological approaches

- a) Dialogue approach
- b) Apologetic approach
- c) Polemic approach
- d) Debate

8. Christian-Muslim relations

- a) Reciprocity
- b) Working together
- c) Lack of freedom in Muslim countries
- d) Dialogue and forums
- e) Common Word

9. Responses to Islam

- a) Islam is distinct from Muslims
- b) Diversity of Islam
- c) Fear & scaremongering
- d) Grace response
- e) Importance of church response
- f) Right wing + link to Christians

10. Islam/state/Islamization

- a) Bias to Islam
- b) Conspiracy
- c) Taqiyya
- d) An Islamic takeover
- e) Responses/Solutions

11. Multiculturalism

- a) Islamophobia
- b) Prayer call
- c) Mosque building
- d) Ghettos/No-go areas

12. Sharia/law

- a) Apostasy
- b) Rights/dhimma
- c) Archbishop's lecture
- d) Blasphemy/religious hatred bill

13. Violence

- a) Causes of violence
- b) Islam inherently violent
- c) Crusades
- d) Jihad
- e) War on Terror
- f) Christian violence
- g) Palestine-Israel

14. Equipping the church

- a) Roles
- b) Opportunities

15. Christian-Christian relations

- a) 2009 Spat
- b) Awareness of other Christian responses

16. Church leader responses

- a) General response
- b) Influence
- c) Mission approach
- d) Relations + meeting
- e) Equipping + training
- f) Allah = God
- g) Inherent violence
- h) Campaigns + politics
- i) Mosques
- j) Prayer call
- k) Incitement
- l) taqiyya
- m) Common Word
- n) Sharia
- o) No-go areas
- p) Israel-Palestine
- q) War on terror
- r) Christian country
- s) Identity
- t) Future

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