"Islam and Early Ecumenical Thought: Protestant Internationalism in the Arab Middle East"
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After the first representatives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) ventured to India and the Mediterranean in the early nineteenth century, American Protestant missionary efforts in the Islamic world were linked to, and often dependent upon, the work of British missionaries and imperial agents in these regions. Such trans-national ties shaped American and British missionary strategies and the ways that missionaries and their supporters back home thought about Islam. More systematic attempts to evangelize Muslims in the Middle East and South Asia emerged in the late nineteenth century, building on wide-ranging international ties among Protestants in Europe, North America, Africa, and Asia. Advancements in international travel and communication, for example, facilitated the publication and global dissemination of evangelistic tracts for Muslims. Then in the early twentieth century these efforts coalesced as part of the ecumenical missionary movement—a largely Protestant movement that combined aspirations for global Christian unity with socio-political notions of internationalism.

Islam was among the topics of conversation at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 and the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in 1928; and the same internationalist sentiments that inspired these well-known gatherings also led to early twentieth-century ecumenical conferences for missionaries to Muslims in Cairo (1906) and Lucknow (1911), as well as the series of Middle Eastern regional meetings that IMC president John Mott coordinated in 1924. As local responses to these meetings in Cairo,

Lucknow, and Jerusalem attest,[1] Christians and Muslims across the Islamic world were not merely the objects of western missionary work. They were active participants in this history, sometimes in partnership with missionary colleagues and at other times in resistance to western religious and political power. While transnational networks facilitated Christian and Muslim collaboration with their co-religionists in other parts of the globe in the early twentieth century, nationalist movements also used patriotic ties to a common land and culture to unite Christians and Muslims in resistance to imperialism.

This paper considers how American and British Protestant missionaries negotiated between their own national and ecumenical allegiances as they sought to change the Islamic world, and how local Christians and Muslims who encountered missionaries responded with their own forms of nationalism and internationalism. The paper focuses primarily on the Arab Middle East, while recognizing how British and American missionaries across West and South Asia and North Africa were in ongoing conversation and collaboration in their efforts to convert the Islamic world. My analysis is centered on the original Christian heartland—the Holy Land— from which the faith expanded to Europe, and the region to which modern Europeans and American missionaries later endeavored to spread their own forms of Christianity. I aim to offer salient points of comparison and contrast with Christian unity movements in regions of the world where Christianity has a shorter heritage.

The paper draws on a variety of archival materials from British and American libraries to address the following questions:

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[1] Deanna Ferree Womack, "A View from the Muslim Arabic Press, 1928: The International Missionary Conference in Jerusalem." *Exchange: Journal of Contemporary Christianities in Context* 46 (2017): 184.

1) In their characterizations of Islam, how did late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American and British missionaries in the Middle East connect visions of global Christian community with their own western cultural prejudices?

2) How did this Protestant ecumenism compare to two forms of emerging internationalism in the early twentieth-century Middle East: Arab nationalism and pan-Islamism?

The paper is divided into two main sections. The first examines instances of collaboration and competition between American and British missionaries who worked in Syria and Palestine and convened ecumenical missionary conferences on Islam in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The second section explores Christian involvement alongside Muslims in proto-nationalist and nationalist movements in the Arab Middle East. The paper then compares Christian movements for global unity to pan-Islamic movements of this period and concludes that Christian nationalism took on very different forms in the west than it did in the Middle East. Whereas western Christian missionaries' nationalist allegiances were often linked with particular ecclesial identities—emphasizing rival traditions rather than ecumenism—this study shows that Arab nationalism upheld solidarity between Christians of diverse Middle Eastern traditions and between Christians and Muslims.

While limiting the scope of this inquiry to the Arab world, I invite conference participants to comment during our discussion time on how this study compares to nationalism and internationalism in other regions of the Islamic word – particularly in South Asia.

American & British Missionaries in the Middle East: Competition & Collaboration

American Protestant missionary pioneers in the early 1800s followed in the footsteps of their earlier British missionary counterparts, while also relying on the British commercial and

diplomatic presence to facilitate their own entry into several parts of the Islamic world,

including North Africa, the Levant, Turkey, Iran, and the Indian subcontinent. This collaboration

was essential for the establishment and survival of American missions in the Middle East, while

both British and American missionaries on the ground benefitted from mutual collaboration

across denominational lines (often between Americans of the Reformed Tradition and British

Anglicans). For example, in Ottoman Syria (present day Syria, Lebanon, and Israel/Palestine),

American Presbyterians employed some British men and quite a few British women. British

teacher training schools in Syria educated Arab women who became school teachers for the

American mission, and British and American Protestants formed one English-speaking church in

Beirut, known as the Anglo-American Congregation, that alternated between British and

American pastors.[2]

Despite instances of rivalry, my research suggests that even as the US grew as a global

power around the turn of the century, and Americans therefore became less dependent upon

British power, the American and British mission agencies in the Middle East maintained

relationships of complementarity. Anglo-American partnerships deepened with the push

toward missions to Muslims in the early twentieth century. American and British Protestants

shared similar (often negative) characterizations of Islam and comparable methods aimed at

converting the Islamic world. They worked in close partnership, for example, to produce

evangelistic literature for Muslim readers and to inform an English reading public back home

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[2] Deanna Ferree Womack, *Protestants, Gender and the Arab Renaissance in Late Ottoman Syria* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 13, 36; *A Historical Sketch of the Anglo-American Congregation, Beyrout, Syria* (Beirut: American Mission Press, 1873); Robert M. Copeland, *The Sesquicentennial History of Community Church, Beirut, Lebanon, 1823–1973* (Beirut: Community Church of Beirut, 1974).

about Islam and the Middle East. As the first subsection below explains, ecclesial and doctrinal

particularities led the Americans and British to take on very different approaches to Middle

Eastern Christians. Church ties and national affiliations were central in cases of British and

American rivalry over territorial jurisdiction. In light of these tensions that flared periodically,

the shared British-American approaches to Islam that I highlight in the second subsection below

are all the more significant. Nationalist competition aside, when it came to evangelizing

Muslims, Christian ecumenical internationalism defined the relations between American and

British Protestant missionaries in the Middle East.

Cases of Competition

The history of modern missions in the Middle East can be mapped alongside efforts of

European imperial expansion. British influence opened the way for Protestant missionaries

(including Americans) to enter the region, while France and Russia sent Catholic and Orthodox

missionaries, respectively, to the Levant as imperial agents and as a buffer against Protestant

evangelism of Catholic and Eastern Orthodox populations. Russian missionaries focused on

Syria and Palestine, and the French cultivated ties with a diversity of Catholics across the

region, and especially with the Maronites of Lebanon. With their sights set on reaching the

entire Middle Eastern population – of Christians, Muslims, and Jews – Protestants engaged in

formal and informal "comity" agreements carving the region into zones of influence based on

nationality and church affiliation.[3] Today, the legacy of British Anglicans and German Lutherans

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[3] David Hollinger, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 95-97, 107-110.

is strong in Palestine, while the prominence of Presbyterians in Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt can be traced to the early work of American Presbyterians (and to a few smaller British Presbyterian missionary societies in regions of Syria outside American jurisdiction). Likewise, because American Congregationalists worked in Turkey, the Armenian Evangelical Churches of the Middle East today are Congregational.[4]

Despite the history of British colonialism in Egypt, the influence of American Presbyterian missions (rather than British Anglican missions) is especially prominent there, where the Coptic Evangelical (Presbyterian) Church today is the largest Protestant denomination by far.[5] This came about because high church British Anglicans took a very different approach to the Orthodox Christian populations of the Middle East than did American evangelicals. The British in Egypt sought to partner with the Coptic Orthodox, for example, and reform the church from within rather than drawing Copts into the Anglican Church. Therefore, as Paul Sedra documented, even the more evangelically-oriented British Church Missionary

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[4] For studies on various denominationally-based missions in these regions, see: Mehemet Ali Doğan and Heather J. Sharkey (eds.), *American Missionaries and the Middle East: Foundational Encounters* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2011); Eleanor H. Tejirian and Reeva Specter Simon, *Conflict, Conquest, and Conversion: Two Thousand Years of Christian Missions in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Beth Baron, *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014); Barbara Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers: Gender, Reform, and American Interventions in the Ottoman Balkans and the Near East* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013); Adam H. Becker, *Revival and Awakening: American Evangelical Missionaries in Iran and the Origins of Assyrian Nationalism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Jeremy Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism, and the Ottoman Armenians 1878–1896* (London: Frank Cass, 1993); Paul Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers and Education in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011); David D. Grafton, *Piety, Politics, and Power: Lutherans Encountering Islam in the Middle East* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009); Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

[5] *Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, World Christian Encyclopedia, 3rd edition (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020),* 267. The Coptic Evangelical Church, Synod of the Nile, currently has 280,000 adherents in Egypt. See also Rebecca Skreslet Hernandez, "At the Borders of Identity: Reflections on Egyptian Protestant Public Theology in the Wake of the Arab Spring," *Exchange: Journal of Contemporary Christianities in Context,* 49:3-4 (2020), 237-256.

Society (CMS) focused on "uplifting" the Coptic Church through educational institutions. This British work included a short-lived seminary for the training of Coptic Orthodox priests run in collaboration with the Coptic patriarch.[6] American Congregationalist and Presbyterian missionaries, on the other hand, named internal reform of Eastern churches as an initial goal, but quickly turned to conversion of existing Christians and the creation of new Protestant churches in the Middle East (a goal shared with British evangelicals but not generally with the Anglican hierarchy). Anglicans objected, often forcefully, to American practices of recruiting Middle Eastern Christians into new mission churches. Working with Syriac Christians, for example, "in Eastern Anatolia and western Iran [Anglican missionaries] struggled to explain that to become Christian was not to become English or to acquire any of the rights and protections of the English."[7] In Palestine, as well, after ending the joint British Anglican-German Lutheran bishopric of Jerusalem, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the British Anglican bishop sought improve relations with the Greek Orthodox church. Thereafter, the Jerusalem bishopric "focused on serving its English congregation and evangelizing Jews, Muslims, and other non-Christians."[8]

While the leaders in the Anglican Church hierarchy critiqued American Presbyterians' approaches to missions among Middle Eastern Christians, others – especially women in the

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[6] Eleanor H. Tejirian and Reeva Spector Simon, *Conflict, Conquest, and Conversion: Two Thousand Years of Christian Missions in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 79; Paul D. Sedra, "John Leider and His Mission in Egypt: The Evangelical Ethos at Work Among Nineteenth Century Copts," *Journal of Religious History* 28 (2004): 224. See also Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity.*

[7] Tejirian and Simon, *Conflict, Conquest, and Conversion,* 197.

[8] Deanna Womack, "Imperial Politics and Theological Practices: Comparative Transformations in Anglo-American and Russian Orthodox Missions to Syria-Palestine." *ARAM Periodical* 25:1-2 (2013): 3. The more evangelically-oriented CMS, however, continued working among Christians in Palestine without yielding large numbers of converts.

CMS and in faith missions – collaborated with them. Tensions arose whenever the Americans

feared British encroachment on their territory or sensed that Anglicans might establish their

own competing churches nearby. These tensions took on a gendered dimension in Syria, where

the American Presbyterian mission sought British and other European missionary women to fill

vacancies in their mission institutions[9] and where the independent female-led British Syrian

Mission's (BSM) jurisdiction overlapped in some places with American territory. Because the

BSM did not include British (male) clergy, in locations like Mount Lebanon, where both missions

were present, "converts and teachers from the British schools became members in the

American mission's Evangelical Churches, and the Americans focused on schools for boys rather

than opening rival girls' schools."[10] The men of the American mission were proactive in

preventing the BSM from establishing ties with British clergy that might interfere with this

mutual arrangement. On several occasions in the 1870s and 1880s, the BSM showed interest in

hiring an Anglican clergyman from the CMS to superintend the British Syrian schools, but

American men in Beirut objected adamantly. In pointed letters to the BSM directors and to the

CMS, the Americans reminded the British of the established territorial jurisdictions. In one such

communication, the American mission's Henry Harris Jessup (1832-1910) wrote to Henry

Wright of the CMS, saying:

> I can see no occasion for sending a Clerical Superintendent. The British Syrian Schools
> are almost without exception in places where both teachers and pupils are under the
> pastoral care of either American missionaries or native Protestant pastors, and the
> introduction of a clerical superintendent would lead to confusion in the native churches.
> Our relations with your honored Missionaries in Palestine are of the most fraternal
> character. Disaffected natives in Es Salt [al-Salt, Transjordan] and other places have

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[9] Deanna Ferree Womack, "Medical Arts and the Healing of Souls: A Transnational Story of Tuberculosis Care in Early Twentieth-Century Syria and Lebanon." *Practical Matters* 11 (2018): 13, 20 note 13.

[10] Womack, *Protestants, Gender and the Arab Renaissance,* 280.

repeatedly petitioned us to send preachers to them and we have always absolutely and utterly refused to have anything to do with them.[11]

In another message, this time to BSM director Augusta Mott, Jessup depicted the potential interference by British clergy as a threat "from ritualistic intruders from Protestant lands," showing distain for Anglicanism while claiming the souls of Syria for the Reformed Tradition.[12] Such pressure kept the British Syrian Mission from hiring Anglican clergy until 1936, when the New Zealander Evan Harris became the mission's first chaplain. The second missionary pastor, the well-known British missionary Kenneth Cragg, joined the BSM shortly thereafter.[13]

Ecumenical Collaboration

Despite such periodic American-British squabbles, when it came to missions to Muslims, the sentiments and strategies of American and British Protestants in the Middle East were largely aligned. A concerted focus on evangelizing Muslims picked up steam in the late nineteenth century missionary movement, after British and American mission societies had already established their territorial jurisdictions in the region. Rather than competing with existing missions, newer Protestant organizations set out to "occupy" lands that had not already been claimed, and there were many such opportunities across the vast Islamic world. For example,

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[11] Henry Harris Jessup to Henry Wright, December 20, 1876: Presbyterian Historical Society Syria Mission Papers (hereafter PHS), 115-5-13. Also quoted in Womack, *Protestants, Gender and the Arab Renaissance,* 282.

[12] Henry H. Jessup to Mrs. A. Mentor Mott, February 19, 1888: PHS 115-5-13.

[13] Francis E. Scott, *Dare and Persevere: The Story of One Hundred Years of Evangelism in Syria and Lebanon, from 1860 to 1960* (London: Lebanon Evangelical Mission/Camelot Press, 1960)*,* 98, 100. Such territorialism, it might be noted, could also occur between missionaries of the same Protestant tradition but different nationalities. American Presbyterian missionaries also objected when Presbyterians from the Free Church of Scotland took over a network of independent Protestant schools in Mount Lebanon within the American Syria Mission's territory. Michael Marten, "The Free Church of Scotland in 19th-Century Lebanon," *CHRONOS: Revue d'Histoire de l'Université de Balamand* 5 (2002): 51-105.

Samuel Zwemer established the Dutch Reformed Arabian Mission with James Cantine and John Lansing in the Gulf States, which had not been a focus for western missionaries previously.[14] In part because territorial competition was minimal, American and British Protestants in the young ecumenical movement collaborated closely with each other and with their counterparts from North Africa to South Asia in the effort to reach Muslims. In this section I provide three examples of such American-British collaboration.

First, we can turn back to the aforementioned veteran of the American Syria Mission centered in Beirut, Henry Harris Jessup, who arrived in Syria as an ABCFM missionary in 1856 and continued working under the Presbyterian Board from 1870 until his death in 1910. Jessup was the American missionary in Syria who wrote most prolifically about Islam and endeavored most zealously – although rather unsuccessfully – to expand the American Syria Mission's influence on Muslims. He did so by maintaining a transnational network of missionaries and mission supporters, most of whom were American or British. Jessup's publications and his lectures while on furlough in the US built on the well-worn trope of Muslim women as passive victims, Muslim men as violent oppressors, and Islam itself as inhumane and immoral.[15] With this work, Jessup had a lasting impact on Anglophone Protestant narratives about Islam and the production and distribution of evangelistic literature for Muslims across the globe. In particular, Jessup contributed to the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century Protestant missionary

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[14] Lewis R. Scudder, III, *The Arabian Mission's Story: In Search of Abraham's Other Son* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

[15] Henry Harris Jessup, *The Mohammedan Missionary Problem* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1879). Although I have found little evidence that Jessup himself had any real sustained personal contact with Muslim women in Syria, he wrote with authority about the "depths of coarseness and brutality, of cruelty and bestiality [of husbands towards their wives and daughters], which are only found among Mohammedans." Henry Harris Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs* (New York: Dodd & Mead, 1873), 18.

effort to win converts through controversial literature (a missionary genre) by recruiting the Syrian Protestant evangelist, Yusif ʿAtiya, to write two of the most widely published evangelistic tracts for Muslims.

The first was a novel titled *Sweet First-Fruits.* It quickly became a favorite among Protestant missionaries and through ecumenical collaboration among missionaries throughout the Islamic world was translated into Turkish, Persian, Urdu, English and Chinese after the first Arabic edition appeared in 1893.[16] Published the following year, the second text was an apologetic tract titled *The Beacon of Truth.* It received nearly equal acclaim in missionary circles, and, in Samuel Zwemer's assessment, the author of these two texts did "more to shake the whole fabric of the false prophet than all the missionaries since Henry Martyn."[17] William Temple Gairdner, a British Anglican missionary of the Church Missionary Society in Egypt expressed similar affirmation of the Syrian author's work, explaining, "The two best controversial apologetic books ever produced in the Moslem East (probably) *Sweet First-Fruits* and *The Beacon of Truth* (translated by Sir William Muir) were both by a Syrian Christian and entirely original works."[18] British-American collaboration was also necessary to facilitate the

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[16] S. M. Zwemer, "Arabic Controversial Literature for Moslems," *The Missionary Review of the World* 24(10) (1901): 735; Isaac Mason, "Christian Literature for Chinese Moslems," *The Moslem World* 10, no. 2 (April 1920): 167. The Arabic text is [Yusif ʿAtiya], *al-Bakura al-Shahiyya fi al-Riwayat al-Diniyya*, eighth printing (n.d.; first edition, Leipzig: 1893).

[17] Zwemer, "Arabic Controversial Literature," 735.

[18] *The Church in the Mission Field: Report of Commission II, World Missionary Conference, 1910* (Edinburgh/London: Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier and New York/Chicago/Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 257. The report quoted Gairdner. The following English translations that Gairdner referenced were used to educate Christian readers and train missionaries for work among Muslim populations: William Muir, trans., *Sweet First-Fruits: A Tale of the Nineteenth Century on the Truth and Virtue of the Christian Religion* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1893); William Muir, trans., *The Beacon of Truth, or Testimony of the Coran to the Truth of the Christian Religion* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1894).

production and distribution of 'Atiya's writings because, due to the press restrictions in the

Ottoman Empire, these text had to be printed elsewhere.[19]

From a second example, the 1907 book entitled *Our Moslem Sisters: A Cry of Need from the Lands of Darkness Interpreted by Those who Heard It*, we can see how enthusiasts of Muslim missions continued such American-British partnerships and championed the cause of Muslim women in order to garner sympathy and financial support. This book was co-written by Samuel Zwemer and Anne Van Sommer, of the Egypt General Mission (an evangelical British faith mission). The two authors conveyed deeply gendered theological judgments about Islam, saying: "[I]n looking at the millions of Moslems in the world to-day, and wondering why they are … rather drifting backward than advancing, we turn to their women and find the cause…The Lord Jesus is the only prophet come to this world who has raised women to what God meant them to be. It is only He who can save our Moslem sisters."[20] The book also demonstrates how by the early twentieth century missionaries began using "stock photos" to deepen the connection between mission supporters and Muslim women and children. We see, for example, a destitute-looking Tunisian woman and child pictured in the book. The caption reads: "A mother and her daughter from Tunis." Such staged photos (often originating in the studios of colonial photographers) were sent individually to mission supporters, and the most popular

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[19] Jessup facilitated this process by sending the manuscript of *Sweet First-Fruits* to the aforementioned Scottish Orientalist and mission supporter William Muir in London. Muir arranged for the first edition to be printed in Leipzig and then sent back to Syria by way of Egypt. Subsequent editions of the novel and *The Beacon of Truth,* were printed in Egypt, where mission presses had freer rein under the British occupation. Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years,* vol. 2, 567. See Womack, *Protestants, Gender and the Arab Renaissance,* 117-119.

[20] Anne Van Sommer and Samuel Zwemer, *Our Moslem Sisters: A Cry of Need from the Lands of Darkness Interpreted by Those who Heard It*, ed. Sommer and Samuel M. Zwemer (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1907), 15.

photos were reprinted again and again in British and American mission publications for decades.[21]

Third and finally, the collaborations between American and British missionaries, particularly around literature for Muslims, coalesced in the ecumenical conferences for missions to Muslims in Cairo (1906) and Lucknow (1911). This pattern continued after the First World War in the regional mission conferences John Mott held in various parts of the Middle East in 1924[22] and in particular sessions of the IMC meeting at Jerusalem in 1928, as discussed in the next section of this paper. The writings of the Syrian evangelist Yusif 'Atiya, for example, gained attention at the Cairo and Lucknow gatherings and remained on missionary lists of controversial literature far into the twentieth century.[23] Likewise, the writings and public addresses by veteran missionaries about Islam and the Muslim world were a central focus when members of various North American and European mission societies and denominations convened to share and receive guidance for their common work. At Lucknow, in particular, the

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[21] One image that Protestant mission organizations in the Middle East frequently used showed two men at prayer in a mosque. One knelt with hands resting on his knees, and the other was prostrate, his head on his prayer rug. The British Syrian Mission, a female-led society in Ottoman Syria, used this photo in early twentieth-century publications, along with shots of other men praying and of veiled women in "Town Costume." The Church Missionary Society in London used the same photograph of the two praying men in its "Picture and Fact" postcard series. The "fact" printed beside the picture emphasized the rigid enforcement of Muslim prayer posture. Photos of fully veiled Muslim women were intended to convey similar notions of religious rigidity. *One Hundred Syrian Pictures: Illustrating the Work of the British Syrian Mission* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1903); Missionary Postcard Collection: Yale University Divinity School (hereafter YDS), Record Group 101-87-109. The CMS postcard in YDS 101-87-114 read: "Of Mohammedanism it has been said that the minutest change of posture in prayer would call for much heavier censure than outward profligacy or absolute neglect.

[22] John R. Mott, *Conferences of Christian Workers among Moslems, 1924: A Brief Account of the Conferences Together with their Findings and Lists of Members* (New York: International Missionary Council, 1924).

[23] E. M. Wherry, C. G. Mylrea and S. M. Zwemer (eds.), *Lucknow, 1911: Being Papers Read and Discussions on the Training of Missionaries and Literature for Muslims at the General Conference on Missions to Muslims held at Lucknow, Jan. 23–28, 1911* (London: Christian Literature Society for India, 1911), 128, 149, 176, 180, 240, 275; Henry Harris Jessup, "Introductory Paper," in S. M. Zwemer, E. M. Wherry, and James L. Barton (eds.), *The Mohammedan World of To-day, Being Papers Read at the First Missionary Conference on Behalf of the Mohammedan World held at Cairo April 4th–9th, 1906* (New York: Fleming H. Revel, 1906), 15.

conference lectures focused on the twin goals of producing literature for educating

missionaries and for evangelizing Muslims.[24] British-American collaboration was essential for

both goals in the Middle East. Along these lines, British missionaries Anne Van Sommer and

Arthur T. Upson had established the Nile Mission Press in 1905 in Cairo to supplement the work

of the American Mission Press in Beirut, the oldest Arabic mission press in the region. On the

American side, Samuel Zwemer, the primary organizer of the Cairo and Lucknow conferences,

founded in *The Moslem World* journal 1911 (now *The Muslim World,* sponsored by Hartford

Seminary since 1938) with the intention of informing Christian readers and missionary recruits

about Islam. He was also involved in the establishment of the American Christian Literature

Society for Moslems (ACLSM) in 1915, a society which evolved out of the New York Auxiliary for

the Nile Mission Press.[25]

In these examples, American and British missionaries upheld sentiments of Christian

internationalism, contributed to the transnational spread of ideas about Islam and evangelistic

literature for Muslims, and convened gatherings in various parts of the Islamic world to discuss

their common commitment to converting Muslims. The next section turns to the very different

movement of Arab nationalism and the ways that cultural and national identity united Arab

Christians and Muslims together in solidarity against the threats perceived from western

colonialism and missions.

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[24] Wherry, Mylrea, and Zwemer, *Lucknow, 1911*. At Lucknow, the officers and conference committee members were mainly British and American, but the delegates came also from German, Swiss, Austrian, Danish, and Canadian mission societies and a diversity of Protestant denominations (including Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Dutch Reformed, Baptist, Methodist, Brethren, Church of God, and Assemblies of God). See Ibid., 12-24. For the Cairo conference, see Zwemer, Wherry, and Barton, *The Mohammedan World of To-day*.

[25] Papers of the American Christian Literature Society for Moslems: PHS 81-27- 19; Charles R. Watson, "The American Christian Literature Society for Moslems," *The Moslem World* (April 1918): 178.

Arab Nationalism: Christian-Muslim Unity in the Holy Land

Pan-Arabism, the ideological principle behind the Arab nationalist movements of the early and middle twentieth century, falls on a spectrum between the territorially-based ethno-cultural nationalisms of modern nation states and the internationalist vision of (imagined) community stretching beyond nation-state boundaries.[26] The defining point of connection between Arab nationalists was the aim to manifest pan-Arab solidarity in an independent Arab nation state. Pan-Arabism held that the essential oneness of Arabic language speakers is further solidified by common ethnicity, culture, geographical location, and historical experience.[27] Common religion, however, as not essential to this unity. Pan-Arabism, as this section shall demonstrate, has historically cut across religious lines to unite Muslims and Christians of the Arab world.

Although some Arab nationalists prioritized Islam as a unifying force among Arabs and sympathized with pan-Islamic aims for a multi-ethnic Islamic state, ethno-linguistic affinity was the central factor in pan-Arabism rather than religion. Arab Christians played influential roles in Arab nationalist movements, contributing to a movement that was both ecumenical and international, in contrast to typical state-nationalisms.[28] The history of pan-Arabism may be

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[26] While the Arabic term *uruba* (or "Arabism") denotes a cultural bond between Arabs, English-language scholarship uses the term "pan-Arabism" interchangeably with "Arab nationalism" to indicate the aim for Arab political union. The concept of unity among all Arabs is so intrinsic to the meaning of Arab nationalism (*al-qawmiya al-'arabiya)* that authors rarely use a separate Arabic term for pan-Arabism.

[27] Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003); Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, and Reeva S. Simon, eds. *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Tawfic Farah, ed. *Pan-Arabism and Arab Nationalism: The Continuing Debate* (Boulder, CO: 1987).

divided roughly into four phases: 1) the proto-nationalist period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; 2) the emergence and development of Arab nationalism from the 1920s to 1970; 3) the rapid decline of pan-Arab political movements in the late twentieth century; and 4) a new phase of pan-Arabism seen in the popular uprisings of the Arab Spring that swept across the Arab world from late 2010 to 2012 and ousted authoritarian leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen.[29] With a focus on Arab Christian participation in pan-Arabism during rise of the ecumenical missionary movement in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century, the following subsections examine the first two phases of Arab nationalism.

Arab Proto-nationalism & Syrian Protestants

The stirrings of cultural Arabism that began in the Ottoman Arab provinces in the late nineteenth century developed into a pan-Arab political ideology after World War I (1914–1918). In his classic study of Arab nationalism, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab Nationalist Movement* (1938), George Antonius contended that Arab nationalism originated among Syrian Christians who came under the influence of American missionaries in Beirut in the nineteenth century. For Antonius, the Arab cultural awakening (*nahda)* initiated by Nasif al-Yaziji, Butrus al-Bustani, and other Syrian littérateurs contributed directly to Arab nationalism by stressing ties

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[28] Pan-Arab ideology differentiated Arab Muslims from their Turkish-speaking co-religionists who ruled the Ottoman Empire and later advocated for Turkish state-nationalism. Turkish nationalism, which united one particular religious and ethnic group with ideals for political autonomy over a specific territorial nation state.

[29] The designation "Arab Spring" indicates the persisting view of Arab nations as one bloc, even in the absence of pan-Arab political unity. While each uprising emerged within unique local circumstances, these movements also demonstrate that common expressions of Arab identity can still serve a political purpose among those who profess membership in an Arab national community.

between Arabic speakers from all of Syria's religious sects.[30] Other scholars point instead to

Islamic reformists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries like Muhammad 'Abduh,

Rashid Rida, and 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi.[31] While advocating for pan-Islamic solidarity in

response to European powers and Ottoman decline, these figures recognized the importance of

Arabs in Islamic history and the distinctiveness of Arabic as the language of the Quran.

Although these early cultural expressions of Arabism paved the way for nationalist

thought, none of these intellectuals articulated Arab nationalism as a political theory. To

understand how Arab nationalism came to unite many Muslims and Christians together in a

common political quest, we need to recognize the legacy of both Arab Christian and Arab

Muslim proto-nationalists and their shared pride in Arab-Islamic culture. The aforementioned

Butrus al-Bustani, for example, was a devoted Syrian Protestant intellectual, an employee of

the American Syria Mission, and a Bible translator who also pointed in his writings to the glories

of Islamic civilization as a point of celebration for Syrian Muslims and Christians alike. I will use

Bustani's work as a case study here to show the role of Christians – even devout practicing

Protestants – in advancing a proto-nationalist Arab consciousness.

Bustani, whom Fruma Zachs credits with initiating Syrian proto-nationalism,[32] was a

widely influential figure of the late nineteenth-century Arab Renaissance (or *Nahda*). The

Nahda, an intellectual revival emanating from the urban centers of Beirut and Cairo, included

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[30] George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1939), 41-55, 80.

[31] Stephen Paul Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2004)., 8-9; Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[32] Fruma Zachs, "Toward a Proto-Nationalist Concept of Syria Revisiting the American Presbyterian Missionaries in the Levant," *Die Welt des Islams* 41, no. 2 (2001): 160, 165.

political and cultural facets. Bustani and his colleagues in Syria, like the Melkite poet Nasif al-Yaziji, were involved mainly in the *Nahda's* cultural currents: establishing modern schools; founding the Arabic presses and establishing the first Arabic newspapers and magazines; and writing and disseminating books, poetry, and scientific studies.

Butrus al-Bustani's story demonstrates how Syrian intellectuals began constructing a proto-nationalist ideology that united Christians and Muslims under the banner of Syrian Arab culture. Bustani's National School in Beirut (founded in 1863) drew a population of Muslims, Druzes, and Christians of all denominations, which his former employer, the American mission, was never able to achieve.[33] This attention to national education demonstrates Bustani's move away from evangelistic missionary goals toward broader social concerns. That focus was clear in *Nafir Surriya* (*The Trumpet of Syria*)*,* a series of broadsheets Bustani published in 1860 in the wake of sectarian violence in Mt. Lebanon. To prevent further fighting between Maronite, Druze, and Muslim communities, Bustani employed Syrian patriotism as he called for unification based upon the love of the homeland (*al-watan*).[34] In the opening of each broadsheet, Bustani addressed his religiously diverse audience as "children of my homeland," and gave them a common identity as Syrians who "drink the same water and breathe the same

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[33] Besides partnering with American missionary Eli Smith in bible translation, for a period of time Bustani also preached in the mission's native churches. He asked to be relieved of such duties in 1854, however, after the mission refused to ordain him as the first native pastor of the Beirut church. Abdul Latif Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria, 1800–1901: A Study of Educational, Literary and Religious Work* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966), 132. Bustani wrote to Smith, "If you have the time and inclination, we should be much obliged if you would inform us, in clear language and with details, of the reasons for your negative reply to the [native] church, and of the defects which you have found in us."

[34] Attention to Arabic terminology shows that Syrian intellectuals of the Arab Renaissance like Bustani were not focused on the political concept of the nation-state, which might be expressed by the Arabic word *balad,* or country. Rather, they used the term *watan,* meaning homeland or "patria," to signal a common loyalty to the land of one's birth.

air" and who are one according to language (Arabic), land, and custom. He appealed to no particular religion but rather urged his readers to "to consider the texts and principles of whatever religion [they] practice."[35]

For the American missionaries with whom Bustani worked, national progress was directly related to Christianization, and converts to Protestantism were to become leaders of a new, modern Syrian society. For local Christian intellectuals like Bustani, however, Syrian welfare could only be achieved by moving beyond perceived religious divisions. As he explained, "The relationship between the citizen and the nation is like [the relationship between] members of a family, its father the nation, its mother the land, its one creator God, and its members from one soil…"[36] Bustani went even further as he drew on Islamic tradition (particularly the Hadith accounts of the Prophet Muhammad) to advocate for patriotic love instead of sectarian division. He wrote, "It is mentioned in the *Hadith* 'Love of the nation is from faith'" (*hub al-watan min al-iman*), and the same phrase was printed on the cover page of his scholarly journal, *al-Jinan* (established in 1870).[37] Such references reflected Bustani's fervent Ottomanism – his loyalty to the Ottoman Empire as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire in which Arab Christian citizens could thrive. Thus, his early Syrian proto-nationalism

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[35]Butrus al-Bustani, *Nafir Suriyya* (Beirut: Dar Fikr li-l-Abhath, 1990), 10-11. While addressing a specific historical event, such language is reminiscent of the ideas that members of the Syrian Society for Sciences and Arts expressed as early as 1852. Fruma Zachs makes the following statement about a book of the society's lectures that Bustani published in 1852: "What emerges most clearly from Bustani's collection is that as early as 1852 a group of local Christians had begun to conceive of 'Syria' as a single geographically unified region with its own socio-cultural characteristics and a shared history and economy. Religion is not mentioned anywhere, neither Christianity nor Islam." Zachs, "Toward a Proto-nationalist Concept," 168.

[36] Stephen Paul Sheehi, "Inscribing the Arab Self: Butrus al-Bustani and Paradigms of Subjective Reform." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 27, no. 1 (2000): 13.

[37] This is Stephen Sheehi's translation of al-Bustani's *Nafir Suriyya*. Sheehi, "Inscribing the Arab Self," 14.

emphasized Arabic language and culture but did not contain the political emphasis on state-nationalism that would emerge in the twentieth century. We turn to such developments next.

Pan-Arab Solidarity in Anti-Missionary Protests

It was only after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 that some Arab intellectuals began advocating for Arab political rights in response to Turkification policies in the Ottoman Arab provinces. However, the majority of Arabic speakers remained loyal to Ottoman rule in the early twentieth century, recognized Istanbul as the seat of Islamic authority, and identified themselves not primarily as Arabs but as members of particular religious communities, clans, or families. This situation began to change during WWI when Sharif Husayn of Mecca sided with the British and led the Arab Revolt against Ottoman authority in 1916. Through this alliance with the Allied powers, the Hashemite leader gained autonomous control of western Arabia and Islam's holiest cities, Mecca and Medina. With the subsequent demise of the Ottoman Empire, the division of the remaining Arab provinces between European powers, and the increase in Jewish immigration to Palestine, Arabs living under French and British mandates in Syria/Lebanon and Palestine began to demand independence. By the 1930s, cultural expressions of Arabism had transformed into a political, Arab nationalist outcry against western imperialism and Zionism.[38]

The relationship between Arabs and Islam is a critical component in the history of pan-Arabism.[39] To gain a popular following, Arab nationalist leaders appealed to the Arab people's

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[38] Basheer M. Nafi, *Arabism, Islamism and the Palestine Question, 1908-1941: A Political History* (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 1998).

[39] Nafi, *Arabism, Islamism and the Palestine Question*; Martin Kramer, *Arab Awakening and Islamic Revival: Political Ideas in the Middle East* (London/New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1996)

Islamic heritage. Muslim theorists like Sati al-Husri (1882–1968) argued that pan-Arab and pan-

Islamic unity were not mutually exclusive but that Arab political union was a prerequisite for

Muslim unity.[40] While not all Arabs are Muslim and most Muslims are not Arab, even Christian

leaders in the Arab nationalist movement like Michel Aflaq, who was born to a Greek Orthodox

family in Syria, sought to reconcile pan-Arabism with Islam. Aflaq characterized Islam as the

soul of Arabism and contended that non-Muslims should embrace the affinity between Islam

and Arab nationalism.[41] In the years preceding World War II, Arab nationalism spread across

the Arabian Peninsula, the Levant, and North Africa as Arabic speakers adapted pan-Arab

ideology to their particular historical and political circumstances. Regardless of their various

ideological commitments and differing religious backgrounds, Arab nationalists voiced a

common concern about western power and the growing European Jewish presence in

Palestine. Arab unrest in Palestine in the late 1920s and the Arab Revolt against the British in

Palestine from 1936–1939 contributed to general pan-Arab sentiment and a growing solidarity

between Arab political leaders.[42]

To demonstrate how this solidarity coalesced in Palestine, I turn now to the Arab

protests against the 1928 meeting of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in Jerusalem.

This ecumenical meeting must be situated in the historical context of British Mandate Palestine.

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[40] Sati al-Husri, Muslim of Syrian decent, was among the foremost theorists of pan-Arabism during this period. Al-Husri's prolific writings and the educational policies he implemented in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt promoted Arab national consciousness among an entire generation of young Arabs. See William L. Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist: Ottomanism and Arabism in the Life and Thought of Sati' Al-Husri* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

[41] Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism*, 3-4, 153-54, 295-96.

[42] This political solidarity would coalesce in 1958 in the creation of the United Arab Republic (UAR, which united Egypt and Syria under the leadership of Egyptian president Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir), the crowning political achievement of pan-Arabism.

The conference represented a turning point in the ecumenical missionary movement because nearly a quarter of the participants came from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and, further, because some delegates demonstrated openness to partnerships with members of other faiths. Outside the conference grounds on the Mount of Olives, where British soldiers stood guard at the gates, however, "Palestinian Muslims and Christians expressed a different view of this gathering in the city of God."[43]Arabic newspapers across the Middle East covered the widespread protests against the meeting, with many of them echoing the protestors' demands for the British government to expel the delegates from the region.

Although the Arab press in Palestine developed later than the aforementioned Arab presses of the *Nahda* in Egypt and Syria, according to Ami Ayalon, "The Palestinian press came to play the familiar role identified for it by Benedict Anderson in his *Imagined Communities*, that of cementing a dispersed public into a self-conscious community."[44] In the case of Palestine, Muslim and Christian presses articulated the essence of the Arab struggle in a region challenged by foreign intrusions, including the British government, Zionists, and missionaries. Reports from *al-Jamiʿa al-ʿArabiyya*, the newspaper of the Mufti of Palestine and his Supreme Muslim Council (SMC), indicated that by the end of the missionary conference in early April 1928, large sections of the Muslim population in Palestine, along with many Christians, had learned of and responded to the conference through written petitions and publications in the Arabic press. The celebration of the feast of Nabi Musa in Jerusalem, which coincided with the

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[43] Womack, "Muslim Arabic Press," 184.

[44] Ami Ayalon, *Reading Palestine: Printing and Literacy, 1900-1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press 2004), 63.

conference, provided further occasion for thousands of Muslim pilgrims who had learned of the

missionary meeting through the Arabic press to participate in mass protests.[45]

The SMC paper's vociferous coverage of IMC 1928 related it to an earlier ecumenical

meeting on the Mount of Olives, John Mott's General Conference on Mission to Muslims in

1924.[46] Based on published documents attained from the 1924 after-reports, the SMC paper *al-

Jamiʿa al-ʿArabiyya* summed up that meeting as follows:

> 1) the evidence of the weakening of Islam, 2) the favourable political conditions and
> accessibility of the Muslim world to missionaries, 3) the relative neglect of Protestant
> missions to Muslims, 4) the insistence that Muslims can be and have been converted, 5)
> the ad- vantages of a sympathetic missionary approach, 6) the need for educational
> methods to reach young Muslims, 7) the call for missionaries trained in linguistics and
> Islamics, 8) the help of 'Oriental Churches' in evangelizing Muslims, 9) the necessity of
> cooperation among all missionaries in the Islamic world, 10) the need for greater
> devotion to Muslim missions in order to demonstrate the 'world-conquering power' of
> the Christian faith.[47]

The newspaper drew the reasonable conclusion that Mott, the organizer of the 1924

conference, had now returned to do more of the same. One headline thus proclaimed: "The

real intention of the missionaries is revealed: How should they convert the Muslims?"[48]

Another headline, referring to a document obtained from the 1928 conference meeting on

Islam decried the IMC for planning a systematic attack against the Islamic world and claimed,

"This conference is like the previous one in its aggression toward Islam and Muslims."[49] In an

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[45] Womack, "Muslim Arabic Press," 190.

[46] See Mott, *Conferences of Christian Workers among Moslems.*

[47] Womack, "Muslim Arabic Press," 192.

[48] *Al-Jamiʿa al-ʿArabiyya*, 2 April 1928, 1.

[49] "The Unmasking of the Actions of the Secret Missionary Conference of 1928 held a week ago," *al-Jamiʿa al-ʿArabiyya*, 19 April 1928, 1.

attempt to pressure Mott to leave Palestine, members of the Islamic council in Nablus printed

the following in the SMC paper:

> We, a great number of Muslim scholars, merchants, landowners, intellectuals, and
> workers in Nablus, express great shock and indignation at these plots which do not
> conform with [the values of] civilization and freedom that Europe purports to uphold in
> this era. We draw your attention to the fact that the continuation of missionary plans
> and attacks upon Muslims' belief . . . will produce nothing but enmity and hatred
> between the people in general and between the Muslim and Christian communities in
> the lands of the Middle East specifically.[50]

Such statements consistently echoed the language that *al-Jamiʿa al-ʿArabiyya* used to describe

the conference as an attack against Islam and a threat to the national patriotic ties among

Arabs. The SMC paper also accused these "missionary forces" of "inciting religious strife by the

ugliest means" between the region's Muslims and Christians. Western missionaries, the

newspaper believed, pursued "the invasion of Islam and Muslims in the name of Christian

colonialism," thus supporting the British Mandate and thwarting the goal of Arab

independence.[51] *Al-Jamiʿa al-ʿArabiyya* insisted, however, that such solidarity had not yet been

broken. Palestinian Christian leaders sought to demonstrate this as well. The Greek Orthodox

Youth Club in Haifa, for example, issued a statement of concern for harmony among the people

of Palestine, saying:

> Our Muslim brothers were disturbed by the decisions of the missionary conference held
> in Jerusalem, and our discontent as Christians was no less than theirs. If what we have
> heard is true that the conference resolved to attack the Islamic religion by converting
> her people, then we strongly condemn it as an immeasurable atrocity and ask the
> government to pre- vent such things in the future.[52]

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[50] "Cable from Nablus to Dr. Mott," *al-Jamiʿa al-ʿArabiyya*, 9 April 1928, 2.

[51] "Our brothers the Christians show their indignation," *al-Jamiʿa al-ʿArabiyya*, 16 April 1928, 3.

[52] "The Shades of English Policy," *al-Jamiʿa al-ʿArabiyya*, 9 April 1928, 1.

In another letter, addressed to the British High Commissioner of Palestine Lord Herbert Plumer,

the Christian elite of Bethlehem similarly condemned all missionary action that might cause

divisions within the Palestinian population.[53] Voicing such sentiments in *al-Jamiʿa al-ʿArabiyya*

and in Christian-owned newspapers like *Sawt al-Shaab* (The People's Voice, published in

Bethlehem), Arab Christians joined their fellow Muslims in protest against the IMC conference,

critiqued missionary leaders for fanning sectarian flames, and called for a "united Palestinian

nation that would be neither Muslim nor Christian but Arab."[54] Rather than glorifying the global

vision of Christian unity that John Mott and the IMC delegates espoused in an international

Christian gathering meant to symbolize the return of the nations to Zion, these indigenous

Christians of the Holy Land instead elevated their cultural ties with Palestinian Muslims and

with Arabs across the region in the face of the ecumenical gathering they equated with western

imperialism.

Concluding Thoughts: Religious Internationalism, the *Umma* & the Church Universal

Arab nationalists allied with the British during the Arab Revolt of 1916, they organized

against European and American missionaries in Jerusalem in 1928, and they worked together

against the British Mandate in the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939. In the last two cases (also

examples of Palestinian territorial nationalism), Christians and Muslims joined together, despite

the differing factions within the Palestinian national movement. Some factions espoused

secularism, and as the Palestinian revolt progressed, these groups drew the participation of

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[53] *Al-Jamiʿa al-ʿArabiyya*, 16 April 1928, 3.
[54] 'We Want an Arab Nation that is Neither Muslim nor Christian', *Sawt al-Shaab* 422, 25 April 1928, 1.

many Christian nationalists and Muslim secularists. Other factions, like the Jerusalem Mufti's

Supreme Muslim Council emphasized the place of Islam in the national cause, yet as noted in

this study, Palestinian Christians joined these movements too.[55] It was not until much later,

after Arab nationalism lost steam in the Middle East in the 1970s and1980s, that Hamas was

established (in 1987) as an Islamic movement linking Palestinian nationalist ideology with Islam.

Yet the pan-Islamic sentiments that fed Islamic revivals across region in the late twentieth

century had earlier precedents. As I conclude this paper, I compare such expressions of Muslim

internationalism to Christian internationalism and consider how these globalist visions differ

from Arab nationalism.

Pan-Islamism – the ideological principle behind modern political movements for a

unified Islamic state – is built on an understanding of common bonds within the *umma* (or the

worldwide Muslim community). This understanding is central to Islam, just as the concept of

the universal church as the body of Christ is central to Christianity. For Sunni Muslims, until the

Ottoman Caliphate was abolished by the secular republic of Turkey in 1924, the Ottoman sultan

held the title of *caliph*, or political successor of the Prophet Muhammad. The sultan was also

the symbolic leader of the worldwide Muslim community outside of Ottoman realms. For this

reason, the end of the caliphate brought a drastic paradigm shift for many Muslims in the

Middle East who felt it severed their connection to the *umma*. In the name of pan-Islamic unity,

some Sunni leaders (in the Middle East and elsewhere) sought to revive the caliphate and

initiated Caliphate Conferences in Egypt, Mecca, and Jerusalem in the 1920s and 1930s to guide

this process and discern who would be the rightful leader. Not only did these conferences

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[55] Womack, "The Muslim Press," 183.

parallel the international gatherings of the early Christian ecumenical movement, but also, like the voluntary societies supporting the work of Christian missions, Caliphate Societies were established in various regions of the Islamic world in order to pursue this goal.[56]

Despite certain differences in political context, pan-Islamic internationalism and pan-Christian internationalism in this period had much in common. Both looked beyond territorial nationalism to envision a global unity held together through invisible bonds of religious fellowship. Often this vision of religious globalism confronted alternate ideologies of secularism, communism, or fascism. Just as Christian internationalism challenged western Christians to break Eurocentric notions and recognize the full body of Christ present in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, Islamic internationalism looked beyond political Arabism and Arabo-centric Islam to unite the multi-ethnic, multi-national *umma*. While this quest in the Islamic world was driven mainly by Sunnis, the early Christian ecumenical movement was driven by Protestants – a reality reflected in the Caliphate Conferences and the International Missionary Council gatherings. Finally, religious internationalism in both Christian and Islamic forms left little room for interreligious collaboration. Christian ecumenism came out of a missionary movement that, at least in the early twentieth century, still sought to achieve global unity through conversion. Pan-Islamism, while allowing Christians (and Jews) the same religious autonomy afforded to them by the Ottoman legal code, envisioned a system in which Muslims held political power.

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[56] Uri M. Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council: Islam Under the British Mandate for Palestine* (Leiden: Brill 1987), 187-220; Thomas Mayer, "Egypt and the General Islamic Conference of Jerusalem in 1931," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18: 2 (July 1982), 311-322.

In closing, with these tendencies for religious exclusivism in mind, I return to the multi-religious ethos of Arab nationalism to show that expressions of political nationalism and national identity took on very different forms for Christians in the Middle East than they did for Christians in the west. Western Christian missionaries' nationalist allegiances were often linked with particular ecclesial identities. Thus, we see European imperial expansion paving the way for British Anglican or French Catholic missions, and we find American Presbyterians and British Anglicans negotiating territorial jurisdictions in the mission field. National allegiances also sparked political divisions between Christians, for example in the different sides Christian nations took during the two world wars. Considering how many Christian-majority or (former Christian-majority) nations in the west todays still struggle against ideals of a multifaith society, it is noteworthy that nationalism in the early twentieth-century Arab world was not religiously exclusivist. Despite the failures of Arab nationalist movements, this study has shown that at a time when western Christian missionaries focused on Christian world dominance and in an era when religious nationalism led to population transfers and ethnic cleansing in certain Christian and Muslim contexts,[57] Arab nationalism upheld the solidarity between Christians of diverse Middle Eastern traditions and between Christian and Muslim Arabs.

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[57] Examples include the population transfers between Turkey and Greece after WWI and between India and Pakistan after the partition, as well as the Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire and the Holocaust in Europe.