

Adel Theodor Khoury

Der Islam und die westliche Welt (The Islam and the western world), Primus Verlag, Darmstadt 2001, 224 pp.

Khoury does not want to write another introduction to Islam, but rather to make a contribution for better understanding and a sincere dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Therefore the present book does not contain many important elements of Islamic life and history but shows some interesting comparisons between Islam and Christianity.

Khoury divides his book into five parts. The first one deals with Muhammad, his prophetic claim, his importance and meaning for the Islam, and the Christians' image of him. He does not write a biography, but points out some important passages of the Koran and the tradition. The second part treats of the conception of god in the Islam, it explains the important dogmas of Islam, the strict monotheism and the transcendence of god. Then it deals with the Islamic view of Jesus Christ, that he is not god, but one of the most important prophets with an important eschatological role. The last chapter of this part shows the differences and communities of Islam and Christianity. The third part explains the principles of Islamic ethics, the bans and commandments, which Khoury compares with the biblical commandments. Part four treats of the relationship between traditional Islam and modern world. Therefore the author describes the Islamic theocracy, the religious freedom of Jews and Christians, the requests of Muslims, the Islamic criticism of the western world, and the problems of Muslims in a pluralistic society like Europe. The last part tries to answer the question "Dialogue or confrontation"? It shows the common requests of Christians and Muslims and introduces an Islamic statement on the Christian-Islamic dialogue, which explains that the dialogue should not be a dialogue of theologies, but a dialogue with the aim of a co-operation of Islam and Christianity. Khoury himself wishes Christians and Muslims to understand that they belong together. For truth is tolerant, and truth and dialogue are possible, one can avoid to treat the others unjustly, one can overcome prejudices, one can work together for a better world.

This book shows that there is no irreconcilable contrast between the Islam and the western world, but the necessity, possibilities and perspectives of the Christian-Islamic dialogue.

(Thomas Fornet-Ponse)