not eaten that entire day. Bob wrote in his diary: “If all my training and efforts to come abroad had given me only today’s opportunity to help this widow, I thought, it would have been worth it” (p. 47).

McCahil was once asked for his thoughts on the evangelization of Christian religious personnel by the poor. From experience he spoke of their patience under adversity, their prayer, their resiliency amidst suffering and hardship, their total surrender to Allah. He concluded: “Still, the safest answer to give to the question ‘How do the poor evangelize us?’ is to recall that God is with them. God is a mystery to us, and God’s way of working through the poor is beyond our analysis” (p. 71).

Dialogue of Life is a very good read about the life and dedication of a missionary priest. The reader connects one’s own life, faith, and values to the experiences of Brother Bob. Profound insights emerge. McCahill is not merely a theoretician of authentic dialogue; he is a sincere practitioner, a doer who links theory and practice in the daily dialogue of life.

When Bob was recently moving on to a new town, he heard: “People in the town are talking. . . . They say you’ve done a lot for the poor.” Bob responded: “All praise be to Allah” (p. 109). Yes, not to us, O Lord, not to us; but, to your name be the glory. Mission continues.

James H. Kroeger, M.M.


The title and sub-title of this attractive book succinctly summarize its contents: the spiritual bases and practice of Muslim-Christian relations.

Edited by two Islamic experts of the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the book traces the numerous, diverse initiatives in Muslim-Christian dialogue from 1978 (the year of Pope John Paul II’s election) until 1994. The reader is struck by the Church’s commitment to engage in fruitful dialogue as an essential dimension of its missionary activity.

In each of the 24 chapters a creative and inviting format of presentation is followed. The chapters are comprised of a thematic narrative (e.g., “Pioneers of Dialogue,” “Praying for Peace,” etc.) which
is generously interspersed with selected quotes from original sources/documents (over 100), biographical vignettes, photographs (over 100 — mostly colored), poetry, and prayers. This format gives the volume a popular appeal while containing extensive original documentation.

In a reflection in Ankara, Turkey (1979), John Paul II asked: "I wonder whether it is not urgent . . . to recognize and develop the spiritual bonds which unite us" (p. 15). Addressing 80,000 Moroccan youth (1985), he noted: "I believe that we, Christians and Muslims, must recognize with joy the religious values that we have in common and give thanks to God for them" (p. 65). These citations serve as examples that emphasize the spiritual/religious foundation of authentic dialogue; it is this faith commitment which consistently emerges as the book's overarching theme.

In the midst of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), Pope Paul VI on Pentecost in 1964 created a special Vatican department (Secretariat for non-Christians) to promote positive relations with believers of other religions. Renamed in 1988 (Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue — PCID), this body has been a major force in Church renewal. Many local, national, and international dialogue initiatives have taken the PCID vision and struggled to implement it concretely. Several informative chapters chronicle the growth of Muslim-Christian dialogue in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. Other chapters deal with the role of prayer, study, service, and encounter vis-à-vis dialogue; challenges and problems are addressed.

This book should find its way to the shelves of any student or library that has a serious commitment to Christian-Muslim interfaith relations. It is not the total story of recent dialogue initiatives (it presents only the global efforts of the Catholic Church); yet, the book shows what has been and can be accomplished.

This volume helps one appreciate the role dialogue will play in the Christian Church of the third millennium; as John Paul II noted in Assisi (1986), the choice is clear: "Either we learn to walk together in peace and harmony, or we drift apart and ruin ourselves and others" (p. 94).

James H. Kroeger, M.M.