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The Promise of Renewal

Dominicans and Vatican II

edited by
Michael Attridge,
Darren Dias OP,
Matthew Eaton,
Nicholas Olkovich



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Introduction

*Michael Attridge, Darren Dias OP,
Matthew Eaton, Nicholas Olkovich*

The essays in this volume emerged from a conference held in May 2015 at the University of St Michael's College in Toronto, Canada. The year 2015 marked not only the 800th anniversary of the Dominican Order's founding it also represented the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's closing. The overlapping of these two milestones provided a fortuitous opportunity for exploring connections that historians of Vatican II are not unaware of but that have never before been foregrounded in such an explicit fashion. Dominicans played an integral role before, during and after the Council. Members of the Order were involved in retrieving and shaping historical and theological insights and resources that would inform some of the Council's most important theological debates giving rise to some of its most exciting developments. The role of Dominicans was essential in the post-conciliar reception and implementation of its many reforms and significant themes. To celebrate the intersection of these two anniversaries, the Dominican Institute of Toronto and the Institute for Research on the Second Vatican Council in Canada invited scholars to submit papers for presentation. The resulting conference brought together individuals from across the globe as well as members of the broader academic community to reflect on the Dominican charism, the Order's relation to the Council and its role in the contemporary world. The essays in this collection are the fruit of these reflections and conversations. They include both English and French contributions.

The volume begins with the opening address offered by Bruno Cadoré, Master of the Order of Preachers. In it he places two Councils in relief: Lateran IV and Vatican II, the former as the context for the

Towards a New Perception of Islam: The Influence of Marie-Dominique Chenu's Theology of Incarnation on Christian-Muslim Relations

Dennis Halft OP

When, on 20 October 1962, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council assembled for their first session, they began with a programmatic declaration to all humanity. In the so-called 'Message to the World', the Council Fathers called for a spiritual renewal of the Church.¹ They invited Christians and non-Christians alike to work together for peace, unity, and social justice. The declaration thus foreshadowed the basic intention of the Council, which sought a positive and collaborative relationship between the Church and the world.

Chenu: Pioneer of a Renewed Church-World Relation

The initiator of this message and author of the 'Message to the World's' first draft was French Dominican theologian and historian Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895–1990).² In a draft of the document,

1. For the 'Message to the World', see *Acta synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II. Vol 1: Periodus prima. Pars 1: Sessio publica 1, Congregationes generales 1-9* ([Città del Vaticano]: Typ. Polygl. Vat, 1970), 254–256; 'Le message du concile au monde', *Témoignage chrétien*, no. 957, 9 November 1962: 13–14 [reprinted in M-Dominique Chenu, *La Parole de Dieu*, 2 vols (Paris: Cerf, 1964), 2:639–645]. For details, see D Halft, 'Offen für die Welt. Katholisch', *Wort und Antwort* 53 (2012): 50–52; Herbert Haslinger, 'Die pastorale Konstitution in nuce. Zu Entstehung, Inhalt und Bedeutung der "Botschaft der Konzilsväter"', *Theologie und Glaube* 102 (2012): 594–617 (I thank Leonhard Hell for bringing this article to my attention).
2. See Christophe F Potworowski, *Contemplation and Incarnation: The Theology of Marie-Dominique Chenu* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001); Michael Quisinsky, *Geschichtlicher Glaube in einer geschichtlichen Welt. Der Beitrag von M-D Chenu, Y Congar und H-M Féret zum II. Vaticanum* (Berlin: Lit, 2007); Christian Bauer, *Ortswechsel der Theologie. M.-Dominique Chenu im Kontext seiner Programmschrift "Une école de théologie: Le Saulchoir,"* 2

Chenu expresses his hope for a new theological appreciation of the realities in the world: 'We are exiting prehistory: The world *exists*. Such is the great originality of the Council compared with the First Vatican Council [. . .]. The Church of the twentieth century [. . .] has to engage jointly her faith, her hope, her good works in this building of fraternal humanity.'³

Although Chenu was a renowned medievalist with strong ties to the institutes of medieval studies in Canada (Ottawa, later Montreal, and Toronto), theologians are quick to associate him with his direct contribution to the redaction of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*.⁴ Chenu combined the methods of historical contextualization and theological reflection in his approach to a wide range of studies. In addition to his important work on scholasticism and the writings of Thomas Aquinas, in particular *Introduction à l'étude de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (1950; English transl. A. M. Landry and D Hughes, 1964), *La théologie comme science au XIII^e siècle* (1957), and *St Thomas d'Aquin et la théologie* (1959; English translation by P Philibert, 2002), Chenu was interested in contemporary theological questions, such as the concerns of the French priest-worker movement of which he became an intellectual leader.⁵

vols (Berlin: Lit, 2010); Ulrich Engel, 'Theologische Mystik im Konflikt. Marie-Dominique Chenu und die Grundintuitionen seiner Theologie', in: idem, *Gott der Menschen. Wegmarken dominikanischer Theologie* (Ostfildern: Grünewald, 2010), 145–165.

3. 'Nous sortons de la préhistoire : le monde *existe*. Telle est la grande originalité du Concile par rapport à Vatican I [. . .]. L'Église du XX^e siècle [. . .] doit engager collectivement sa foi, son espérance, sa charité, au service de cette construction d'une humanité fraternelle' (quoted in Claude Rolland, 'Le Père Chenu, théologien au Concile', in: *L'hommage différé au Père Chenu*, with an introduction by Cl Geffré [Paris: Cerf, 1990], 249–256, here 253–254).
4. See Potworowski, *Contemplation and Incarnation*, 155–195; Christian Bauer, 'Marie-Dominique Chenu OP (1895–1990). Gottes messianisches Volk unter den Zeichen der Zeit', in Th Eggensperger and U Engel, edotors, *Mutig in die Zukunft. Dominikanische Beiträge zum Vaticanum II* (Leipzig: Benno, 2007): 105–146, especially 126–134.
5. See M-Dominique Chenu, *Pour une théologie du travail* (Paris: Seuil, 1955); Ulrich Engel, "'Vital Opposition": Marie-Dominique Chenu OP—Fundamental Categories of His Theology Reflected in the Conflict Surrounding the French Worker-Priest Movement', *Angelicum* 90 (2013): 961–976.

The wide spectrum of Chenu's interests is grounded in his concept of a continued incarnation of the Word of God that encompasses history and time. The beginnings of his thinking date back to the 1920s, when Chenu became an instructor of the history of Doctrines in the Dominican house of studies, *Le Saulchoir* near Tournai in Belgium. In 1932, as he was appointed rector of the studium, Chenu reflected in his opening lecture on the method of theological study. Five years later, a revised version of his lecture was published under the title *Une école de théologie: Le Saulchoir* (1937).⁶ Soon after its publication, the Holy Office placed Chenu's programmatic tract on the index of prohibited books (1942).⁷ As a result, the Dominican lost his teaching positions at *Le Saulchoir* and was assigned by his provincial to Rouen, France. Despite the significance of Chenu's theology, for the Council and beyond, the Dominican theologian was never officially rehabilitated by the Church.⁸

What were the reasons for Chenu's condemnation? In his tract, the author suggests an ecclesiological approach based on a dynamic notion of revelation. Since God is incarnated in a historical event, the act of incarnation is perpetual in the realities of the world. Chenu argues that God is continuously manifesting himself in time and in history. His optimism towards humanity is grounded in a deep spirituality that is part of what the German theologian Ulrich Engel calls a 'Dominican Theology of Incarnation'.⁹ Following the sixteenth-century Dominican Melchior Cano, Chenu interprets the existing realities in the world as theological sources, so-called *loci theologici in actu*, from which a valid theological argument can be

6. M-Dominique Chenu, *Une école de théologie: Le Saulchoir* (Kain-Lez-Tournai: Le Saulchoir, 1937), [reprinted under the same title with studies by G Alberigo, É Fouilloux, J Ladrière, and J-P Jossua (Paris: Cerf, 1985)].
7. See Jesús Martínez de Bujanda, ed, *Index librorum prohibitorum: 1600–1966* (Montréal: Médiaspaul, 2002), 216.
8. On 15 June 2004, Chenu symbolically received a posthumous honorary doctorate from the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, Germany. The honorary doctorate had been offered to Chenu in the late 1940s, but he declined for fear of potential repercussions and the condemnation of the Faculty. See Ulrich Engel, 'Posthumer "Dr. h.c." für M-D Chenu OP. Erinnerung an einen "Theologen der Zeichen der Zeit"', *Wort und Antwort* 45 (2004): 131.
9. Ulrich Engel, 'Vatican II – Inspiration for the Dominican Order in Europe Today', *Angelicum* 90 (2013): 617–632, here 632. See also idem, *Gott der Menschen*.

derived.¹⁰ Among the identified localities, Chenu explicitly mentions three fields that touch upon Christian-Muslim relations, namely 'the pluralism of human cultures' (*le pluralisme des civilisations humaines*), 'the Near and Middle Eastern Christians' (*les chrétientés locales*), and 'Islam'.¹¹ Far from being complete, this list symbolises an underlying principle that can be extended to other realities of the world, which are significant in better understanding the incarnate Word of God.¹²

In an interview on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, Chenu still emphasized the importance of the theology of continued incarnation.¹³ Given God's immanence in this world, its different religious and cultural faces are theological sources for the Church and, consequently, should be an object of our studying and learning.¹⁴ The model of incarnation can thus be applied to different historical situations. As the Canadian theologian Christophe F. Potworowski has put it, 'Chenu's commitment to the concreteness of history – or, better, to the historicity of human knowing—is most clearly expressed in his view of theology as a reading of the signs of the times'.¹⁵

In what follows, I highlight the pivotal role of Chenu's 'theology of openness toward the world' (*théologie d'ouverture au monde*) in renewing Catholic theological perceptions of Islam. Below I demonstrate that Chenu's thinking had either a direct or an indirect

10. See Max Seckler, *Die schiefen Wände des Lehrhauses. Katholizität als Herausforderung* (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 1988), especially 79–104, 220–230. On the reception of Cano's theology in the twentieth century, see Bauer, *Ortswechsel der Theologie*, 2:716–753.

11. Chenu, *Une école de théologie*, 67 [reprint 142]. See also Jean Ladrière, 'Théologie et historicité', in: Chenu, *Une école de théologie* (Paris: Cerf, 1985), 61–79, no. III, especially 75.

12. The criteria for identifying these *loci theologici in actu*, however, must be specified. Chenu understood his approach as 'a hermeneutical principle of discernment with regard to specific historical situations' rather than 'a system'. See Potworowski, *Contemplation and Incarnation*, xv.

13. See *Un théologien en liberté. Jacques Duquesne interroge le Père Chenu. Les interviews* (Paris: Centurion, 1975), 126.

14. See *Un théologien en liberté*, 135–136, 170–172.

15. Potworowski, *Contemplation and Incarnation*, xv. See also Marianne Heimbach-Steins, "Erschütterung durch das Ereignis" (M-D Chenu). Die Entdeckung der Geschichte als Ort des Glaubens und der Theologie', in *Visionen des Konzils. 30 Jahre Pastoralkonstitution 'Die Kirche in der Welt von heute'*, edited by G Fuchs and A Lienkamp (Münster: Lit, 1997), 103–121.

influence on Christian-Muslim relations in three historical contexts. First, in the foundation of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies in Cairo (*L'Institut dominicain d'études orientales du Caire*) in the 1940s. Second, in the inclusion of Islam in the doctrinal teachings of the Second Vatican Council, namely in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, and in the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra aetate*. Finally, in the present position of the Order of Preachers, the Dominicans, towards Christian-Muslim dialogue, evidenced in the General Chapters of the last decades.

The Foundation of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies

Chenu's efforts for a theological paradigm shift that would open the Church to other religions is most visible in his role in the foundation of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies, an institute based in Cairo that is dedicated to the study of the Arabo-Islamic culture. As a specialist of thirteenth century historical theology, Chenu was well aware of the intellectual influence of medieval Arab philosophers on scholastic theologians, especial its role in the thought of Thomas Aquinas.¹⁶ For a contextualization of Aquinas's thinking, it was important to study the works of Avicenna (980–1037) and Averroës (1126–98) and to identify their role in the transmission of Greek philosophy to Europe.¹⁷ Since Chenu did not read Arabic, he encouraged his students at *Le Saulchoir* in the 1930s to study the language.¹⁸ These students and later founding members of the Institute

16. See Chenu's lectures presented in Rabat, Morocco, in 1961 and published as 'La coexistence culturelle de la civilisation arabe maghrébine et de la civilisation occidentale au Moyen-Âge', *Confluent* 11 (1961): 6–12 (I), 12 (1961): 160–167 (II), 13 (1961): 277–286 (III), 14 (1961): 366–374 (IV). See also Régis Morelon, 'L'IDEO du Caire et ses intuitions fondatrices sur la relation à l'Islam', in: *Les Dominicains et les mondes musulmans* (Paris: Cerf, 2001), 137–216, especially 155–156.

17. See Édouard-Henri Wéber, 'Les sources arabes d'Albert le Grand et de Thomas d'Aquin', in: *Les Dominicains*: 11–19; Jean-Pierre Torrell, 'Saint Thomas et les non-chrétiens', *Revue thomiste* 106 (2006): 17–49, especially 34–42.

18. See Morelon, 'L'IDEO du Caire', 184–185.

in Cairo were Georges Chéhata Anawati (1905–94), Jacques Jomier (1914–2008), and Serge de Laugier de Beaucueil (1917–2005).¹⁹

In Chenu's view, the establishing of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies was the realization of the mission of the Order in a concrete *locus theologicus in actu* in an Islamic society.²⁰ The friars would live among Muslims and study Islam on the basis of its primary sources in Arabic. Cairo as the intellectual center of the Arab world with its important Azhar University appeared to be the appropriate place.²¹ Following his journey to Egypt in 1938, Chenu described in a letter to his provincial his vision of the future institute, stating that 'the whole purpose and meaning of the project is certainly not to go out and conquer Islam nor to convert some individuals here or there who are thereby separated from the Muslim community, but to dedicate oneself to intensive studies on Islam, its doctrine, and its

19. On the foundation of the Institute in Cairo, see Dominique Avon, *Les Frères prêcheurs en Orient. Les dominicains du Caire (années 1910 – années 1960)* (Paris: Cerf, 2005); Jean-Jacques Pérennès, *Le père Antonin Jaussen, op (1871–1962). Une passion pour l'Orient musulman* (Paris: Cerf, 2012); Josef Dreher, 'Der Dominikanerkonvent in Kairo, ein Ort der Begegnung von Muslimen und Christen', in *Ordenscharismen im Aufbruch zum Dialog mit den Weltreligionen*, edited by P Bsteh and B Proksch (Lit: Berlin, 2014), 108–118.

On the Dominican friars, see Jean-Jacques Pérennès, *Georges Anawati (1905–1994). Un chrétien égyptien devant le mystère de l'Islam* (Paris: Cerf, 2008); idem, 'In Memoriam. Jacques Jomier, o.p. (1914–2008)', *Mélanges de l'Institut dominicain d'études orientales du Caire* 28 (2010): 1–13; idem, *Passion Kaboul. Le Père Serge de Beaucueil* (Paris: Éd. du Cerf, 2014); idem, 'Serge de Beaucueil, ein ungewöhnlicher Lebensweg über Kairo bis Kabul', in Bsteh and Proksch, *Ordenscharismen im Aufbruch*, 119–125; Minlib Dallh, 'A Mystical Encounter of a Dominican Friar, Serge de Beaucueil (d. 2005), and a Ḥanbalī Ṣūfī, Abdullāh Anṣārī of Herāt (d. 1089)', PhD dissertation, University of Exeter, 2011; Petrus Bsteh, 'Georges Chéhata Anawati (1905–1994) – Dominikaner zwischen der arabischen und der westlichen Welt', in *Wegbereiter des interreligiösen Dialogs* edited by P Bsteh and B Proksch (Berlin: Lit, 2012), 200–204; Georges C Anawati, *Ich liebe die Muslime, weil sie Gott lieben. Aufforderungen zum Dialog*, translated and edited by Hoda Issa (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 2014); Emmanuel Pisani, *Le dialogue islamo-chrétien à l'épreuve. Père Anawati, o.p. – Dr Baraka. Une controverse au vingtième siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2014).

20. See Morelon, 'L'IDEO du Caire', 159; Bauer, *Ortswechsel der Theologie*, 1:310, 346–351.

21. See Georges C Anawati, 'Le Père Chenu et l'Institut dominicain d'Études orientales du Caire', in: *L'hommage différé au Père Chenu*, 63–67, especially 64. See also Avon, *Les Frères prêcheurs*, 338–339.

contribution to culture [. . .].²² A revised version of Chenu's letter became the founding charter of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies in 1945.²³

Chenu's efforts in the foundation of the Cairo institute coincided with the interests of the Vatican to foster the study of Islam and, thus, to widen the Church's knowledge about other religions. The Secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, the French Cardinal Eugène Tisserant (1884–1972), requested the Dominican General Chapter of Rome in September 1938 in a 'secret message' to prepare a team of friars for the studying of questions on Muslim belief.²⁴ As Chenu relates, Tisserant asked for a purely scientific mission while living among Muslims.²⁵ This episode shows that the Church's perspective on Islam began to change in the 1930s, long before it culminated in the teaching documents of the Second Vatican Council.

22. 'Sens et but du projet : non pas certes partir à la conquête de l'Islam, ni même convertir ici et là quelques individus séparés par là-même de la Communauté musulmane, mais se livrer à l'étude approfondie de l'Islam, de sa doctrine, de sa civilisation [. . .]' (quoted in Régis Morelon, 'In Memoriam. Le Père Marie Dominique Chenu, o.p. (1895–1990)', *Mélanges de l'Institut dominicain d'études orientales du Caire* 20 (1991): 521–527, here 521).

Similarly, Chenu reported to the Master of the Order in 1939 as follows: 'Il ne s'agit pas de pénétration apostolique directe, ce qui serait non seulement vain mais objectivement mal ordonné ; c'est une tâche préalable, et en profondeur, qu'il faut entreprendre : connaître l'Islam, son histoire, sa doctrine, sa civilisation, ses ressources, et le connaître par des études sérieuses et prolongées, auxquelles de vrais apôtres sauront consacrer leur vie' (quoted in Morelon, 'L'IDEO du Caire', 183).

23. For the founding charter, see Morelon, 'L'IDEO du Caire', 138–139.

24. For details, see Avon, *Les Frères prêcheurs*, 337–342. For Tisserant's ambiguous attitude towards Islam (and Eastern Christianity), see Dominique Avon, 'Un homme du magistère catholique devant l'Islam. Le cardinal Tisserant (1884–1972)', in *Écrire l'histoire du christianisme contemporain. Autour de l'œuvre d'Étienne Fouilloux*, edited by A Becker, F Gugelot, D Pelletier, and N Viet-Depaule (Paris: Karthala, 2013), 143–159. On Tisserant, see also Christine M Grafinger, 'Eugene Tisserant', in: *I cardinali bibliotecari di Santa Romana Chiesa. La quadreria nella Biblioteca apostolica vaticana* edited by J Mejía, C Grafinger, and B Jatta (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2006): 329–331, no 39.

25. 'Travail exclusivement scientifique. Pas de prosélytisme immédiat (ordre exprès de Rome, de la part du Cardinal Tisserant)' (quoted in Anawati, 'Le Père Chenu', 66). See also Morelon, 'L'IDEO du Caire', 138; M-Dominique Chenu, 'Pour un oecuménisme planétaire', *L'Actualité Religieuse dans le Monde* 38 (1986): 21–23, especially 23.

With the foundation of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies, Chenu's vision of a Dominican presence among Muslims with the aim of holistically studying the Arabo-Islamic heritage was realized. Considering the tradition of Dominican friars in the encounter with Muslims since the thirteenth century, this field of study seemed an almost natural vocation for Anawati and others.²⁶ Throughout his life, Chenu considered a presence of Dominicans among Muslims as 'one of the most important things to hold on to' (*l'une des choses les plus importantes à tenir*).²⁷ After his death in 1990, the friars in Cairo lauded Chenu as their pioneer. In their obituary, they affirmed that 'our Institute owes its foundation and direction to him [Chenu] [. . .], [as] one of the many intellectual and religious dimensions of the brilliance of this man.'²⁸

The Inclusion of Islam in the Doctrinal Teachings of the Council

The year 2015 marked the 50th anniversary of *Nostra aetate*, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. Despite doctrinal differences, the episcopal magisterium had expressed in 1965 its theological position towards other religions as characterized by a positive attitude and the search for new ways of dialogue, understanding, and collaboration. Although

26. See Georges C Anawati, 'Islam et christianisme : la rencontre de deux cultures en Occident au Moyen Âge', *Mélanges de l'Institut dominicain d'études orientales du Caire* 20 (1991): 233–299; Wolfram Hoyer, 'Der dominikanische Ansatz zum Dialog mit den Religionen in der Gründungszeit des Ordens', in *Das Charisma des Ursprungs und die Religionen. Das Werden christlicher Orden im Kontext der Religionen*, edited by P Bsteh and B Proksch (Berlin: Lit, 2011), 242–278. For a critical revision of the traditional assumption of a Dominican involvement in missionary proselytism, see Robin JE Vose, 'The Limits of Dominican Mission in the Western Mediterranean', in *Christlicher Norden—Muslimischer Süden. Ansprüche und Wirklichkeiten von Christen, Juden und Muslimen auf der Iberischen Halbinsel im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter*, edited by MM Tischler and A Fidora (Münster: Aschendorff, 2011), 469–487.

27. See Morelon, 'In Memoriam', 526.

28. 'Notre institut lui [Chenu] doit sa naissance et son orientation [. . .] [comme] une des multiples dimensions intellectuelles et religieuses du génie de cet homme' (Morelon, 'In Memoriam', 521). Similarly, Anawati had stated in 1964 as follows: '[. . .] c'est bien celui [Chenu] à qui revient en définitive tout le mérite de [l'] existence [de notre institut du Caire]' (Anawati, 'Le Père Chenu', 63).

the Declaration comprises only five rather short paragraphs, it was among the documents that attracted the most public attention, inside and outside the Church. Considering the different stages during the Council sessions and intersessions between 1963 and 1965 that led to the emergence of a separate declaration—not only on the Jews but also on the Muslims and other religions—*Nostra aetate* was 'one of the final surprises of the Second Vatican Council'.²⁹

Muslims are explicitly mentioned in *Nostra aetate* 3 as well as in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* 16C. In these passages, the Church expresses 'a high regard for the Muslims' (NA 3), their belief, and worship.³⁰ Despite some shortcomings—for example the Council avoids expressing any view on the interrelationship of Jesus and the role of Muhammad in Islam—it is no exaggeration to state that the documents mark a turning point in the Church's perception of

29. Maurice Borrmans, 'L'émergence de la Déclaration *Nostra Aetate* au Concile Vatican II', in idem, *Dialogues, rencontres et points de contact entre musulmans et chrétiens dans une dimension historique* (Milano: ISU Università Cattolica, 2007), 32–64, here 32. For the history of the Declaration, see Georges M-M Cottier, 'L'histoire de la Déclaration', in *Les relations de l'Église avec les religions non chrétiennes: Déclaration 'Nostra aetate'* edited by AM Henry (Paris: Cerf, 1966), 37–78; Robert Caspar, 'La religion musulmane', in Henry, *Les relations de l'Église*, 201–236; Gavin D'Costa, *Vatican II: Catholic Doctrines on Jews and Muslims* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

30. *Nostra aetate* 3 reads as follows: 'The Church has also a high regard for the Muslims. They worship God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has also spoken to men. They strive to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God, just as Abraham submitted himself to God's plan, to whose faith Muslims eagerly link their own. Although not acknowledging him as God, they venerate Jesus as a prophet, his virgin Mother they also honor, and even at times devoutly invoke. Further, they await the day of judgment and the reward of God following the resurrection of the dead. For this reason they highly esteem an upright life and worship God, especially by way of prayer, alms-deeds and fasting. Over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values.'

In *Lumen gentium* 16C the Church acknowledges that 'the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims: these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day.'

Muslim belief.³¹ They open a new perspective that enables Christians and Muslims 'to achieve mutual understanding' and to 'preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values' (NA 3).

As we know, Chenu did *not* contribute to the redaction of the Council documents on Islam. However, it is argued here that his 'theology of openness toward the world' inspired the Council's teaching in relation to Muslim faith through the contribution of his former student Anawati. As the director of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies in Cairo, Anawati was present in Rome during the Council meetings. With a lecture entitled *L'Islam à l'heure du Concile. Prolégomènes à un dialogue islamo-chrétien* held at the Angelicum University in November 1963 in the presence of several Council Fathers, Anawati helped to put Islam on the agenda of the Council.³² This was particularly welcomed by the Council Fathers from the Near and Middle East (who wanted to counterbalance the emphasis elsewhere on Judaism).

Moreover, Anawati was directly involved in the redaction of *Nostra aetate* 3 and *Lumen gentium* 16C.³³ Being one of two 'experts', Anawati was appointed a member of the subcommittee on Islam by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.³⁴ Together with the French White Father Robert Caspar (1923–2007), Anawati was

31. See Georges C Anawati, 'Exkurs zum Konzilstext über die Muslim[e]', in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 2., völlig neu bearb. Aufl. [=LThK²], *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil. Dokumente und Kommentare*, 3 suppl. vols (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 1966–68), 2:485–487; Roman A Siebenrock, 'Theologischer Kommentar zur Erklärung über die Haltung der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen *Nostra aetate*', in *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, 5 vols, edited by P Hünermann and BJ Hilberath (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 2004–06), 3:591–693, especially 658–661.

32. See Georges C Anawati, 'L'Islam à l'heure du Concile. Prolégomènes à un dialogue islamo-chrétien', in *Angelicum* 41 (1964): 145–166. On the attendees of the lecture, see Avon, *Les Frères prêcheurs*, 785–786.

33. For details, see Avon, *Les Frères prêcheurs*, 777–807.

34. Johannes Oesterreicher, 'Kommentierende Einleitung zur Erklärung über das Verhältnis der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen', in: *LThK², Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, 2:406–478, here 450. For other members of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity who were involved in the drafting of the Declaration, among them the Belgian Dominican and later cardinal Jean Jérôme Hamer (1916–96), see Avon, *Les Frères prêcheurs*, 780, 783–784; Borrmans, 'L'émergence de la Déclaration', 40–41.

entrusted with drafting the passages on Islam.³⁵ In his report to the Council Fathers on the preparation of the Declaration later called *Nostra aetate* at the end of the 88th General Congregation of the third Council session on 25 September 1964, the president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, the German Cardinal Augustin Bea (1881–1968), explicitly thanked the White Fathers in Tunisia and the Dominicans in Cairo for their contribution.³⁶

While Anawati was working on the Council's textual passages on Islam, Chenu outlined the broader contours of the Church-world relation, as expressed in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*. Despite his condemnation, Chenu was also present in Rome as theological advisor to Bishop Claude Rolland, a Council Father from Madagascar and former student at *Le Saulchoir*. Thus, Chenu directly influenced the Council's definition of a new relationship of the Church with the world by drafting the corresponding chapter for *Gaudium et spes*.³⁷ The German theologian Christian Bauer therefore called Chenu 'a crucial background actor' (*zentrale Randfigur*) of the Council.³⁸

Besides his involvement in the redaction of the Pastoral Constitution, Chenu continued to be in constant conversation with Council Fathers, theologians and Muslim observers on matters of

35. See Jean-Marie Gaudeul, 'Robert Caspar (1923–2007)–Lehrer christlich-muslimischen Zusammenlebens', in: Bsteh and Proksch, *Wegbereiter des interreligiösen Dialogs*, 240–245.

36. Referring to the second part of the Declaration, which was intended to be appended to the scheme about ecumenism at the time, Bea stated as follows: 'Il est fait explicitement mention des Musulmans, comme de nombreux Pères l'avaient demandé. Nous pouvons dire que, sur ce point, le texte a plu aux experts, spécialement aux Dominicains de l'Institut du Caire pour les études orientales et aux Pères Blancs de l'Institut pontifical pour les études orientales, en Tunisie' (Augustin Bea, 'La déclaration sur les juifs et les non-chrétiens', *La Documentation catholique*, no 1435, 1 November 1964: 1421–1428, here 1425). See also Anawati, 'Le Père Chenu', 63; Cottier, 'L'histoire de la Déclaration', 59; Caspar, 'La religion musulmane', 204; Maurice Borrmans, 'Les évaluations en conflit autour de *Nostra Aetate*', *Communio* 25 (2000): 96–123, especially 102.

On Bea, see Klemens Stock, 'Augustin Bea (1881–1968)–Einsatz für die christlich-jüdische Verständigung', in: Bsteh and Proksch, *Wegbereiter des interreligiösen Dialogs*, 99–103.

37. See Quisinsky, *Geschichtlicher Glaube*, 231–249; Eggensperger and Engel, *Mutig in die Zukunft*; Bauer, *Ortswechsel der Theologie*.

38. Bauer, 'Marie-Dominique Chenu OP', 121.

Islam. As Rolland relates, 'during his free time, he [Chenu] [. . .] attended, for instance, the meetings of the representatives or the experts on Islam in Rome, long before the Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions was even founded [in 1967].³⁹ Another former student of Chenu, the Dominican Jacques Jomier, recalled in 1964 that his teacher had already talked about most of the concerns of the Council, such as the dialogue with non-Christians, in *Le Saulchoir* in the 1930s.⁴⁰

Thus, Chenu's pleading for a new relationship of the Church with the world and, in particular, with Islam and other religions appears to have influenced a whole generation of Dominican friars. These friars shaped not only the Council's view on Islam but contributed to Catholic-Muslim dialogue throughout the twentieth century. In particular Anawati, who became member of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity as well as the Pontifical Council for Culture, played a key role in Christian-Muslim relations until his death in 1994.⁴¹

The Present Position of the Dominican Order towards Islam

Chenu's 'theology of openness toward the world' led not only to the foundation of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies in Cairo and inspired the Second Vatican Council's teachings on Islam, but it was also institutionalized in his own Order. That his thinking continues to influence contemporary encounters between Dominicans and Muslims is evident when recalling Chenu's above-mentioned letter to his provincial in 1938, in which he describes a

39. 'Pendant le temps libre, il [Chenu] [. . .] fréquentait, par exemple, les réunions des représentants ou des spécialistes de l'islam à Rome bien avant que le Secrétariat pour les religions non chrétiennes fût créé' (Rolland, 'Le Père Chenu', 252–253).

40. 'La plupart des réflexions que le Concile de Vatican II inspire à tant de théologiens, le souci de dialogue avec ceux qui ne partagent pas notre foi, celui de la présence au monde [. . .] on peut dire sans crainte de se tromper que le Père Chenu nous en parlait déjà [au *Saulchoir*], il y a trente ans' (Jacques Jomier, 'Une leçon d'espérance', in: *L'homme différé au Père Chenu*, 58–60, here 59).

In a letter dated 21 June 2000, Jomier stated as follows: 'Les rapports avec le P. Chenu peuvent être envisagés au plan de l'ouverture et la culture générale, ou bien à celui du travail technique sur l'apport des philosophes arabes au Moyen Âge, ou enfin à celui des conseils pratiques qu'il nous donna en nous lançant' (quoted in Avon, *Les Frères prêcheurs*, 321).

41. See Morelon, 'L'IDEO du Caire', 165, n. 60.

Dominican mission among Muslims that excludes proselytism, and emphasizes the importance of the study of Islam from its own 'inner perspective.'

What later became the founding charter of the Institute in Cairo also found its way into the debates of the General Chapters of the Dominican friars. In 1986, the General Chapter of Ávila defined five priorities—the so-called frontiers (*fronteras*) of evangelization—to which Dominicans are particularly committed today. Within the so-called 'frontier of Christian experience, [or] the challenge of the great world religions' (*[la] frontera cristiana, el reto de las religiones universales*), the engagement of the Order in dialogue with Islam was identified as a priority of the Dominican mission.⁴² The acts of the General Chapter states that 'it is neither about gaining a victory over Islam nor proselytizing some individuals who are thereby separated from the Muslim community, but understanding the notion of the spread of this religion in the context of contemporary religious development [. . .] by an attentive present, listening to and thoroughly studying Islam, its doctrine, and culture.'⁴³

There is clear evidence from a comparison between Chenu's letter to his provincial, written in French, and the acts of the General Chapter of Ávila in Latin that the text largely draws on Chenu's writing. This is, of course, no coincidence. The former director of the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies, Régis Morelon, was elected to represent the Dominican 'Vicariate of the Arab World' at the General Chapter

42. The other priorities are 'the frontier between life and death, [or] the challenge of justice and peace in the world' (*la frontera entre la vida y la muerte, el gran reto de la justicia y la paz en el mundo*), 'the frontier between humanity and inhumanity, [or] the challenge of the marginalised' (*la frontera entre la humanidad y la inhumanidad, el gran reto de los marginados*), 'the frontier of religious experience, [or] the challenge of secular ideologies' (*la frontera de la experiencia religiosa, el reto de las ideologías seculares*), and 'the frontier of the Church, [or] the challenge of non-Catholic Christians and the sects' (*la frontera de la Iglesia, el reto de las confesiones no católicas y las sectas*). See *Acta Capituli Generalis Diffinitorum Ordinis Praedicatorum Abulensis 1986* [=ACG Ávila], chap 2, no 22.

43. 'Non agitur de victoria super Islam ingenue consequenda, nec de convertendo huc illuc quaedam particularia individua, sic a sua communitate ea seiungendo. Conari debemus ut, in contextu evolutionis religiosae actualis, intelligamus significationem dilatationis huius religionis universalis [. . .] per praesentiam attentam, auscultando ac serio perscrutando Islam necnon eius doctrinam et culturam' (ACG Ávila, chap 2, no 41).

of Ávila in 1986. At the Chapter, he was appointed a member of the commission 'On today's mission', which drafted chapter two of the newly defined five priorities of the mission of the Order. Morelon contributed to his commission the quoted passages from the founding charter of the Institute, which were in fact composed by Chenu in 1938.⁴⁴

The succeeding chapters have confirmed the Order's approach towards Islam, as defined in Ávila. The General Chapter of Bogotá in 2007, for instance, states 'inter-religious dialogue was one of the frontiers declared at Ávila in 1986 which we wish to emphasise again. This frontier, which has a long history in the Order, concerns us today because of the places in which we are established. It is in meeting with others who see a different face of God that we discover our true identity as "a people for others".'⁴⁵ The General Chapter further emphasized that 'Islamic-Christian dialogue has become one of the crucial questions of our time and one of the great challenges for our preaching in certain regions of the world for several reasons: globalization, the growth in religious extremism, questions raised by religious pluralism and cultural diversity.'⁴⁶ Interfaith dialogue and, in particular, the dialogue with Muslims thus remains among the fundamental priorities of the mission of the Dominicans.⁴⁷

Concluding Remarks

Following Chenu's notion of a perpetual act of incarnation in the realities of the world, that is in time and in history, five suggestions for a future direction of the Dominican engagement in the Near and Middle East are proposed here. First, continuing the local Dominican presence in Muslim-majority societies, in particular in the context of emigration of local Christians. Second, studying the religious and cultural heritage of the Arabo-Islamic world with a particular

44. Personal communication with Régis Morelon, 2015.

45. *Acta Capituli Generalis Priorum Provincialium Ordinis Praedicatorum Bogotae* 2007 [=ACG Bogotá], chap 2, no 82.

46. *ACG Bogotá*, chap 2, no 83.

47. See *ACG Bogotá*, chap 3, no 102; *Acta Capituli Generalis Electivi Ordinis Praedicatorum Romae* 2010, chap 5, no 161; *Acta Capituli Generalis Diffinitorum Ordinis Praedicatorum Traugurii* 2013, chap 6, no 111/3, and appendix I ('Promoting reflection on the mission: apostolic creativity and "mobility"'), nos 51–53, 60.

attention to the history of Christian-Muslim relations. Third, collaborating in academic work, as far as possible, with Muslim, local Christian, and other scholars to bridge the gap between the different communities. Fourth, making the results available to the interested public in the local as well as Western societies as a contribution to ongoing discussions in the humanities. And, finally, reflecting theologically on the experience of a multicultural research group as well as on the importance of our results in the field of historical studies for the notion of the incarnate Word of God and a theology of religious pluralism.