PROGRAMME FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN AFRICA

PROGRAMME DES RELATIONS ISLAMO-CHRETIENNES EN AFRIQUE

PROCMURA NAIROBI KENYA

PRICA NAIROBI KENYA

ADDIS ABABA REPORT

AFRICA CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
January 8th-13th 2012

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Africa Christian And Muslim Religious Leaders Conference On Peace And Development

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**Printing & Design by
Acken Media Services
P.O. Box 29276-00625
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 722 338801**

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INTRODUCTION

The journey of PROCMURA towards the promotion of Christian and Muslim joint actions for peace and development continues to make great strides and heights, as we began the year 2012 as evidenced by this conference which we organised at the beginning of the new year.

The conference, dubbed the Addis Ababa conference with the theme **Africa Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders for Peace and Development** was special in many ways. This is because it brought together Christians and Muslims from a cross-section of the African continent: West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa, North Africa and the Indian Ocean.

This cross-section of participants was deliberately chosen to enable them to share good practice as well as concerns and visions of Christian and Muslim relations into the future.

The countries that participated were deliberately pinpointed and chosen because of their particularities and the experiences that they would bring to bear on the proceedings.

For example, Sierra Leone and Liberia are two countries where Christians and Muslims collaborated and took risks that helped to end civil wars in their respective countries. In fact their efforts earned them the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Peace Price. Tanzania (Mainland) and Zanzibar as well as Madagascar, were chosen so that participants may learn from them how Tanzania's political concept of *Ujamaa* and the Malagasy traditional concept of, *Fihavanana* has helped to build bridges of understanding between Christians and Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence toward the wholistic development of their peoples.

Egypt on the other hand come into the rendering because of their great experience of Christians and Muslims having to live alongside one another as important minorities and majorities respectfully, and how such relations are sometimes threatened by violence from a few politico-religious bigots. The so called Arab Spring made us to recongise that the presence of Egypt will unravel the perceptions that the outside world have of the cause and effect of the Arab Spring.

Nigeria and Cameroon were invited by similar and yet different reasons. The situation in the northern part of Nigeria where the activities of Boko Haram has hit the international media meant that a conference of this nature could not appropriately be seen to be successful without hearing 'the Nigeria Story'. The Cameroon, a northern neighbour of Nigeria which plans to replicate the Addis Ababa experience needed to be present to listen to others especially the Nigerian delegation. For as the General Adviser of

PROCMURA has always said "if your neighbor's beard catches fire you need to get water close to your beard".

The Danish Christian and Muslim participants were needed not just to experience Africa's maze of Christian-Muslim relations, but also to share their own experiences. This is very important. For in Christian-Muslim relations we have always said that the universal significance of the two religions calls for not just an African approach but a world approach since this global village we live in has shown that what happens anywhere can happen everywhere.

The value of publishing the proceedings of the Addis Ababa conference is not on the brief summaries that we have given, but rather on the individual papers themselves. In this light, readers are encouraged to read the main papers which are put in the appendices.

We look forward to sharing with you from time to time in the form that this report has taken or in brief reports on country programmes which are usually put on our Website.

May God bless all who made this conference possible and to all who are able to read it, we hope that you will learn something from it.

Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah
General Adviser

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1.0 DAY 1

1.1 Opening Ceremony

There was great expectation as the Christian and Muslim religious leaders from Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tanzania (mainland) and Zanzibar, congregated at the Global hotel in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, to work on the conference theme *"Africa Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders for Peace and Development"*.
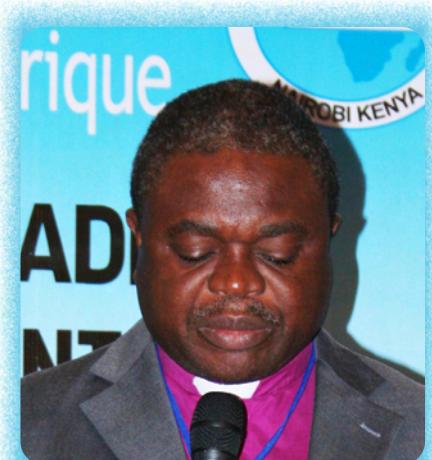
Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Gehaz Malasusa

Sheikh Abu Bakarr Conteh

As is the case in all PROCMURA Christian and Muslim conferences, the session began with prayers. The ***Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Gehaz Malasusa***, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) who is the Vice President of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF)-Africa, and Chairperson of PROCMURA Area Committee in Tanzania, led in the Christian prayer, while ***Sheikh Abu Bakarr Conteh***, Chairman of the Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone and Commissioner of the Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA) and an old hand in PROCMURA's work in Sierra Leone and Africa, led in the Muslim prayer. They both prayed for the success of the conference deliberations.

The General Adviser of PROCMURA Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah warmly welcomed participants to the meeting. He then proceeded to introduce the chairperson for the opening ceremony. The ***Rev. Iteffa Gobena***, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Ecumenical Envoy to the African Union (AU), immediate past Chairperson of PROCMURA and immediate past President of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church, Mekane Yesus. In his brief acceptance speech, the Rev. Gobena emphasized the importance of the conference saying that "PROCMURA by choosing the theme of Peace for Development, had touched on the heart of the matter when it comes to Africa's spiritual and material development". He said that "Religious leaders around the continent play important roles in promoting peace and development; this is being recognized by governments, regional bodies and the African continental body, the African Union". The Rev Iteffa said

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that the presence of the African Union representative in the conference in the person of Mr. Filipe Alimo Faruma of the African Union Commission, Citizens and Diaspora Directorate is evidence of this development.

He urged the religious leaders to co-operate with the chair to ensure that the proceedings run on smoothly.

Rev. Iteffa Gobena

1.1.1 Dignitaries and Special invited Guest Address delegates

As protocol will have it, the chairperson invited dignitaries and special guest at the high table to bring greetings and provide encouragement to the religious leaders. The speeches were made in the following order:

His Emminence Abune Berhaneyesus D. Souraphiel, was one of the speakers during the opening address

i. *His Eminence Abune Berhaneyesus D*. *Souraphiel*; Metropolitan Archbishop of Addis Ababa and President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Ethiopia. The Archbishop welcomed participants to Ethiopia and reminded them that the country was the motherland of all Africans. "Africans who come to Ethiopia" (said the Archbishop) "should always know that they have come home - Indeed PROCMURA has brought us home to discuss family issues – issues of peace and development.

On the Catholic Church's position on interreligious dialogue, the Archbishop assured participants of the commitment of the Catholic Church to dialogue with Muslims and pointed out that there were some similarities between Christianity and Islam that can be harnessed towards working together for peace and development. He made reference to the Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate* which spells out the Church's relations with the Muslim Community.

Expounding on the concept of dialogue, the Archbishop outlined four areas of importance worth taking note of when one talks about dialogue. These are:

a. Dialogue of Life which enables Christians and Muslims to interact on daily basis where religion may not be discussed while sharing humanity may be the norm. This helps to build confidence.

b.   Dialogue of actions/works that enable Christians and Muslims to meet to discuss issues of mutual concern to them and society with the objective of coming out with concrete plans to attend to them. The present conference on peace and development the archbishop explained, falls within this dialogue of actions/works.

c.   Dialogue of theological exchange is the preserve of theological specialists who meet to inform and discuss pertinent theological issues that are sometimes misunderstood or shrouded in controversy. This kind of discussion, the Archbishop made it clear, is the preserve of specialist and not for 'ordinary' Christians and Muslims.

d.   Dialogue of religious experience, he explained, rest on spirituality and religious experience of people of faith communities. He explained that this is an aspect in Christian-Muslim relations that the two religions can share in informal sessions more than structured sessions.

The Archbishop was of the view that belonging to different religions will remain the experience of human beings adding that God who is all-knowing knows better why there is plurality of religions.

Turning his attention to Christian-Muslim relations in Ethiopia, His Eminence recalled that the first encounter between Christians and Muslims in the country began in 615 CE when Muslims facing persecution in Mecca arrived to seek refuge in the country (Abyssinia). He said that on the whole, current relations between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia remain cordial with few problems here and there which are manageable but sometimes blown out of proportion by the media. The Archbishop, however, said that the Horn of Africa which Ethiopia is a part has been engulfed with intermittent conflicts that appear to be unending and recalled the conference that PROCMURA organised in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania where he was present and where issues of peace in the region formed part of the focus of the discussions. "This particular conference and the venue is opportune as Ethiopia hosts the African union and the African countries represented here are members of that union which is making all efforts to bring peace to the continent" he concluded.

Sheikh Umar Idris the Mufti of Addis Ababa began his word of welcome by conveying greetings from the Muslim Community in Addis to participants. He stated that the gathering was most pertinent as its theme centred on the issue of peace and development. He said that

Sheikh Umar Idris

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the general peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia stretches over a thousand years when the first Muslims set foot in the country.

Commenting on the theme, the Muslim leader said that the Prophet Muhammed upheld the value of peace and maintained principles that espoused peaceful and cooperative lifestyles that would help promote peaceful co-existence among all peoples and between all nations. He was proud to note that but one or two incidences that disturbed peace as a result of actions by some religious extremists, Christians and Muslims have always lived in peace as neighbours. The Sheikh concluded his speech by warmly welcoming participants to the conference and urged them to feel at home.

Rev. Dr. Waqseyoum Iddosa; President Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) began his address by commending PROCMURA for the work it is doing. He said that the principle under which PROCMURA operates in the continent is worth emulating by all. He lamented that even though generally there is good relations between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia, irresponsible acts of a few religious extremists poisoned the good relationship that would otherwise be harnessed to strengthen bonds of friendship

Rev. Dr. Waqseyoum Iddosa

between Christians and Muslims and thereby promote interfaith dialogue for peace and development.

Dr. Iddosa pointed out that religious leaders need to strengthen their relations and act against divisive tendencies that breed conflicts. He said that blatant disregard for the rule of law and injustice is part of the challenges that Christians and Muslims need counter for peace to prevail. 'The buck does not stop with dialogue' he said. 'We need to engage one another in common acts that will promote peace and development' he emphasised. He was sad that some countries were experiencing conflicts between Christians and Muslims and called on PROCMURA to engage those countries in the Christian-Muslim peace programmes. The president of Mekane Yesus Church expressed his gratitude to PROCMURA for organising the conference and welcomed all participants, urging them to continue to work together to sustain good relations between Christians and Muslims and in the wider society.

Rev. Rose-Marie Ibyishaka Vice Chairperson of PROCMURA (East & Southern Africa) and Coordinator of the Women and Family Desk of the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda addressed the conference on behalf of the Chairperson of PROCMURA, Rt. Rev. Dr. Josiah Idowu-Fearon, Bishop of the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion. Rev. Ibyishaka

conveyed greetings of the chairperson to the conference and informed them that the Bishop could not be present with them because he was drafted into a committee by the government of Nigeria to work on finding solutions to the emerging conflicts which had serious implications for peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims. She said that the religious element in the conflict stems from the fact that it is principally engineered by *Boko Haram*.[1]   The vice chairperson said that the situation in the northern part of Nigeria made it even more important for Christians and Muslims to resolve to work together in support

Rev. Ibyishaka Rose-Marie

of peace and unity in the country and the sub-region. The Rev. Ibyishaka praised PROCMURA's partners from Denmark for their presence and for providing the finances that made this historical conference possible.   *(For details of Rev. Ibyishaka address see Appendix iv)*

Most Rev. Dr. Robert Aboagye-Mensah

Most Rev. Dr. Robert Aboagye-Mensah, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Vice President for West Africa who represented the organisation, began his address by bringing greetings from the General Secretary of the AACC Rev. Dr. André Karamaga. He said that the General Secretary wishes the participants well and looks forward to reading its proceedings and outcomes.

Recounting the link between the AACC and PROCMURA, the Most Rev. Aboagye-Mensah informed the participants that the two organisations share a history as both were brain children of the All Africa Church Conference which took place in Ibadan Nigeria in 1958. It was this conference which arguably sowed the seed for the founding of PROCMURA in 1959 and the AACC in 1963. On the focus of the AACC, the former Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Ghana pointed out four main areas that transcend the religious divide. These are: life, truth, justice and peace. He emphasised that these should always be pursued vigorously if Africa has to develop holistically. He applauded PROCMURA's efforts in this respect and reiterated the AACC's commitment--

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1.   Boko Haram is extremist Muslim group that operate in the northern part of Nigeria. They have claimed several bombings of various institutions and churches in that part of the country.

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to work with the organisation to harness the potential of religious leaders and religious people in the African continent towards peace and development. (*See Appendix V for details*)

Sheikh Dr. Khalid Abubakar Aliyu

Sheikh Dr. Khalid Abubakar Aliyu Secretary General *Jama'tu Nasril Islam* (JNI), the umbrella body of all Muslim organisations in northern Nigeria began his speech by lauding PROCMURA for the actions it is taking to address social problems that are affecting Africa as a whole and at the apex of this agenda are Christian-Muslim relations for peace and peaceful coexistence. He implored PROCMURA to step up its engagement on peace-building and proactively mitigate violent conflicts wherever it raised its ugly head. On causes of conflicts, he pointed out that economic stress and political divisions contribute a lot to such conflicts.

On the situation in the northern part of Nigeria, Dr. Aliyu explained that the conflicts are not really between Christians and Muslims but revolve primarily around matters of economic opportunity. For instance the conflict over oil is one of resource control; at the point where this access is not feasible conflict ensues. He also noted that ethnic considerations are areas that breed conflict because ethnic identities are sometimes exploited along religious lines thereby disrupting any move to unify the people for development.

Henrik Sonne Petersen of Danmission (right) and other participants follow the proceedings attentively

Unfortunately, politics has now staged a coup in the mosque *minbar*[2] and the church pulpit. Instead of using them to offer spiritual guidance they have become podiums where personal political ambitions are promoted.

The media also bears some of the brunt in perpetuating the state of unrest, the Sheikh emphasized. In Nigeria, the media overplays the ethnic and religious cards by being sensational in its reportage of issues and thus exacerbate simple situations instead of ameliorating them. By all intent and purpose the media has a lot to do if peace and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in the northern part of Nigeria have to be the norm and not the exception. Its reportage of events leaves much to be desired and is indeed a disservice to the public.

Christians and Muslims in Nigeria have coexisted for years and all of a sudden the situation has become a house of cards crumbling at every gust. A comprehensive and contextual analysis of the situation is imperative, if people in Nigeria and the outside world have to come to a deeper understanding of the complex situation in the northern part of Nigeria.

Commenting on the youth involvement in the conflict, Dr. Sheikh Aliyu lamented that the youth are being misused as foot soldiers for politicians, who engage them to further their political ends and spit them out by the wayside as soon as those ends are realised. He said that Boko Haram is an example of a group which was used and then left out in the cold thus making them vent out their anger in violence as an expression of their disillusionment of the social order. In his opinion, the government of the republic of Nigeria needs to enter into dialogue with Boko Haram rather than try to exterminate them. They chiefly targeted government installations because they felt that they had been shortchanged. The problem was aggravated when their leader was killed, extra-judicially. This blow to their leadership structure managed to disperse the group for about a year and as soon as they regrouped embarked at what can only be described as a terror campaign.

They are now more dangerous than ever because on their return they adopted a more camouflaged posterior intermingling with the general populous and thus remaining faceless.

Notable also is that pattern of attacks has become wider; they now prey on anyone and everyone who is against their core ideology.

Boko Haram, the Sheikh explained has now become synonymous and indeed the scapegoat for all sorts of crimes. Christians and Muslims in the north and south have now adopted the name and carry out crimes purporting to be members of the group.

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1. *Minbar* is the equivalent of Pulpit in Islam.

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One cannot therefore bandwagon all incidents of crime and violence in Nigeria under Boko Haram, but rather look at them critically to ascertain what has been carried out by the extremist group and what has been carried out by criminals who claim to be members of the group.

Sheikh Aliyu asserted that the Muslim community abhors the acts of violence that are being perpetuated in Nigeria, especially so in the name of Islam. He said utterances by some Christian and Muslim leaders in the public domain are sometimes careless and serve to incite the masses. He added that both Christianity and Islam have embedded peace in their doctrine and as such pronouncements of that nature go against Christian and Islamic teachings.

In conclusion he praised PROCMURA for organising such a noble forum of Christian and Muslim leaders saying that understanding context was perhaps one of the most important efforts of forestalling conflict and embedding peace. The Sheikh urged PROCMURA to come to Nigeria again and bring together Christians and Muslims under a common banner of peace and peaceful coexistence. This will help bring serenity in the country.

In a brief comment after the presentation, Rev. Dr. Mbillah commended the Sheikh for being succinct in such a complex issue and reiterated PROCMURA's commitment to accompany religious leaders in Nigeria in their determination to find a lasting solution to this intractable situation. He prayed that religious leaders in Nigeria would exercise restraint and avoid provocative pronouncements that would worsen situations. "Our aim in PROCMURA is to harness our common humanity for peace and not explore our animality by pushing and shoving and making worse a dire situation".

Rev. Arngeir Langas

Rev. Arngeir Langås, Coordinator for Christian-Muslim Relations for Mission Afrika began his word of greetings by recognizing the various partners from Denmark and invited them to stand and salute participants. He went on to mention areas in which they work and their presence in Africa from Zanzibar to Sierra Leone, Egypt to Madagascar.

With regard to the pan-African conference, he said that the relationship with PROCMURA has been a long standing one and one that continues to flourish. He commended PROCMURA's approach and said that it was one worth emulating given the dynamics of Christian-

Muslim relations in Africa, specifically in the quest to establish peace and initiate holistic development projects. He said that the process of peace was one that safeguards future generations and it was upon Christian and Muslim religious leaders to yield to God's call to promote peace and serve humanity as a whole.

Mr. Filipe Alimo Faruma of Citizens and Diaspora Directorate-African Union (AU) in addressing the conference said that the AU has largely been viewed as a political instrument detached and disinterested in matters of religion. Contrary to this view said Mr. Faruma

Mr. Filipe Alimo Faruma

the AU recognises the important roles religious people play towards the peace and development of the continent and is therefore committed to working with religious leaders to promote sustainable peace and development.

As a result of this commitment the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) of the AU Commission initiated a conference in Abuja, Nigeria in 2010 that brought together representatives of all Africa's Religious Leaders to deliberate on how the AU can work with religious leaders to promote peace in the continent. The conference which had the theme "Advancing Justice, Peace, Security and Development in Africa" had the objective of establishing a structured partnership between the African Union, as the main regional continental organization, and religious communities that will be harnessed to the task of integration and development on the continent. It was also aimed at facilitating religious harmony and tolerance among the people of the continent by fully associating the authority of the continent's religious leadership with the process of governance at the continental level.

This landmark initiative in the history of the AU, said Mr Faruma, was in recognition of the important role played by religious leaders in maintaining and promoting peace and development. This role which cannot be left entirely to the whims of political machinations requires a consultative approach to realize best practice. He said that the AU and religious leaders need to form a partnership that can be harnessed for the benefit of Africa. In winding up his presentation, he assured PROCMURA of her continued support in this important journey of peace and development emphasising that PROCMURA has an unrivalled experience in this field as it has existed for over fifty years. We can all draw inspiration from PROCMURA, he said. He looked forward to welcoming the religious leaders to the AU offices and assured PROCMURA that due to the importance of the conference, he will sit in throughout and participate in its deliberations.

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Ms. Joy Wandabwa

Ms. Joy Wandabwa, PROCMURA Team Leader-Finance and Administration took an interesting approach in her vote of thanks. She pointed out that as the last to speak, she had the opportunity to be the voice of the younger generation that still needs to learn from the elder generation, and symbolically this is the generation that follows in the footsteps of those gone before. She appreciated the members of the dais and participants who had travelled far and wide to make it for the conference. She also thanked the Christian and Muslim religious leaders for their presence and urged them to continue to put PROCMURA and her activities in their prayers. She concluded by thanking invited guests and all others present for attending the opening ceremony and wished everyone well as she looked forward to very fruitful deliberations. 'All that begins well ends well. We have began well and the Lord will enable us to end well' she concluded.

On popular request Dr. Mbillah wound up the session leading participants to nominate persons who wiil work on a statement on the situation in Nigeria. Such as statement, it was agreed, will be discussed at plenary and fine-tuned for circulation to the religious and political leaders of Nigeria and all those who have that country at heart. The drafting team that was selected included Dr. Benjamin Lartey from Liberia, Mrs. Lantana Bako from Nigeria, Sheikh Fadhil Soraga from Tanzania (Zanzibar) and Ms. Abeer Saady Hassan from Egypt.

The afternoon session was reconvened at 2:00pm under the chairmanship of Sheikh Abu Bakarr Conteh from Sierra Leone. Participants were asked to introduce themselves and give briefs about the work that they are involved in. (*The full list of participants can be found in Appendix XVII*)

After the introductions, ***Sheikh Conteh*** asked participants to observe a moment of silence and direct their thoughts on the afternoon's proceedings and working sessions.

1.2 Conference Rationale

The rationale of the conference which was expected with a lot of enthusiasm was presented by the General Adviser of PROCMURA, Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah. The General Adviser began his presentation by reminding participants that the rationale of the conference comes in the concept paper that was sent to all participants earlier and hoped that most, if not all participants have been able to read it. He proposed to outline to outline salient points with the understanding that those who have not yet been able to read the script will do so tonight in preparation for the proceedings the following day.

Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah

The concept paper begins with a justified statement of the obvious that Africa, the second largest and second most populous continent in the world, after Asia, is a continent of religion and religious people. The social fabric of Africa is therefore a religious one while Christianity and Islam currently wield the largest following within the continent's religious landscape. What this means in practice and in the light of this conference, explained Mbillah, is that there can be no peace in the African continent if Muslims and Christians are not at peace among themselves and with one another.

In the over 50 years of PROCMURA's life and work, it has always been recognised that even though Christianity and Islam claim to be religions with peace at the centre of their teaching by many, history has shown that Christians and Muslims have not always lived up to this core value which they claim to be innate in their respective religions. They have in some instances used the concept of a 'Just War' (Christian) and Jihad (Muslim) to perpetuate violence in society and violence among and between themselves. When it comes to the issue of development, Christianity and Islam have always stated clearly that according to their respective scriptures and traditions, humankind are stewards (Christianity), viceroys and vigerents (*Khalifas in Islam*) of God's creation.

The rationale behind the organisation of the Addis Ababa conference, is best understood in terms of one of PROCMURA's programme focuses in the continent; its commitment to work towards peace and live peace and to have a broader understanding of how religious leaders can team up with state actors, civil society, regional and continental bodies, towards the material and spiritual development of the African peoples as true stewards of God's creation.

PROCMURA's work on peace and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims as a prerequisite for development falls within its second operational principle of 'Christian Constructive engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence", and its stated vision of a "continent where faith communities in spite of their differences work together for the wholistic (spelt holistic) development of the human family."

The focus of this particular conference, far from duplicating what has been done over the past few years, brings together influential Christian and Muslim religious leaders and media representatives, with the understanding that the presence of the media from each participating country will help spread the conference proceedings far and wide.

The choice of countries (Cameroun, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania (main land and Zanzibar) depicts a mix of varied wealth of experiences some of which may be unique and peculiar to any given country. This variety of experiences, it is hoped, will stimulate sharing across the regions and the different countries and help produce a broader impact on participants across the religious divide.

On the objectives of the conference, the General Adviser referred participants to the main document in the appendices. He however gave a gist of the principal objective by making it clear that it is to provide a platform for the Christian and Muslim religious leaders to deliberate on the reality that human beings are economic, political, social, cultural as well as spiritual beings constituted with body, soul and mind as a unit. It is hoped that this reality will provide good grounds for participants to come up with a holistic developmental approach that shall attend to these realities. Apart from this, the conference is expected to launch an added phase in PROCMURA's cooperation with its partners in Denmark and stakeholders in Africa, towards an African Christian and Muslim renaissance for peace and development. (*Full texts of the presentation can be found in the Appendix I*)

After Mbillah responded to questions from the floor, Sheikh Conteh thanked the General Adviser for a well written and brief presentation and encouraged all to re-read the paper so that they may not digress from the conference rationale in their deliberations.

1.3 Country Presentations

The chairperson invited presenters of each country to get themselves ready to make the presentations detailing the state of Christian-Muslim relations . The countries lined up to make the presentations included: Cameroon, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania (mainland) and Zanzibar. (*Full texts of the presentations can be found in the Appendices*)

1.3.1 Tanzania

The presentation for Tanzania (mainland) was made by **Rev. Canon Thomas Godda**, who is PROCMURA's Area Adviser for Tanzania and Regional Coordinator for East and Southern Africa. He began by speaking on the pluralistic nature of the Tanzanian society both by ethnic composition and religious adherence.

What seemed to stand out is the fact that Tanzania is 85% Christian and 15% Muslim and differences in specifics vary negligibly. There are arguably areas of Christian and Muslim domination in Zanzibar (Muslim) and Mainland Tanzania (Christian) for example. In mainland

Rev. Canon Thomas Godda

Tanzania, said the Canon, almost every family has a mixture of both Christians and Muslims thus providing a formidable front for coexistence. In spite of this Christians and Muslims continue to face challenges which cannot be overlooked.

To begin with *Mihadhara* as a form of debate between Christians and Muslims on core doctrines of the two faiths was greatly compromising gains from relationship building. These he said, more often than not turn polemical and insults are hurled back and forth about both Christianity and Islam. Other challenges he mentioned included unemployment, the mixing up of politics and religion, the importation of conflicts from abroad, the rise of hard-line movements and constitutional reforms.

Elaborating on the issue of unemployment, Canon Godda, mentioned that the youth are largely affected by the state of affairs and as such remain susceptible to manipulations from politicians and religious leaders with unscrupulous morals and intentions. The situation was not so grim as PROCMURA and new emerging groups working on the promotion of good relations between Christians and Muslims to promote peace and peaceful co-existence. PROCMURA which has already set a good precedence in building relations between Christians and Muslims is now being emulated by such organisations as:

i. Juhudi za Viongozi wa Dini Kuimarisha Amani (JVD) [*Translated as* Efforts of Religious Leaders in Peace Building]. They bring together three religious institutions: *The Supreme Council of Muslims*, (BAKWATA), Tanzania *Episcopal Council*, (TEC), and *The Christian Council of Tanzania*, (CCT), (ii.) International Inter-religious Federation for World Peace-Tanzania (IIFWPT), (iii.) Tanzania Interfaith Forum, (TIF), (iv.) World Conference on Religions for Peace, Tanzania,(WRCPT), (v.) Tanzania Commission for Muslims and Christians for Peace and Development,

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(TUWWAMUTA), (vi.) Inter-religious Council for Peace, Tanzania,(IRCPT), (vii) Tanzania Interfaith Committee, (TIC) dealing with advocacy on Minerals and Environmental issues, and (viii) a newly formed commission to deal with HIV/ AIDS known as Tanzania Interfaith Partnership, (TIP). (*Full text of the presentation can be found in Appendix VI)*

1.3.2 Zanzibar

The Zanzibar presentation was read by **Sheikh Fadhil Soraga**, the Secretary General of Mufti of Zanzibar. In his reading of the text, he made it clear that the text was prepared by a team and not by an individual.

The situation of Christian and Muslim relations in Zanzibar the text read is rather complex as compared to mainland Tanzania. As an Island where about 98% of the population is Muslim and indigenous Zanzibaris, Christians, who are mainly from mainland Tanzania are considered

Sheikh Fadhil Soraga of Zanzibar

settlers whereas Muslims are considered the indigenes of Zanzibar. The challenges to Christian-Muslim relations in Zanzibar are therefore quite unique from mainland Tanzania.

The presentation of the challenges was classified in three broad categories: political, social and religious. These are explained further in the full text of the prose. However under religious challenges, it was pointed out that one of the prospects for cooperation had been embodied by the Joint Committee of Religious Leaders which had done much to promote cooperation among Christians and Muslims through joint projects. Unfortunately, the committee has also been dogged by accusations of being a syncretistic organisation by its detractors.

In spite of having stated clearly that the purpose of Christian-Muslim relations as propounded by PROCMURA is not syncretism but rather relations towards peaceful coexistence of members of the two religions, accepting and respecting differences that exist between them and rising above these differences to enter into constructive engagements with each other for the holistic development of the human family the detractors look for ways and means dismembering the organisation.

In any case, the joint programmes of the organisation has endeared itself to peace loving Zanzibaries and present a great point of interaction for Christians and Muslims especially on issues of mutual concern. (*Full text of the presentation can be found in Appendix VII)*

1.3.3 Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leone situational report was presented by the ***Rev. Moses Khanu*** who is the Area Adviser of PROCMURA for Sierra Leone and also the Regional Coordinator for the Anglophone West Africa Region of PROCMURA.

The situation in Sierra Leone is one that speaks to the immense potential of Christians and Muslims working together for peace and development. During Sierra Leone's civil war, Christians and Muslims got together and spearheaded peace talks between the leaders of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and government. The

Rev. Moses Khanu

talks took the Christian and Muslim leaders to the bush where they endured hardships of personal and psychological proportions to promote peace. It is clearly documented that Christian and Muslim leaders played important roles that led to the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement that brought peace to Sierra Leone.

This cooperation lasted beyond the Agreement and remains the focal point of ensuring that a similar situation of conflict does not arise. The cooperation evolved to deal with issues of human rights, truth, justice and reconciliation. The Rev. Moses Khanu himself is a member of the human rights commission.

Pastor Daniel Rakotoarijoana

Sierra Leone continues to be a beacon in Africa towards the efforts of Christians and Muslims in conflict transformation. (*Full text can be found in Appendix VIII*)

1.3.4 Madagascar

Madagascar remains one of the most beautiful annexes of Africa with a rich cultural heritage and diverse breathtaking ecosystem. The context of Christian-Muslim relations in Madagascar is one of deep history with the first Muslims known as *Antalaotra* (*Anti-Alautsi*) which means "men from overseas" being said to have migrated

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to the island one or two centuries after the death of the prophet of Islam, Muhammad. The peculiar situation of the island dwellers in terms of relations among the Malagasy is embodied in one word *Fihavanana*. PROCMURA which has actively been exploring African traditions that build on relationships among peoples was glad to see this very concept brought out during the meeting. *Fihavanana* cannot be described in a single English word but embodies the totality of solidarity, kinship and friendliness.

 Just like Tanzania's principle of *Ujamaa* which emphasises a communal sense of being that was strengthened by a common language – Kiswahili, *Fihavanana* is a concept that unites Madagascans and serve as an asset to Christians and Muslims working together to deal with issues of mutual concern to the two communities of Christians and Muslims. It is crucial here to point out an example of an idiom used in common discourse to depict the importance of *Fihavanana*… "It is better to lose wealth than to lose *Fihavanana*"(*Full text can be found in the Appendix IX*)

Participants in group discussions.

2.0 DAY 2

The chairperson for the morning proceedings of the second day was was Bishop Augustine Mweleli Shao, Catholic Bishop of Zanzibar. After calling the conference to order, the bishop invited Sheikh Khaled Hassan Mohamed of Egypt and Bishop Sumoward E. Harris of the Lutheran Church in Liberia to lead in prayers for the programme to commence. After the prayers, the day's business was commenced with a continuation of country presentations.

Bishop Augustine Mweleli Shao
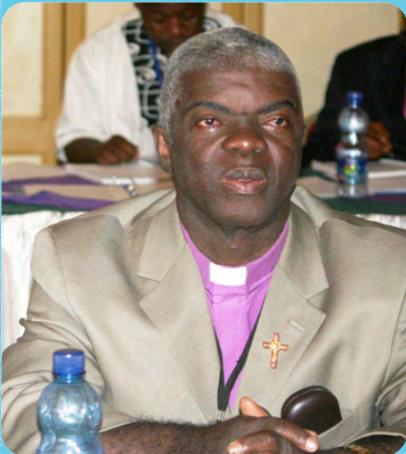
Bishop Sumoward E. Harris

Sheikh Khaled Hassan

2.1 Country Presentations

2.1.1   Liberia

The Liberia report was presented by Dr. Benjamin Dorme Lartey, the General Secretary of the Liberia Council of Churches (LCC) and a member of the Executive Committee of PROCMURA.

Dr. Lartey started off his presentation by giving the religiography of the country. This was basically a description of the different regions in Liberia and the ethnic and religious dominations of these regions. He also went ahead to point out areas of convergence and almost equal distribution of both religious groups exemplifying coexistence thus granting credence to PROCMURA's view, that there is no country in Africa where Christians and Muslims do not live together even if as minorities.

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The presentation then moved on to highlight cooperation between Christians and Muslims in the wake of the Liberian Civil war. During that period (1990s) the Liberia Council of Churches and the National Muslim Council of Liberia formed the Inter-Faith Mediation Committee to step up efforts to avert conflicts emanating from the civil war, that seemed to assume religious dimensions as the Mandingo (largely Muslims) and the Lorma (largely Christians) seemed to set themselves against one another. The formation of the committee helped immensely to build confidence and to avert a situation where the civil war will have assumed full-fledged war on religious lines.
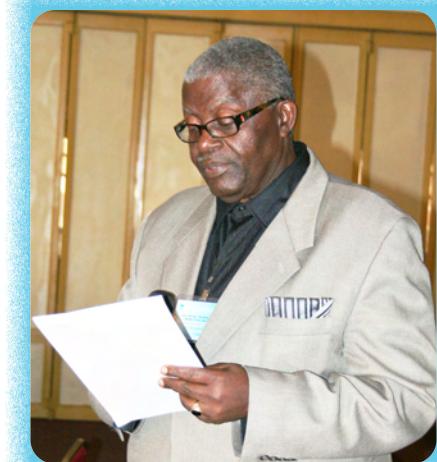
Dr. Benjamin Lartey going through his presentation

On the contemporary situation, Dr. Lartey said that some of the problems among Christians and Muslims were as a result of latent tensions which were spawned during the civil war leading to human rights violations, ethnic divisions, land disputes, clamour for power etc. as nascent flames that could be easily sparked into full blown violence. He underlined the potential of collaboration between Christians and Muslims to forestall future conflict saying its Leaders still hold a substantial pull among the masses and political leaders. (*Full text can be found in Appendix X*)

Rev. Jürgen Klein during the presentation

2.1.2 Ethiopia

The Rev. Jürgen Klein EECMY Christian-Muslim Relations Programme Adviser presented the Ethiopia country report. Ethiopia, he said, is no stranger to Christian-Muslim relations as it has the earliest examples of Christians and Muslims encounter, when the first converts to Islam had to leave Mecca to Ethiopia for fear of persecution and was warmly welcomed by the Christian king (the Negus). Ethiopia has since had a long standing tradition of pacific coexistence between Christians and Muslims. However several challenges exist. For in the recent past, sporadic instances of violence have been reported in the south-west Jimma area initiated by a Muslim group known as the *Khawaraij*.

This isolated incident among others means that if Ethiopia has to consolidate relations between the two faiths, Christians and Muslim leaders have to take seriously the complex dynamics of relations between Christians and Muslims which are known to be multifaceted. Just as challenges exist so do opportunities to further relations also exist. For instance, religious communities have legal statuses in Ethiopia and as a result need to be registered officially with the state. This accords them with certain privileges and freedoms and the possibility of enjoying government support.

On the practical level, it appears that ethnic affiliations rank higher than religious ones and therefore serve as a rallying point for different communities irrespective of their religious affiliation. In addition, government is categorical in differentiating state from religion thus it is not permitted for any religious grouping to clamour under the banner of political participation or outrightly support a certain political party or form one for that matter.

Issues posing challenges to peace include among others land tensions in the country and extremist religious groups and activists who appear to gain grounds in certain parts of the country. There are numerous instances where Christians and Muslims can come together for the common good. One of these include rendering training to journalists who can then sensitize the general population on matters of Christian-Muslim relations, development of networks among practitioners of Christian-Muslim relations and the establishment of academic centres of excellence that will provide the requisite knowledge to practioners in Christian and Muslim relations. (*For details of the presentation see Appendix XI*)

2.1.3 Egypt

Following the political revolutions in the Arab world, Egypt has become a country of particular interest to Africans as to the entire world. In their presentation, the Egyptians were categorical in stating that there were obvious challenges between Christians and Muslims, as was epitomized by attacks on the Orthodox Church, although it has to be said that the media exaggerated the issues.

Egyptians have been working together for centuries and the contemporary situation is no different as was manifest during the revolutions where Christians and Muslims alike

The Egyptian delegation poses for a group photo

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were united under the banner of political and social change. Unfortunately politics has also taken centre stage in determining the manner and form of relations between Christians and Muslims in the country. Other challenges to Christian-Muslim relations in the country include external interference, illiteracy, misinterpretation of religious texts etc. Some of the proposals put forth to boost relations include strengthening of Al Azhar, promotion of citizenship and cultural awareness through educational programmes. It is hoped that with the coming into power of the Muslim Brotherhood a greater effort to engagement with Christians will be instituted in the country. (*For details of this presentation see appendix XII*)

2.1.4 Nigeria

The presentation on Nigeria was quite sensitive coming in the backdrop of ongoing conflict sparked off by the removal of fuel subsidies that led to nationwide mass protests coupled with weeks of bombings by Boko Haram[3]. The presentation by Mrs. Justina Ngowbia Mike and Mrs. Lantana Abdullahi Bako focused on the prevailing situation in Jos. The presentation highlighted the historical context of Jos and a brief overview of the current crisis being faced in the Middle-Belt area.

Mrs. Justina Ngwobia Mike

The presentation also drew attention to current peace building efforts. Mrs. Lantana was clear to point out that the conflict in Jos was not one between Christians and Muslims per se. A culmination of driving forces seemed to have dragged Christians and Muslims to the fore. The media on the other hand tends to focus on the points of divergence between the diverse ethnic groups and religious differences. She pointed out that some of the problems facing the people of Jos include; identity which is characterised as either being an indigene or settler and religio-ethnic identity also playing itself out.

Other factors that have contributed to conflict in the area have been political exclusion, lack of economic opportunity, constitutional discrimination and reforms to name but few.

The result of these areas of divergence has been the destruction of property and the loss of lives. In 2008, for example, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) reported

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3. Nigerian Sunni Muslim militant group spawned from sectarian tensions, political machinations and deprivation

that 129 Christians were killed and 8,229 others were displaced. Similarly, reports from the Jos North Muslim Ummah demonstrated that 632 Muslims were killed. These attacks have bred suspicion and mistrust with Christian and Muslim communities gradually segregating into Christian and Muslim neighbourhoods and markets. In January of 2012 Boko Haram was accused of killing at least 186 people in the Kano State bombing which is to the North-North West of Jos.

Mrs. Lantana Abdullahi Bako

Unfortunately, like all conflicts and situations of unrest, women and children seem to bear the brunt of hostilities. Widows and orphans often litter the streets and internally displaced camps that make the most out of temporary shelters and scarce food stuffs. To this end, women in Jos have organised themselves into networks and support groups that are actively engaged in peace efforts at the grassroots and empowerment programmes for themselves.

One thing that came out clearly during the presentation was the need for a collaborative effort between Christians, Muslims, Government (both state and federal) and the Civil Society. A consultative forum bringing onboard all actors is downright crucial if a sustainable path to peace is to be instituted.

Participants in the conference room

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2.1.5 Denmark

The presentation by Denmark was a careful choreography of a Christian, Muslim and journalist's interplay of the situation between Christians and Muslims in the Danish society. The three quite like an orchestra, spoke on the issues each to his/her area of expertise in successive order. Denmark, it was explained, has a strong Christian heritage. The arrival of Muslims mainly as immigrants has changed the majority Christian dynamic. Muslims are now about 4-5% of the population. They have over the past few years changed their engagement with the Danish society from purely economic to look at various other factors affecting policy and political participation.

The growth in numbers of the Muslim community has occasioned conflict which some times pit Christians against Muslims. For one thing, the government which was constituted by the liberal and conservative parties came out strongly against Islam. These notions of

The Danish Presenters from left Dr. Mogens Mogensen, former Mission Afrika General Secretary, Malene Fenger-Grøndahl, freelance journalist and writer, and Abdul Wahid Pedersen, Secretariat General Danish Muslim Aid

segregation and a view of Muslims as outsiders was made worse by the 9/11 bombings which then sparked yet another crisis depicted by the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper. This has gone a long way to spark unrest and even conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Denmark and very well across the world, with some Muslim leaders calling on its followers to boycott Danish products.

With these developments, Christians and Muslims have to critically examine contexts before bandwagoning issues as either pro or anti-Islam or Christianity for that matter. With specific regard to the media it was understood that little attention is paid to Islam and Christianity as a 'hot' news item.

The truth of the matter is that the economic interests sometimes outweigh societal considerations with respect to the news agenda. One key issue that hovers around the Danish society is the Christian majority societal domination coupled with strict regard to the separation of religion and state. The typical Dane would regard religion as a personal conviction and thus individual driving force.

Denmark is not a basket case however, as efforts to work together (Christians and Muslims) have been instituted from as far back as 1998, where an Islamic Christian Study Centre in Copenhagen, was established as a joint venture of the two faith communities. The Centre provides a forum for continuous dialogue and one where both the Christian and Muslim communities can continue to learn about one another. These instances of cooperation were evident during dialogue forums around issues of citizenship, religion and freedom, self-criticism of both Christians and Muslims to name but a few. In spite of challenges and very well encouraged opportunities for engagement, a growing interest in Christian-Muslim relations accelerated in Denmark after the infamous Muhammed cartoon saga was.

The continued support by partners in Denmark in different programmes especially those pertaining to Christian-Muslim relations is commendable and one to be emulated. For example, Danish mission organizations exemplified by Danmission and Mission Afrika with the support of DMCDD have supported PROCMURA's work around Africa. The current conference is no exception. (*For a details of this presentation see Appendix xiv*)

2.1.6 Cameroun

Rev. Robert Daga Goyek, President of the Council of the Protestant Churches of Cameroon and President of the EFLC, and Sheikh Hamadou Mahamadou El Hadj Banoufé presented the current situation of Christians and Muslims in Cameroon. They began the presentation by giving the historical context of Islam and Christianity in the country, describing the initial dominance of Islam in the northern part of the country to neighbouring chiefdoms. Till date the northern part of Cameroun is predominantly Muslim.

Christianity on the other hand was introduced centuries later after the penetration of Islam through the south of the country and consequently dominates the south. There are several challenges being experienced in the country that also present opportunities for engagement. Cameroon has particular significance in the early beginnings of PROCMURA. It is on record

Rev. Robert Goyek (left) and Sheikh Hamadou Mahamadou El Hadj Banoufé (right)

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that one of the founding fathers of PROCMURA, Pierre Benignus died in a plane crash at the Cameroun mountains in 1960's when he was travelling to our country on PROCMURA business.

In spite of this history, there are still no concrete structures to bring together Christians and Muslims to chat a way forward for cooperation and collaboration. In recent times the emergence of polemical preachers threaten to disrupt the peaceful coexistence of the two religious communities. This situation is rallying cry for Christians and Muslims to come together to promote peaceful co-existence and explore ways and means of constructively relating to one another on various issues of mutual concern.

It will not be an exaggeration to point out that Cameroon's neighbourhood such as the northern part of Nigeria is one that is perilous. Without the proper structures in place to promote peaceful co-existence, the country could be exposed to infiltration by negative elements that tend to be more divisive than unifying. These structures need to be set up in consideration of Cameroon's ethnic diversity which has become a contentious issue among African countries, because of individuals who have used ethnicity as an ally to religion when it comes to whipping up the masses emotions. (*For details of the Cameroun presentation see Appendix v*)

After the Cameroon presentation and plenary discussions on the presentations of the day, participants were divided into groups to discuss pertinent and relevant issues that had emerged so far. The breaking into groups allowed the drafting committee on Nigeria to retreat to a secluded room to work on a statement that would be discussed in plenary and after accommodating divergent views adopted and issued on behalf of the conference. The group discussions and the draft committee meeting winded down the day's activities.

A participant giving his views.

3.0 DAY 3

The day commenced under the stewardship of the President of the Christian Council of Madagascar (FFKM), Rev. Rasendrahasina Lala, who invited Sheikh Hamadou Mahamadou El Haji Banoufé and Rev. Kristian Skovmose to give the opening prayers. After which Sheikh Banoufé commended the efforts of PROCMURA in bringing participants together. He said that one unique thing that needs to be carried on is the prayer session that continues to glorify God even in the face of Christian-Muslim relations.

Rev. Rasendrahasina Lala

3.1 Religion and Civil Society

Rev. Lala then proceeded to invite Sheikh Abu Bakarr Conteh to give a presentation on Religion and the Civil Society. Sheikh Conteh begun his presentation by making it clear that in the not distant past, civil society organisations were ignored and viewed as alien when it came to matters of talking about peace and development. This situation has drastically changed as civil society organisations have become indispensible in any action that involves the citizen of any nation. He articulated that civil society should play an active role in peace, security, governance and sustainable development issues which are core to a well rounded society. The common challenges faced by civil society revolve around funding, lack of sufficient room to practice, membership, engagement in issues where they lack expertise, political influence etc. He then pointed out a few success stories in Sierra Leone by the civil society which was instrumental in instituting accountability mechanism, monitoring political parties, observing elections, spearheading Gender and Child Rights acts, HIV/AIDS programmes, health programmes, monitoring of political parties to name but a few.

Religion by its very nature is partisan and thus is quite difficult to position in civil society and more especially for Christianity and Islam following the 9/11 attacks, the current events in Nigeria (2011-2012). However, responsible theology has been known to make significant contributions to the Civil Society by championing development and peace agendas.

For example, the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone was instrumental in initiating the peace process during the Sierra Leone civil war, it also mediated between the ousted president Alhaji Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabba and the Junta Leader.

Religious leaders are thus properly positioned to take up the utmost lead role because

of the moral authority vested in them by the public. This authority allows them to restore confidence in processes of government and get going several initiatives because of the distinct advantage that cuts across several spheres of life and very well of society. Religion, and specifically in Africa, plays a major role in the lives of Africans and with pre-existing structures of religion, leaders should maximise their outreach through these structures and networks of collaboration. A proactive role should be embarked upon by religious leaders not only to be active in the Civil Society but also to be pace setters in the development agenda. (For details of the presentation see Appendix xvi)

3.2 Religion and the Media

The paper on Religion and the Media was presented by Ms. Abeer Saady Hassan Mohamed Soliman who gave an overview of the interplay between religion and the media. Ms. Soliman who is a seasoned journalist recounted her experiences and the challenges faced by the fourth estate in general. She drew correlation between the media and religion and how each has the power to shape the other. The roles of the media which include education place the it at a vantage point in terms of being able to influence opinions and perspectives.

Ms. Abeer Saady Hassan Mohamed Soliman

3.3 Nigeria Statement

A health break was followed by the reading of the draft statement on Nigeria. This session was chaired by the Drafting Committee Chairman Dr. Benjamin Lartey who proceeded to read the entire document at first and then reread it to allow plenary to step by step, phrase by phrase dissect the document and give their input. The draft statement was analysed with debates ensuing on its substance and form.

Subsequently recommendations were taken and adopted to reflect the consensus of all the participants. (*The text of the Nigeria Statement can be found in the Appendix.*)

After the reading of the Nigeria Statement the group was treated to an afternoon excursion of Addis Ababa where they visited several historical sites including the Orthodox Church and the city Mosque.

4.0 DAY 4

The fourth and final day of the conference was chaired by Canon Thomas Godda, who invited Imam Abdul Wahid Pedersen and Bishop Malasusa to give the opening prayer. This was followed by a recount of the visit to the Mosque and Orthodox Church that had been met by some confrontation which was quickly diffused putting theory and principle into practice. A session was slated for later on, where the plenary could discuss the happenings and reflect on the mission of this great calling to Christian-Muslim relations. As was the case some of the participants were visibly rattled by the events of the preceding day, just as it had been a walk in the park for the stalwarts. Regardless, the experience was right up the ally for the conference participants, a practical scenario that needed them to engage the knowledge that had been acquired.

4.1 Way Forward

Plenary broke into focus groups of countries to look at the entire proceedings of the conference and its outcomes and to come up with the way vis-a-vis each country's situation pursuant to the conference focus. The session resumed under the Chairmanship of Bishop Malasusa who invited the

Some of the participants from Tanzania hold brief on the way forward

different countries to make presentations on the way forward.

The first to present was Madagascar (Mrs. Colette Ranarivony), followed by Cameroon (Bishop Robert Goyek), Egypt (Ms. Abeer Saady Hassan Mohamed Soliman), Ethiopia (Abba Gebriel), Tanzania (Sheikh Fadhil Soraga), Denmark (Henrik Sonne Petersen) but because of time constraints the rest were handed in to the secretariat which compiled them and summarised them as follows:

1. To replicate the ideals of the conference in the specific countries represented and beyond.
2. To engage top brass Christian and Muslim leadership to establish and further relationships among Christian and Muslim adherents.
3. To address political leaders on matters of peace and development, taking a proactive stance in contributing to policy formation and implementation.
4. To be active in civil society especially where peace and development is concern.

5. To take an active role in development and peace issues in countries of origin.

6. To establish a network of cooperation, where participants can keep in touch and seek best practices.

7. To engage the youth in peacebuilding programmes through curriculum and practice from an early stage.

8. To establish a resource centre that will facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among practitioners of Christian-Muslim relations.

9. PROCMURA to carry out more training for Church leaders on Christian-Muslim relations.

10. PROCMURA to engage with Christian and Muslim leaders at the country level.

11. PROCMURA to institute practical working sessions in different communities to show examples of Christians and Muslims working together.

After the presentations, the plenary moved on to the session concerning the visit to the Mosque and Church. Rev. Iteffa who spoke on the matter said that the incident that took place in the offices of the Muslim community near its central mosque is an isolated incident. He explained that coexistence and pacific interactions are the norm rather than the exception. The unfortunate incident that

Rev. Iteffa Gobena and Hajj Seid Asmare speaking on the confrontation at the Mosque.

involved participants being barricaded in the offices of the Muslim community by irate Muslim youth was an example how peace efforts can sometimes be challenging when encounters of this nature are not put into perspective. He said that foreign influence on Muslims in Ethiopia is very much to blame for the change of temperament. He proceeded to apologise for the incident explaining that even though it was water under the bridge, the incident can be chalked up to a mere misunderstanding that arose between the youth and the delegates.

Hajj Seid Asmare, one of the Muslim participants from Ethiopia, also assured participants that the unfortunate incident was peculiar and apologised on behalf of the youth. He was categorical in stating that Christians and Muslims live peaceably among themselves.

Dr. Mbillah, commenting on the situation said that the incident goes to confirm how few people can create a situation that is unreflective of the majority. He said that if the

media was present at the time, it would have made a mountain of it that would have carried headlines instead of the importance of the meeting here.

He made it clear that PROCMURA works with groups which understand the value of building Christian-Muslim relations for peace and those that do not. He gave an example of a similar experience in Sierra Leone during meeting and how both Christian and Muslim participants quickly made an irate youth to understand that his approach was unwarranted and unnecessary and he had to retract his inflammatory language. Sometimes a tactical retreat in situations of that nature does more

Abdul Wahid Pedersen contributing to the discussions

to forestall conflict than an all out confrontation. He urged participants not to give up on the quest under which they are called upon because the notion peace is noble.

The General Adviser's sentiments were followed by comments from the plenary with Abdul Wahid Pedersen from Denmark saying that conflict is inherent to human beings and we always have to look for a way to diffuse such conflicts in a peaceful manner. No doubt to be human is to be in conflict, the distinguishing factor between humanity and the rest of creation is our ability to resolve conflict.

Mrs. Justina Mike from Nigeria added that in Nigeria the situation is quite similar and whenever the leaders of the two faiths interact the relations are cordial. On the other hand, the challenge of putting into practice these good principles especially at the grassroots is always a daunting task.

To turn a blind eye to the reality of conflict among Christians and Muslims is, in the crudest manner, foolish! Opposition is a fit suffered by all peace makers and very well a silver lining that should let them know that they have their work cut out for them. This incident only serves to show that Christian-Muslim relations are crucial in Africa and very well the world over. A great deal has to be done in terms of sensitizing populations to the importance of Christian-Muslim relations as they transbound religious matters to everyday living. Christianity and Islam shape perceptions, for the core of motivation to action and very well affect the way in which individuals acquire knowledge and thus their world view.

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4.2 Evaluation

The session gave way to the evaluation session which was presided over by Dr. Mbillah. The participants were each given a questionnaire which they were asked to fill out. The evaluation forms allowed the participants to give their views on the conference. Questions ranged from the organisation, substance, activities and relevance of the conference to the accommodation, duration of the conference.

A summary of the responses are detailed below:

The participants were generally appreciative of the conference organisation ranking the Central Office staff quite high, although some wished they had received more information on the conference especially of the different papers that were presented forehand. There was also praise for the relevance of the conference and especially the Concept Paper of the conference. Participants also pointed out that the country presentations were well worth their salt given the different experiences that were shared and learned. In addition, participants were keen to push for the use of both French and English given that this particular conference had an English bias. Finally some participants felt that the group work could have been longer or even the duration of the conference longer to allow for exhaustive deliberations.

Some comments that came to the fore that were quite important were those concerning the openness of the conference and the manner in which the debates and presentations were carried out. The frankness was commendable. There was a suggestion that the Christian-Muslim relations programme extend to a European-African one.

4.3 Address by incoming DCMDD General Secretary

A special guest was invited to the podium to address the Conference. Mr. Lars Udsholt who is the incoming DCMDD General Secretary was at hand to grace the occasion. Although he did not say much, he expressed gratitude for having the opportunity to be party to a forum which they (DCMDD) are part of and urged on PROCMURA in the work that it is engaged in.

Rev. Dr. Mbillah (right) and Mr. Lars Udsholt (left)

4.4 Visit to the African Union

During the duration of the conference PROCMURA was privileged and indeed blessed to have been the first organisation to be accorded an opportunity to bring together Christian and Muslim leaders to pray for the new African Union Building. The Chinese Master Piece in Africa was a memorable nudge to Christian and Muslim leaders in Africa. Prayers from both Bishop Alex Malasusa and Sheikh Soraga were offered during the visit. These prayers were done just before the 18th AU Summit which was held several days later.

After the prayers participants toured the AU complex and were introduced to the various departments. The tour concluded with an informative lecture on how the AU is run, the programmes that it is involved in and the challenges it faces in the continent. Most if not all the participants were in the AU for the first time had a welcome feel of what their heads of states and foreign ministers often do when they come for AU meetings.

At the end of the tour, Dr. Mbillah thanked the Rev. Iteffa Gobena for arranging the tour and Mr. Filipe Alimo Faruma of the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate-African Union for meticulously planning for participants to see as much as they did and to have detailed information of the operations of the AU within at one visit. Such an orientation Dr.

Participants pose for a photo in front of the African Union logo

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Mbillah emphasised will stay with participants for a long time yet. He reminded staff of the AU of PROCMURA's commitment to contribute its quota towards the peace and development of the continent.

4.4 Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony was lead by Bishop Malasusa and Rev. Dr. Mbillah. The first agenda of business was the reading of the Addis Communiqué, which had been drafted beforehand. The draft was scrutinised and various inputs put forth by the participants. The document outlined the focus of the conference and the details of the resolve by the Christian and Christian leaders. The gist of the document called for collaboration among Christians and Muslims in the continent coupled with working in close proximity with both government and the media in development projects. The meeting was then brought to a close by a word of prayer by Sheikh Aliyu.
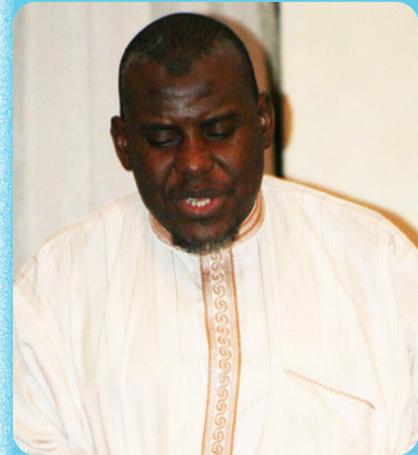
Sheikh Aliyu offering the final prayer

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Concept Paper on Conference Focus and Rationale

PROGRAMME FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN AFRICA (PROCMURA)

CONCEPT PAPER:
AFRICA CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT
Addis Ababa, January 8th-13th 2012.

1.   Introduction:

It is well known that Africa, the second largest and second most populous continent in the world, after Asia, is a continent of religion and religious people. Covering 6% of the earth's total surface and 20.4% of the total land area (http//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa), the world's population which hit the 7 billion mark at midnight of 31st October 2011, puts Africa's population to be over I billion people (*http://www.worldometers.info/world-population*). Barring specifics of religious figures which are sometimes contested by one religious group or the other, it is understood, and generally accepted that over 400 million of Africa's population profess to be Christian and over 400 million profess to be Muslim.

These figures make it clear that the social fabric of Africa is a religious one and that Christianity and Islam currently wield the largest following within the continent's religious landscape. What this means in practice and in the light of this conference is that there can be no peace in the African continent if Muslims and Christians are not at peace among themselves and with one another. In the same vein, there can be no meaningful development in the continent if Christians and Muslims are not active participants in the development agenda alongside others. To put these together, it is clear that peace is a prerequisite for development and environmentally friendly development with an ethically accepted norm is an asset to peace.

On peace and development or peace for development, therefore, the political environment of many African countries call for concerted efforts by all sectors of the society to create a serene environment of peace and harmony for sustainable development to take place.

The importance of the contribution of religous leaders and religious groups with specific development agendas teamming up with governments and civil society to work towards achieving that goal cannot be over emphasised.

It is well known that in a number of countries in Africa the political class listen to, and sometimes even consult religious leaders when the peace of the land is disturbed. Religious leaders are also often urged to contribute to the socio-ecomic development agendas of nations.

In the first African Union (AU) interfaith dialogue Forum held in Abuja from June 15-17 and which the General Adviser of PROCMURA was a member of the Steering Committee that helped to plan the forum, the AU emphasized the importance of African religious leaders' involvement in the peace and development agenda of the continent. This recognition informed the AU's choice of the theme of the

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forum which was "Advancing Justice, Peace, Security, and Development: Harnessing the Power of Religious Communities in Africa."

A declaration issued at the end of the forum reemphasized the importance of the role of religious leaders and communities, in accelerating the pace of integration and development of Africa, and the need for them to join hands with the political elite and civil society to continue their work towards justice, peace, security and development of the continent.

The forum reiterated the responsibility of religious leaders as moral and ethical guarantors of peace and societal transformation. With ample examples put on the table, the forum referred to situations where religious leaders have served as agents of change in the prevention, mitigation and transformation of conflicts using 'the enormous spiritual, moral, and social assets that Religious Leaders and religious communities have.' There was a commitment at the forum to form a Permanent Steering Committee of religious leaders that would help to develop an agenda for mutual engagements with the AU to enhance and strengthen the quest for sustainable peace, security and the development agenda in Africa.

With what has been said so far, it can unreservedly be said that Religious leaders are indispensable agents of peace and enviromentally friendly development.

2. The Challenge for Christianity and Islam:

In the over 50 years of PROCMURA's life and work, it has always recognised that even though Christianity and Islam claim to be religions with peace at the centre of their teaching and recognised as such by many, history has shown that Christians and Muslims have not always lived up to this core value.

They have in some instances used the concept of a 'Just War' (Christian) and Jihad (Muslim) to perpetuate violence in society and violence among and between themselves. When it comes to the issue of development, Christianity and Islam have always stated clearly that according to their respective scriptures and traditions, humankind are stewards (Christianity), viceroys and vigerents (*Khalifas in Islam*) of God's creation.

The challenge for Christianity and Islam in our contemporary times in Africa in the eyes of PROCMURA is how adherents of these two religions can translate their ideal precepts into practical actions. In deed how they can accept their religious differences and cooperate to work towards the peace and developement of the continent. This is especially important at this time when religious differences are sometimes seen to be contributory factors to violent conflicts which in turn stifle development. This view, be as it may, does hold some amount of truth except that such a truth cannot be wholly attributed to religion. It happens through political manipulation, economic stress, ethnicity finding an ally in religion, the importation of religious extremism into the continent among others. In spite of all these multiple factors religion is often pushed forward and made the one and only factor.

3. Rationale Behind the Organisation of the Conference

The rationale behind the organisation of the Addis Ababa conference, apart from the introductory analysis above is best understood in terms of one of PROCMURA's programme focuses in the continent; its commitment to work towards a broader understanding of how religious leaders can team up with state actors, civil society, regional and continental bodies, towards the material and spiritual

development of the African peoples. It seeks to create a credible platform of Christian and Muslim leaders' cooperation and collaboration to attend to issues of mutual concern and interest that will recommend itself to the world of Christianity and Islam as a model worth emulating.

3.1 PROCMURA's Programme Focus on Peace and Development

PROCMURA's work on peace and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims as a prerequisite for development falls within its second operational principle of 'Christian Constructive engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence", and its stated vision of a "continent where faith communities in spite of their differences work together for the wholistic (spelt holistic) development of the human family."

This operational principle which finds value in the stated vision has been experimented in several countries where PROCMURA is active with some degree of success, and has since 1997 developed to become a credible endeavour in Christian-Muslim relations. In that year (1997) the PROCMURA's Executive Committee resolved to send a high powered delegation of Christian and Muslim religious leaders from different African countries to Sudan to meet with the government and Muslim and Christian leaders of that country, to urge them to work together for peace between north and south and between Muslims and Christians. Difficult as such a mission was, the delegation made it clear then, that the only way to achieve peace and development for the country was through dialogue and negotiations. We look back at the current political situation where Sudan and South Sudan have become two countries through dialogue and negotiations and feel that we have been a pioneer in the interreligious arena to advocate for a tangible solution.

Apart from the Sudan experience, those who are conversant with the Christian and Muslim leaders cooperation to bring about peace in one time war-torn Sierra Leone and Liberia were persons familiar with PROCMURA's principles of Christian and Muslim cooperation for peace. A number of religious leaders who were principal initiators of those success stories and who continue to play leading roles in the PROCMURA work on peace and development shall participate in the Addis Ababa conference and shall be sharing with us.

After these initial invaluable contributions to peace, PROCMURA went through a major evaluation towards redefining its future focus. The process culminated into several staff changes that eventually led to the formulation of a Strategic Plan that among other things, recommended a reinvigoration of PROCMURA's focus on conflict prevention, advocacy for peace in society, peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims and reconciling people in conflict as a proactive measure, and not just as a locus of crises intervention.

This new sense of direction helped to accelerate PROCMURA's determination to work towards peace and development. The reentry point to this noble course began with a joint conference with the Coptic Evangelical Organisation for Social Services (CEOSS) from Egypt through our partner Danmission, with the express support of the Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD). In November, 2005 PROCMURA brought together Christians and Muslims from 8 countries around Sub-Saharan Africa to Nairobi to meet with a CEOSS delegation of Christians and Muslims so that together we may share information on issues of peace and development among others. CEOSS reciprocated and invited PROCMURA to go to Egypt with a Christian and Muslim delegation in 2006 to see what Christians and Muslims do together under the umbrella of CEOSS. This joint initiative has since

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developed into a number of exchanges of experiences between Egypt and Zanzibar.

The reinvigoration of PROCMURA's work in conflict prevention, peace and peaceful co-existence as well as reconciliation in 2005 has seen PROCMURA organise various Christian and Muslim leaders' gatherings on similar and overlapping focuses on regional and country levels. To provide detailed information for each will be unreasonable in the context of a concept paper. To serialise some of them though, would be important so as to give participants a feel of what we have done and hope to be doing together in Addis Ababa. Since 2008 the following regional conferences have been held: Eastern Africa conference in Dar es Salaam 2008, Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa conference in Cairo (with the Anglican Communion) 2008, and West Africa conference in Accra 2009. As follow up to these regional conferences, country programmes were carried out in Monrovia 2010, Lome 2010, Porto Novo 2010, Antananarivo 2010, Kaduna 2010, Freetown 2011, Ouagadougou 2011, and Addis Ababa (women only) 2011.

Apart from the above, PROCMURA has teamed up with several sister organizations to hold religious leaders colloquia, conferences, workshops seminars, and teaching sessions on collaboration towards sustainable peace and development. Worth mentioning in this respect is the Bangui Christian and Muslim leaders conference on the consolidation of peace in Central Africa 2010, and the Arusha Christian and Muslim leaders conference on conflict analysis and peace building 2010 as well.

It will be recognised from the information we have provided in this section, that all the countries who shall be participating in the upcoming Addis Ababa conference have participated in PROCMURA's gatherings either in country or regional levels. As reminders and background information on what Christian and Muslim leaders around Africa have been saying on the issue of peace, reconciliation and violent conflict prevention as a prerequisite for development, we do hereby refer participants to communiqués or memoranda of understanding issued during such gatherings as preparatory material towards this important conference.

3.2 Engaging World Leaders and Organisations.

We live in a world where a particular action or failure to act on an issue or issues in any geographical location can and do affect people anywhere and everywhere. Perhaps the talk of the world being a global village is a reflection of this reality. World leaders and organisations recognise this. In fact several development partners recognise that religion and religious people cannot be ignored when it comes to issues of peace and development among others.

From the PROCMURA perspective, we seek to have an informed leadership of Church and Mosque who will be able and willing to contribute to peace and development in Africa and by that example become active contributors on the world stage when issues of that nature are discussed. The involvement of the PROCMURA General Adviser in the proceedings of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in 2003 and the Chairperson of PROCMURA, a year later in 2004 laid the foundation for such engagements. For thereafter, PROCMURA was part of the team that nominated and led Christian and Muslim religious leaders to Washington DC with the support of Church World Service to meet sections of the American Senate to discuss issues related to the so called 'war on terror' and how that impacted Christian-Muslim relations in Africa.

When we talk about sustainable peace for development we are not talking about development at any cost but responsible development that does not exploit peoples and the environment, thus becoming

a source of conflict. A most recent pan-African religious leaders conference on "Climate justice for sustainable peace in Africa" which the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), PROCMURA, and the South African Faith Communities' Environment institute (SAFCEI) teamed up to organise in Nairobi (June 2011) sought to emphasise exactly that. It was aimed at preparing the religious leaders of Africa for the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) under the umbrella of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Durban, South Africa in November/December 2011. The focus of the conference was to say it as loudly as possible that environmentally friendly development is that which religious leaders will go for. We will have this in our mind during our deliberations.

4. The Addis Ababa Conference Focus

The focus of the Addis Ababa conference far from duplicating what has been done so far, brings together the influential Christian and Muslim religious leaders and media representatives with the understanding that the presence of the media from each participating country will help spread the Addis Ababa conference proceedings far and wide.

The choice of countries (Cameroun, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania (main land and Zanzibar) depicts a mix of varied wealth of experiences some of which may be unique and peculiar to any given country. This variety of experiences, it is hoped, will stimulate sharing across the regions and the different countries and help produce a broader impact on participants across the religious divide.

We hope that CEOSS from Egypt will be able to share with us the important development projects they are engaged in, and provide us with first hand information on what the future holds for that country in its recent activism towards greater democracy and sustainable peace. It is hoped that Ethiopia will provide participants with information on current developments in Christian-Muslim relations that have sometimes disturbed the peace in some regions of the country and the positive Christian and Muslim engagement of recent times that seek to promote peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims towards sustainably development. Sierra Leone and Liberia will tell us how Christian and Muslim leaders of their countries teamed up to bring about peace in the onetime war-torn countries and the current challenges they face to keep the momentum for sustainable peace and development going. Much interest has been generated by the recently held Liberia elections even as Sierra Leone looks forward to its own elections. We are hopeful that the participants from Madagascar will be able to share with us the Malagasy doctrine of Fihavanana which provides fundamental values for Christian and Muslim peaceful co-existence and how that doctrine alongside others provide community solidarity. Participants from mainland Tanzania and the Island of Zanzibar will help us to appreciate the different dynamics in Christian-Muslim relations in the two places and how Christians and Muslim leaders are working hard to promote peace for development. Nigeria which continues to face what looks like insurmountable challenges in Christian-Muslim relations will throw light on what the real issues are, and what Christians and Muslims are doing to ensure that sustainable peace prevail to facilitate sustainable development. Cameroun which is the last country to join in the list of countries that shall participate in the conference will have the opportunity to let us know what they intend to do when they return home. Our initial information has it that they are coming in to assess what we are doing with the objective of doing something similar in their own country

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5.   The Objectives of the Conference

The objectives of the conference can be summarized as follows:

i.   To provide a platform for the Christian and Muslim leaders to deliberate on the reality that human beings are economic, political, social, cultural as well as spiritual beings constituted with body soul and mind as a unit. It is hoped that this reality will provide good grounds for participants to come up with a holistic developmental approach that shall attend to these realities.

ii.   To facilitate reflection with the aim of unleashing the potential of religion as a source of good in African countries.

iii. To elevate the level of reflection among the participants and provide grounds for replicating the ideals and goals of the conference in the different countries from which participants come.

iv.   To help accelerate interreligious cooperation into the public sphere and build the sectors capacity to move beyond its current involvement.

v.   To inculcate a good working relationship between the religious leaders so as to facilitate constructive dissemination of information on the role of religious leaders towards the development of society.

vi.   To affirm the Christian and Muslim leaders commitment to Africa's development and the development of the countries and regions from which participants come, by will and intent of collaborating with state functionaries and civil society to achieve the stated goals of the conference.

vii. To assist participants to consider seriously, the damage that can be caused by religious bigots in our respective communities who would use or shall we say rather misuse our religions to foment violence and thereby stifle both the material and spiritual development of our peoples.

viii. To inculcate a spirit of understanding religious differences (not forget them), and accept to live with such differences in peace.

ix.   To help disabuse minds that see human development as part of the secularisation process and instead, add value to what development means i.e a healthy body and environment that produce a serene atmosphere for the spiritual and material development of the human family.

x.   To affirm that religious faith is not an obstacle to development but an ally, by critically examining ways and means by which the religious leaders can work towards the prevention of violent conflicts and galvanise their efforts towards peace in society and   peaceful co-existence

xi.   To work towards an understanding of the concept of pro-existence or living in support of one another's quest for peace and development, as a necessary model that will dispel negative solidarity where people of faith are in solidarity with their own at any cost to the extent of being 'partners in crime'.

xii. To lay emphasis on Christian and Muslim constructive relations in all facets of human existence and emphasise that dialogue as conversation between Christians and Muslims on various aspects of life only finds real value in diapraxis – tangible action together.

Expected Outcomes

i. The conference is expected to launch an added phase in PROCMURA's cooperation with its partners in Denmark and stakeholders in Africa, towards an African Christian and Muslim renaissance for peace and development.

ii. That presentations and discussions which will be guided by the overall objectives of the conference which are to promote peace and development and to strengthen civil society in the participating countries will be widely publicised.

iii. That papers and proceedings of the conference shall be published.

iv. That the conference will provide new insights in many areas of PROCMURA's work and thereby broaden networking in Africa and beyond.

v. That participants from each country will meet during the conference to come up with a plan of action of their own towards replicating the Addis Ababa recommendations in collaboration with the media and civil society.

Prepared by

Rev. Dr. Johnson A. Mbillah

General Adviser.

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Appendix II

The Addis Ababa Communiqué

Africa Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders Conference on Peace and Development

We, Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders from eight (8) African countries: Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tanzania (mainland and Zanzibar), met at the Global Hotel PLC in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia between 8th and 13th January, 2012, under the auspices of the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) on the theme "*Africa Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders for Peace and Development*".

HAVING received country reflections and specific papers on the subject matter;

HAVING made sure that some members of civil society and the media participated fully in the deliberations as partners in peace and development;

CONFIDENT that Africa is a continent of Religion and Religious people, and that the social fabric of Africa is a Religious one;

CONVINCED that religion is an integral partner in development;

CONSCIOUS that Islam and Christianity wield the largest following within the continent's Religious landscape;

UNDER NO ILLUSION that there can be no peace in the African continent if Muslims and Christians are not at peace among and between themselves;

RECOGNISING that peace is a prerequisite for development and environmentally friendly development with an ethically accepted norm is an asset to peace;

AWARE that governments and politicians consult religious leaders when the peace of the land is disturbed;

CONCERNED that religion is sometimes used or rather misused to perpetuate violent conflicts in some parts of the continent;

ALARMED by the tendency for ethnic exclusivism to find an ally in religion to perpetuate violence of unimaginable proportions thus stifling development;

AWARE of the propensity by some governments and policy makers to regard religious leaders as persons only concerned about the hereafter and not the here and now;

Do hereby:

a)   Resolve to work tirelessly to ensure that adherents of our respective religions live with their religious differences in peace.

b) Declare our determination to promote sustainable development agendas as our religious tenets requires of us, to be good stewards of God's creation.

c) Resolve to cooperate with each other, government, civil society and the media to enhance the peace and development endeavours of each country and region.

d) Commit ourselves to replicate the focus of this conference in the countries from which we come.

To this end, we call on:

The Media:
a) To partner with us in our quest and resolve to promote peace and development.

b) To embark on responsible reportage of conflict situations so as to avoid inflaming passions and thereby further aggravating existing tensions.

Governments and the Political Elite:
a) To desist from manipulating religion and religious people towards political ends and thereby polarising religious people along sectarian lines.

b) To consult and work closely with Religious Leaders to promote peace and development at all times and not only in times of national crisis.

The African Union and its Regional Bodies:
a) To take religious leaders and people seriously when discussing the peace and development of the continent.

b) To create avenues or fora for consultation with Religious Leaders on matters relating to the wellbeing of the continent and its peoples.

Development Partners
To respect and take into consideration religious demography of the continent and not superimpose a secular agenda.

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Signed on behalf of the Christian and Muslim Leaders here gathered:

- ☐ Cameroon: _Rev. GOYEK Robert_ _ELHADJ H.M. BANOUFE_

- ☐ Egypt: _Ayman Is___ _Abeer Saady_ _SHIEKH KHALED HASSAN_

- ☐ Ethiopia: _Hajji Seid Asmare_ _Iteffa Gebene Rev. Iteffa Gobena_

- ☐ Liberia: _SHEIKH Habib Ashreibf_ _Benjamin Lartey_

- ☐ Madagascar: _RASENDRAHASINA Lala (Rev)_ _HAMED Ahmed_

- ☐ Nigeria: _Shk. Dr. Khalid A. Aliyu_ _Bishop Josiah I. Fearon_

- ☐ Sierra Leone: _SHEIKH ABU BAKARR CONTEH_ _Rev. MOSES B. KHANU_

- ☐ Tanzania (mainland) and Zanzibar: _____

Witnessed by:

- ☐ General Adviser of PROCMURA _Rev. Dr. JOHNSON MBILLAH_

Appendix III

Statement on the Situation in Nigeria

AFRICA CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

STATEMENT ON THE PREVAILING SITUATION IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

We, 60 Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders from eight (8) African countries that include: Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania (mainland and Zanzibar), met at the Global Hotel PLC in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 8th – 13th January, 2012 under the auspices of the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) on the theme "*Africa Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders for Peace and Development.*"

Having closely followed the events and happenings in Nigeria (especially some states in the North and South), are alarmed by the spiral of violence and utterances that are bound to further derail any hope of peace in the states, regions, cities and towns concerned, and indeed the entire country.

At a conference called to deliberate on the contribution of Africa Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders towards Peace and Development, the sheer mayhem purported to be unleashed against innocent people in the name of religious ideology which finds no credence in our respective religious faiths and practices could not have come at a worse time.

It is common knowledge that religious differences have always been exploited to satisfy political, economic and social agendas and that ethnic exclusivism has more often than not found allies in religion thus perpetuating negative solidarities with its attendant blind support and determination to undermine ethnic and religious plurality of Nations.

As Christian and Muslim Leaders gathered here, we are devastated by the indiscriminate killings and destruction of properties including worship centres being carried out by some members of our respective religions.

These acts seriously undermine our religious mandate to be agents of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation, and thus discredits our resolve to live up to that mandate.

We strongly condemn the heinous crimes being inflicted on innocent people and call on peace lovers in Nigeria, Africa and indeed the world to join us in the condemnation of these inhumane acts that bear the marks of human beings inhumanity towards fellow human beings.

Our hearts and thoughts at this moment in time are with the families who have lost their loved ones. We extend our condolences to those families and the people and government of Nigeria.

In order to avoid this already volatile situation from becoming worse and in the spirit of peace and reconciliation;

We CALL on the Christian and Muslim leadership of Nigeria to exercise maximum restraint and refrain

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from making pronouncements and statements that would threaten the unity of that Nation and the spirit of togetherness.

We acknowledge that inconsiderate utterances in the context of the current situation are recipes for further chaos and go against the spirit of acceptance of the ethnic and religious pluralities which are innate realities of Nigeria as in many African Nations. On account of this we would like to implore Nigeria Muslim and Christian Religious Leaders as well as adherents of the two religions to avoid any action or inaction that will lead to the heightening of tension and aggravation of what is already a highly charged situation.

We urge them to immediately create a platform for effective engagement in intra-Muslim and intra-Christian discussions that will lead to inter Christian and Muslim consultations towards sustainable peace in that country.

As Religious Leaders it is our strong conviction that if we were to allow this mayhem to continue we will be doing so in the name of our respective religions and not in the name of the one God (*Tawhîd* in Islam) and (Triune in Christianity) who is loving and merciful.

We CALL on governments at all levels (local, state and federal) to intensify the security measures already being taken to put an end to the ongoing senseless killings and destruction of properties as well as extra-judicial killings and all forms of human rights violations.

We urge them to immediately put into place control mechanisms to stop the proliferation of small arms and light weapons which will go a long way in safeguarding human lives.

We CALL on politicians and the political elite to refrain from unguarded utterances and acts that will exacerbate an already deteriorating situation in the country.

We CALL on the Media, Civil Society and all responsible institutions to immediately refrain from reportage that is based on regionalism and focusing on negative religious dimensions, as well as sensationalism and to be objective and reflect the diversity of the Society/Nation.

We also call on the Media to be Agents of Peace.

We call on Civil Society to be more proactive and become more involved in civic education for the promotion of peace and peaceful co-existence and inte-rfaith relations.

Conclusion

That Nigeria being the most populous nation in Africa, and seen as one of the leading powers in the continent, we recognise that a peaceful Nigeria would create a peaceful environment in Africa. Therefore, we see a divided and turbulent Nigeria as having a negative impact on the continent and not only in West Africa.

We do hereby agree to continue to remain in solidarity with each other in the promotion of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation. We further would like to assure the people and government of Nigeria that as Religious Leaders we commit ourselves to continuously pray for the peace and unity of that country even as we stand by for any assistance that may be required from us.

Signed on behalf of the Christian and Muslim Leaders here gathered:

- Cameroon: _Rev. GOYEK Robert_ _ELHADJ H. M. BANOUFE_
- Egypt: _SHEIKH KHALED HASSAN_ _Abeer Saady_ _youny Edward_
- Ethiopia: _HAJI Seid Asmare_ _Rev. Itefta Grabena._
- Liberia: _SHEIKH Aziz A Shejkh_ _Benjamin D. Cofey_
- Madagascar: _RASENDRAHASINA Lala (Rev)_ _HAMED_ _Alfred_
- Nigeria: _Shk. Dr. Khalil A. Aliyu_ _Bishop Josiah J. Fearon_
- Sierra Leone: _____ _____
- Tanzania (mainland) and Zanzibar: _SHEIKH ASH BAKARR Conteh_ _Rev. MoseB. Khare_

Witnessed by:

- General Adviser of PROCMURA _REV. DR. JOHNSON MBILLAH_

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Appendix IV

Address of PROCMURA Vice Chairperson

ADDRESS OF THE VICE CHAIRPERSON OF THE EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION OF PROCMURA
Rev. Ibyishaka Rose-Marie

1. Introduction

The chairperson, Your excellencies, Representatives of the African Union, Religious Leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to begin this very brief address by bringing you greetings of peace as we know it in the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions.

PEACE BE WITH YOU ALL.

I would also like to bring you greetings from the Chairperson of PROCMURA, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Josiah Idowu Fearon, Bishop of the Kaduna Diocese of the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, who was billed to address you this morning but could not travel for this meeting due to circumstances beyond his control. He has asked me to assure you that his thoughts are here with us and that he is with us in spirit.

In his absence there are a number of key persons in the PROCMURA Executive Committee here, whom I would mention their names so that they may rise to be recognised.

1. Dr. Benjamin Lartey, General Secretary of the Liberia Council of Churches

2. Rev. Moses Khanu, PROCMURA Regional Coordinator for Anglophone West Africa who is also a member of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone

3. Rev. Canon Thomas Godda, PROCMURA Regional Coordinator for East and Southern Africa who is also Staff of the Christian Council of Tanzania

4. The fourth person I would like to introduce is Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Malasusa, the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), who is also the Africa Vice President of the Lutheran World Federation, and Chairperson for the Tanzania Area Committee of PROCMURA.

2. Rationale For PROCMURA organising this Conference

The rationale behind the organisation of this conference has been clearly outlined in the concept paper produced by the General Adviser of PROCMURA and there will be no need to repeat it, as I am convinced that most, if not all of us have made time to read it, or will read it later. If there are invited guests or gentlemen and ladies of the media who have not had access to it, please collect copies from the secretariat.

The theme for this conference which is **"Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders for Peace and Development"** is taking place at a critical time in the history of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa.

3. The Challenges We Face

We are all aware that Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa with an estimated population of 160 million people is going through its most challenging times in some parts of the country as political, economic, ethnic divisions, and religious extremism have combined to produce violence of major proportions. The situation has produced unprecedented challenges for the Christian and Muslim leadership of that country. The General Adviser of PROCMURA has been mandated to call on this conference to consider issuing a statement on the situation in Nigeria. We would humbly ask the conference to support this move so that we may together contribute to the peace of that country, the West Africa Sub-region and indeed Africa as a whole. We will at this meeting have the opportunity to listen to our brothers and sisters from Nigeria who will tell us about the challenges they face.

The current political situation in Egypt has had its own challenges in Christian-Muslim relations and we are indeed pleased that our Egyptian sisters and brothers are here to throw more light on the situation and to provide us with positive interactions between Christians and Muslims towards peace and development. In Kenya, worshippers in Churches during the Christmas and New Year period had to individually go through electronic screening as a result of bomb threats from *Al-Shabab* the Somalia militants.

These examples are not intended to paint a grim picture of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa but rather to emphasise the importance of this conference and other subsequent and similar conferences that PROCMURA considers to organise in the near future.

4. Acknowledging our Partners from Denmark

We in PROCMURA are very much committed to the peace and development of our dear continent, and believe that this is only possible when Christians and Muslims who form the majority of Africa's peoples team up with the political elite, governments, and civil society to promote the peace and development agenda of the continent.

We cannot, however, do this by ourselves, we need the help and support of all people of good will who share in this noble vision of PROCMURA. It is in this light that we would like to recognise and appreciate the immense contribution of our partners from Denmark. Without their contribution our mission and vision as it relates to this conference would probably have remained but only a dream.

Mr. Chairperson, Representatives of the African Union, Your Excellencies, Religious Leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to conclude this address by wishing us all a Happy New Year and very fruitful deliberations.

MAY GOD BLESS US ALL

Rev. Ibyishaka Rose-Marie
Vice Chairperson for East and Southern Africa Region of PROCMURA

Annex V

Address of AACC Vice President for West Africa

ADDRESS OF MOST REV. DR. ROBERT ABOAGYE-MENSAH, VICE-PRESIDENT, ALL AFRICA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (AACC)

Introduction

Religion permeates every dimension of our African life, both private and public. It is therefore not surprising that during the long period of Africa's fight for political independence religion did play significant role in the liberation process, alongside political and economic emancipation.

Brief history of AACC

From January, 10-19 1958 the African Church organized the first ever All-Africa Conference at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria under the theme: "The Church in Changing Africa". At that Conference non-Africans including European missionaries were urged to keep quiet. As George W. Carpenter commented, "It was most heartening to see the African churchmen and churchwomen themselves come forward one after the other, speaking capably, confidently and effectively; and to watch the growing sense of personal responsibility, initiative and commitment with which they dealt with the issues before them. The capable direction of the chairman, Sir Francis Ibiam, contributed greatly to this development."

Vision, Mission and collaborative efforts of AACC

A major significant and lasting outcome of the confidence, sense of personal responsibility, initiative and commitment to addressing issues in Africa by Africans demonstrated at this **All-Africa Conference** was the birth to two important continental Christian organizations, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCUMRA). The conception of the two organizations took place at the same Conference but their birth occurred at different years. The AACC was born in Kampala, Uganda in 1963. It is also worth noting that the Organization of African Union (OAU) was born in the same year as AACC, with the AACC being a month or also older than the Organization of African Union (OAU), now Africa Union (AU). Since its establishment the AACC has been in solidarity with OAU in the struggle for political freedom. And up till today, AACC continues to work together with PROCMURA and AU directly and indirectly towards advancing justice, peace and development on our dear continent. It is also important to observe that indeed all the earlier African leaders of the nationalist movements were members of the religious communities in Africa, be they Christians or Muslims, and they were rooted in African traditions, culture and religion.

Today the AACC accounts for over 120 million Christians on the continent. It envisions itself as a church organization working together with Churches and its related institutions in Africa and elsewhere for Life, Truth, Justice and Peace. It has the mission of witnessing together with the churches in Africa and other religious bodies by

- Mobilizing people to faithfully live the message of God's love
- Nurturing a common understanding of the faith
- Interpreting and responding to challenges to the human dignity, and
- Acting prophetically in word, life and service for the healing of peoples and nations.

As part of its organizational strategy, the AACC is an Ecumenical Instrument facilitating synergy amongst its members and with the people of Africa as a whole. In accompanying the churches in Africa to fulfill their mission of promoting peace, justice and development, the AACC at the invitation by member churches, such as the regional, national and local councils of churches pay solidarity visits to various countries on the continent. In some cases the solidarity visits are done in collaboration with the World Council of Churches. It may suffice to mention some of the countries where these visits have taken place: Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Togo, Nigeria, Kenya, Sudan and South Sudan, Somalia and many others.

It is important to observe that in some of these countries the AACC, together with PROCMURA and Muslim organizations have worked together for peace and development. In both Liberia and Sierra Leone a joint collaborative actions of Christians and Muslims played significant roles in helping to bring the wars to an end; and in each case the AACC helped to facilitate their working together for peace.

The year 2006 saw the AACC breaking ranks with tradition by accompanying Somalia people where the AACC has no members. It was out of the prolonged political instability and dire socio-economic and political impact that Somalia has on the entire region of the Horn of Africa that this was deemed necessary. In 2007 the AACC continued to collaborate with other Ecumenical actors to engage the church in the inter-faith search for lasting peace and stability in Somalia. A Muslim-Christian religious leaders' peace initiative conference aimed at harnessing Religious and Traditional Leaders potentials in resolving conflicts and tensions in the region was held in Dar-es-Salaam in February 2007.

Lessons on Collaborative Efforts for Peace and Development

There are some important lessons that AACC has learnt during its solidarity visits and other engagements on the continent. It has observed the following:

1. That, in the countries where religious leaders, have been able to speak with one voice on national issues, political leaders and the citizenry as a whole have acknowledged with respect their moral and prophetic authority to speak to the nation. Such countries are among the most peaceful countries on the continent.

2. That, in the countries where the religious bodies are polarized along ethnic and political lines and the religious leaders have taken partisan and ethnic positions, they have not had the moral authority to speak to the nations during national crises.

3. That, in countries where churches in cooperation with other religious groups, such as Muslim, have taken active part in preparing their members towards democratic governance, such as participating in the drawing up of the national constitution, national elections, etc. such countries have tended to be among the peaceful countries on the continent.

4. That, in the countries where Christian leaders and other religious leaders, such as Muslims work closely together in promoting peace, the religious leaders are highly respected and their

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moral authority deeply recognized and appreciated.

5. That, there are varied reasons that lead to violence in our nations, including religious, ethnic, inequality and inequity in the sharing of national resources and development, and that where religious leaders have taken up some of these challenges and worked along with civil societies and governments to address them it has resulted in achieving relative peace and stability in the country.

6. That, in Africa majority of the people still have a lot of respect for non-partisan religious leaders who speak out on national issues and they expect such religious leaders to participate in peace-building, development and national reconciliation processes.

These observations have motivated the All Africa Conference of Churches to collaborate with other religious communities, particularly Muslims in seeking ways and means to promote peace for development on our continent. Indeed together with PROCMURA the AACC have been working with other religious bodies and civil society to ensure peaceful co-existence among diverse religious bodies so that sustainable development can be assured on the continent. It is because AACC is convinced that religious bodies have meaningful role to play in peace-building for development that it participated in the AU-Interfaith dialogue that was held in Abuja, Nigeria.

AU- Interfaith-Dialogue Forum at Abuja, Nigeria

The All Africa Conference of Churches believes that in Africa where Christians and Muslims together form the largest majority of citizens their collaborative efforts with governments and civil society organizations in working towards peace for development will have lasting and sustaining impact on Africa. It is this conviction that led the AACC to participate fully in the first African Union (AU) Interfaith Dialogue Forum that took place in Abuja, from June 15-17, 2010. As a Vice-President of the AACC for West Africa, I was pleased to lead the AACC team, serving as a member of the Steering Committee for the forum. The Conference came out with a significant Africa Union (AU)-Interfaith Declaration.

Expressing its concern "about the state of justice, peace, security and development on the continent of Africa" the Declaration also acknowledged the efforts that Africa Union has made "since its inception to promote sustainable peace and development on the Continent". The Forum also took into account "the enormous spiritual, moral, and social assets that Religious Leaders and religious communities have at their disposal", and acknowledged the fact that "they have often deployed these efforts in emergency situations during war and peace time to promote peace and development in the Continent". The Forum therefore saw the need "to build a structural partnership between the AU and Religious Leaders and communities to consolidate these efforts in the course of justice, peace, security and development in Africa". In consequence of this, "we affirm the need to structure and strengthen the partnership between the AU and Religious Leaders for advancing justice, peace, security and development in Africa; and commit ourselves to advocacy, building capacity, mobilization of resources, and maintenance of consultations at all levels".

The Forum also affirmed the need to formalize the partnership between AU and Religious Leaders by establishing a Permanent Steering Committee of fifteen Senior Religious Leaders "with credibility, integrity and stature".

The Declaration also identifies that "the Steering Committee, the Apex Body, for the partnership shall receive technical support from the AUC through the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) in line

with its statutory functions and will serve as the focal point and hub for the interfaith dialogue within the AU; it will assume responsibility for coordinating its relations with the various organs of the AU and planning of subsequent Interfaith Forums. The African Council of Religious Leaders – Religions for Peace, will serve as its technical partner in this process and provide, as required, appropriate secretariat and logistic support to facilitate the work of the Permanent Steering Committee".

The presence of His Excellency, the President, Dr. Goodluck Ebelle Jonathan (GCFR) of the Government and Peoples of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, at the opening session of the Forum demonstrated the importance that the AU gave to this Forum, to which we, the participants were extremely grateful.

In conclusion, the AACC in conjunction with PROCMURA look forward to working together with other religious bodies and governments in Africa to engage in peace for development. It is in this light that we would like to recognize and affirm the importance of this Religious Leaders Conference organized by PROCMURA. We humbly urge participants not to make this Conference a mere talking shop but must ensure that its proceedings and resolutions are fully implemented leading to pragmatic results for peace and development in Africa.

Most Rev. Dr. Robert Aboagye-Mensah
Vice-President, AACC for West Africa and
The Immediate Past Presiding Bishop,
Methodist Church Ghana
January 9, 2012

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Annex VI

Christian-Muslim Relations in Tanzania

THE STATE OF CHRISTIAN MUSLIM RELATIONS IN TANZANIA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF COLLABORATION FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Tanzania is among the East African countries surrounded by the great lakes, Lake Victoria on the north sharing waters with the Republic of Kenya and Uganda. In the West we have the deepest lake in Africa, Lake Tanganyika, in the south west we have Lake Nyasa and to the east we have the Indian Ocean.

Tanzania is a democratic, multi-religious, multicultural and pluralistic nation. Its population is estimated to be 45 million people, with 123 tribes. Christianity and Islam religions make over 85% of the population. We don't have exact numbers of adherences of the two religions, but most statistics given by both sides show minimal difference. That is if one group is said to have a higher number of followers than the other, the difference is very small. These two religions have no geographical location that can be claimed as Islamic dominated or Christian dominated areas except the island of Zanzibar. All religions have followers in every district. One unique character not seen in other countries is our historical Christian-Muslim presence in many families and tribes. Most tribes have Christian and Muslim believers who are united by their tribes and clans. In this context Muslims and Christians, respect each other, and live as a community. Intermarriage between Christians and Muslims has been common in many families. I have been brought up in this context. My father and my mother both had Muslim brothers and sisters. Today I have brothers and sisters who are Moslems. Any conflict between Christians and Muslims will be between blood brothers and sisters. Another major factor that makes Tanzania an island of peace is the Swahili language which unites all tribes. Swahili is our national language.

We have just celebrated 50 years of independence, Tanzanians had time to reflect back on the legacy left to us by our forefathers, religious leaders, tribal and political leaders, who believed, lived and taught about peace, respect, religious tolerance and the Ubuntu culture. As I share with you this brief report, I can boldly declare Tanzania to be a peaceful country where cultural and religious differences are respected, and the culture of acceptance and tolerance is maintained.

CHALLENGES

One can wonder how can a country having many religions, tribes and faiths, not experience conflicts. Yes we also have challenges which if left unattended will destroy the peace and tranquillity we enjoy. These challenges are;

·MIHADHARA

Arranged religious public preaching called *Mihadhara* Groups of people, mostly youth and middle aged, go round in cities, towns and villages attacking each other's religion, with the aim

of discrediting the teachings and beliefs of the other faith.

This movement began in the mid 80's, and the person who triggered the button was the late Ahamed Diddat from South Africa who came to Zanzibar to preach against Christianity. He preached against the veracity of the content of the Bible as Christians believed, he claimed that it had been distorted and it is full of contradictions. It was a new experience for both Christians and Muslims who expected the authorities to take proper action given that it was against the Tanzanian culture of religious respect and tolerance. But nothing was done to stop this.

In the late 90's we saw a new group of young Christians who having realized that neither the authorities concerned with maintaining peace and order, nor Church leaders the custodians of Christian teachings, took action, they independently formed an ecumenical group to answer and clear the allegations raised by *Mihadhara* groups. They registered this group as **BIBLIA NI JIBU** meaning "The Bible is the Answer". To date there are five groups made up of Christians coming from different denominations, they work as freelance itinerary preachers. These Christian and Muslim groups move from place to place speaking abusively and distorting the culture of religious respect and tolerance. In some places police were miss- used and became the source of chaos; instead of bringing order and peace they stormed in and took sides. Currently, these groups continue to multiply, a sign that they are sponsored by people who have a hidden agenda. One member told me that there are around twenty Muslim groups and five Christian groups. These groups are registered as religious institutions. Police give them permits to conduct *Mihadhara* in open places. Sometimes the Muslim and Christian groups agree to meet at one venue and agree on a topic to discuss. This is not dialogue but confrontation. What they do is to disapprove the other faith as an untrue religion. This creates bitterness among believers who honour and respect their sacred books. These movements have been a stumbling block in our efforts to maintain peace and religious collaboration. In one of interfaith consultations, religious leaders commented on *Da'wah* and Evangelism as a religious obligation, but condemned *Mihadhara* which is aimed at attacking the other faith.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Tanzania's population has grown from 32 million people to about 45 million in a span of twenty years. Over 50% of the population is made of young adults, who remain largely unemployed. This group poses a threat to the stability of Tanzania as they are easily manipulated and used by few to fulfil selfish goals and agendas.

IMPORTATION OF CONFLICTS AND DISPUTES FROM ABROAD.

We are in an era of science and technology, and especially of information technology. This achievement of human development has made our planet to be a global village. Good and bad information can easily be shared within minutes. I have witnessed one incident in Westland in Nairobi, a day or two after Danish media reported of an individual who drew cartoons of the prophet of Islam, Mohammed considered blasphemous.

Muslims in turn after Friday prayers came out chanting words to condemn the culprit and the nation of the perpetrators and vowed to revenge.

Their revenge was to block the road passing by their prayer house smashing cars of innocent Kenyans who happened to pass by that road at that time.

The same protests were shown in Dar es Salaam city, but they were quickly controlled by the police. In my opinion, there was no need for believers outside Denmark to attack and destroy properties of innocent people. Yes there are issues that touch us especially when they are of one's faith, but we need to be mature and avoid generalizing issues, and importing them to our countries. What we need is to know the root cause, and take positive and constructive measures to avoid such acts being emulated in our societies.

POLITICS AND RELIGION

Tanzania strengthened her democracy by introducing the multiparty system in the 90's. We had our first multiparty elections in 1995. Prior to the first multiparty elections, the late President Julius Nyerere warned those who aspired to be leaders to shun away from tribalism or use religion in any way to attain leadership. He referred to this as a sin which can kill our nation. The first multiparty elections were declared nationally as successful, but not without setbacks. In few places there were reports of clashes between supporters of political parties. But it was much worse in Pemba, where it claimed lives and forced some citizens to flee to a neighbouring country and even some to Europe as refugees. This alarmed religious leader, both Muslims and Christians were compelled for the first time to come together to a round table and discuss how they can jointly intervene to stop violence and hatred. This meeting gave birth to a forum of religious leaders on peace and stability. This forum was named JUHUDI ZA VIONGOZI WA DINI KUIMARISHA AMANI (JVD) meaning, Efforts of Religious Leaders to Maintain Peace and Stability. This forum was made up of top leaders from The Muslim Supreme Council, (BAKWATA), Christian Council of Tanzania, (CCT), Episcopal Council of Tanzania (TEC), and Office of the Mufti of Zanzibar. Several consultations, workshops and trainings have since been conducted on peace and peaceful coexistence, development, conflict prevention and resolution, and interreligious cooperation. Jointly they have instituted projects on advocacy for peace, religious tolerance and social-economic justice.

THE RISE OF HARDLINE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Tanzania's Constitution, Act no. 19 (CAP2) GIVES THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION and THE FREEDOM OF FAITH AND CHOICE. The government allows everybody to perform religious activities both spiritual and secular, such as building schools, hospitals, providing water systems, etc. It is under this law that groups of people find opportunity to register *religious* institutions making them autonomous from the mainline religious institutions. These institutions/groups have different agendas, and are not ready to work under the institutionalized religious bodies. Therefore the agenda of Religious Tolerance and Coexistence for Peace and Development is not in their vocabulary. They are inward looking, extremists.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

The demand for Kadhi Courts to be established through the legislature, had its impact on Christian-Muslim relations, and posed a challenge to the government. As mentioned in my introduction, Tanzania is a secular and a pluralistic nation. The debates and statements given by people of both faiths and by the media threatened our national unity and created mistrust between Muslims and Christians. We are thankful to our top religious leaders who continued to collaborate and by their wisdom helped this issue not blow out of proportion and become one that would disrupt our national unity and tranquillity.

During last years' *Eid el Fitr* national prayers in Dodoma, the President who was the guest of honour, explained to the Muslim community why the government is not ready to pass a bill in Parliament to establish Kadhi courts, as it was against the constitution. However, he assured Muslim citizens of government support where applicable and non-interference or stoppage of Muslims from establishing Kadhi courts, so long as it was within their institution.

PROSPECTS OF COLLABORATION FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Despite the fore mentioned challenges, there are prospects for collaboration among people of different religions and among their religious leaders. As I mentioned in my introduction, the foundation of inter-religious collaboration in Tanzania is based on the historical good leadership we inherited from our forefathers and the founders of our nation who believed in national unity, peace, and human dignity. He mobilized all Tanzanians to respect their tribal and religious values but shun away from any kind of *apartheid* be it religious or tribal or because of one's colour. Using the *Ujamaa* ideology, the late President Nyerere built a spirit of national unity. Schools and colleges were centers of interaction. Students of different religions and tribes coming from different districts lived and trained together. This helped Tanzanians to accept each other and helped to remove tribalism and religious segregation. Again he introduced a National Service Military training for every high school college leaver. This compulsory military training aimed at promoting nationalism, self-reliance, discipline, and unity among learned Tanzanians building a spirit of citizenship and brotherhood.

Formation of Ujamaa villages under the Arusha declaration helped Tanzanians to live together, building closer relationships and allowing families to open up to a wider family. Intermarriages between people of different tribes and religions is also another factor that helped to lessen tribal and religious segregations, strengthening unity in the process.

The above principles helped Tanzanians to coexist, collaborate and respect one another. Today the majority of religious leaders and followers of both Christianity and Islam have been brought up in this context, making it easier for them to collaborate, respect each other and interact well in day to day life.

In the same way most of the current political and government leaders are the products of this context who remember how they were brought up, therefore try hard not to betray their predecessors, who made Tanzania to be a harmonious country free from civil wars.

FORMATION OF INTERRELIGIOUS BODIES/FORUMS

Since year 2000 we have witnessed efforts from interfaith forums to bring different religious institutions together to discuss interfaith collaboration for peace and peaceful coexistence for development. The seed of this endeavour was sown in Africa in 1959 when PROCMURA as it is known today was formed. The principal aim of The Program for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa was to help citizens of independent Africa, Muslims and Christians to coexist and live in peace and not in pieces, by understanding their differences, respecting them, striving to work for peace and peaceful coexistence, in a post independent Africa.

In the same spirit, since the year 2000 several interfaith forums/institutions were established in Tanzania, these are, (i) JVD, bringing three religious institutions, *The Supreme Council of Muslims*,

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(BAKWATA), *Tanzania Episcopal Council*, (TEC), and *The Christian Council of Tanzania*, (CCT). (ii) International Inter-religious Federation of the World Peace (T), (IIFWPT); (iii) Tanzania Interfaith Forum, (TIF), (iv) World Council of Religions for Peace, Tanzania, (WRCPT); (v) Tanzania Commission for Muslims and Christians for Peace and Development,(TUWWAMUTA) as registered in Kiswahili. (vi) Inter-religious Council for Peace, Tanzania,(IRCPT), (vii) Tanzania Interfaith Committee, (TIC) dealing with advocacy on Minerals and Environmental issues, and (viii) a newly formed commission to deal with HIV/AIDS known as Tanzania Interfaith Partnership, (TIP). All these institutions and committees play as forums aiming to bring religions through their leaders/representatives to collaborate in various national issues and by extension build understanding, cooperation and neighbourliness.

These efforts have been joined hands by several international agents who give financial and sometimes technical support, especially on joint research. The Norwegian Church Aid has an office in Tanzania, giving financial support to BAKWATA, CCT, and TEC on different humanitarian activities at the grassroots. Through the Norwegian Church Aid support, the three religious bodies have agreed to operate in different districts on issues of social-economic importance, (to avoid duplication). Each organization in her area of operation works with people of all faiths. They work with district Sheikhs, Imams, Bishops, and Pastors through interfaith committees they have formed. Through these District Interfaith Committees, are forums to address crosscutting issues pertaining to the society, doing advocacy when necessary and acting as an advisory committee to the government leaders in the quest to strengthen peace and development. Through these committees several social economic activities are supported and facilitated in an interfaith context. Health and HIV/AIDS, campaign against Female Genital Matriculation (FGM), Gender Violence, and OVCs. In order to improve livelihoods of citizens, these three religious institutions have mobilized Muslims and Christians to form Village Community banks (VICOBA) comprised of groups of thirty people, both women and men. They agree a minimum achievable amount of shares which allows them to borrow and pay back with a small interest. These VICOBA groups are also used as channels for educations on different areas like environmental issues, Public Expenditure Tracking PETS, peace building, etc.

Having noticed signs of religious fanaticism and the use of religion as an agenda in attaining political leadership in the last general elections, President Dr. Mrisho Jakaya Kikwete in his swearing in speech and in his address to the first session of the National Assembly warned Tanzanians not to entertain such people as they will bring the nation conflicts more so religious conflicts.

In order to deal with this new phenomenon in our nation, The President has recently formed a ministry to deal with issues of peace building and religious affairs. This ministry is under the President's office.

CONCLUSION

I believe all here, present belong to a particular religion. Each one has a strong conviction that his/her faith/religion is unique and holds the truth. Holding that conviction, we wish all others who are not in our religion to convert and become believers of our religion. This is a good wish, but any conversion should be as a result of your attitude of love, respect, acceptance of individuals regardless of their status, heart of peace and friendship. Never should it be by force, or intimidation, or blasphemy or enticing people using money or power.

We may differ in the attributes of God and how we address Him, but since we know that this world, the universe and creatures therein have been created by one Being, let us therefore, build on that foundation, that we are all creatures of the creator and in need of the same basics. Let us share the world and the benefits there in.

Let us regard ourselves as African Christians, African Muslims, and African Traditionalists etc. To regard ourselves as Tanzanian Muslims and Tanzanian Christians does not harm our faith. This is so because citizenship unites us to share our values and gifts for the betterment of our nations. Let us show our faithfulness to God by accepting one another, just as God has allowed us all these years of life, living in this planet Earth being what we are.

I conclude by summarizing our National Anthem;

> *God bless Africa and her leaders, give them dignity unity and peace;*
> *God bless Africa and her People, bless the Children of Africa*
> *God bless Tanzania, may freedom and unity prevail, the bless women and the children*
> *God bless Tanzania bless the Children of Tanzania.*

The focus of this anthem is to pray for peace, unity, and human dignity.

Let us be ambassadors of Peace and Human dignity.

Thank you,

Rev. Canon Thomas Godda
Email:goddamuyya@yahoo.com

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Appendix VII

Christian-Muslim Relations in Tanzania

THE STATE OF CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN ZANZIBAR: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR COLLABORATION FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

This paper is evaluating the state of Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar today, concentrating on the challenges and looking at the prospects for collaboration for peace and development. The paper is first going to look at the history of Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar, highlighting on the social, political, and religious challenges facing Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar today. Finally the paper is going to look for prospects of further collaboration between Christians and Muslims.

In recollecting the history of Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar various written sources have been consulted, while in establishing the challenges and prospects of Christian-Muslim Relation in Zanzibar, members of the Joint Committee of Religious Leaders for Peace and Tranquillity in Zanzibar (the joint committee) and other religious leaders have been interviewed. Members of the joint committee have been chosen because the committee has been mediating in interreligious conflicts and because it has been working on creating a safe environment for dialogue since 2005. This makes the members conversant with what is going on in the Christian-Muslim Relations sphere in Zanzibar.

A History of Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar

The history of Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar can roughly be divided into three eras. The first era is traced back to the end of the 15th Century CE when the Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, and his crew reached Zanzibar in 1499. At that time Zanzibar was mainly populated by Muslims. It is contested precisely when Muslims arrived in Zanzibar but the oldest Mosque known today dates back as far as 1107 CE[1]. The Portuguese decided to make Zanzibar part of their empire in 1504, thus the relationship between Muslims and Christians was that of occupied and occupiers respectively. The Portuguese Christian rule is said to have been very brutal, and thus the occupied Muslims sought support from fellow Muslims in Oman who came to their rescue during the end of the 17th Century. The Sultan of Oman destroyed the former Roman Catholic Church near the harbour, and used its remains to build the now famous Old Fort.

The second era of Christian-Muslim Relations began in the 19th Century. During this period Christians came back not as oppressors, nor as occupiers, but as liberators. Christians in the 19th Century came as liberators of slaves. Zanzibar had grown to become an important commercial centre for the Indian Ocean slave trade. The Anglicans bought the former slave market and build on it a mission station with a hospital and a Cathedral at Mkunazini. Likewise the Catholics bought a house of a former slave trader which was used to keep slaves, as a way to help shrink slave trade.[2]

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1. http://www.zanzibarhistory.org/Zanzibar_Mosques.htm (accessed 29/11-2011)
2. http://home.catholicweb.com/dioceseofzanzibar/index.cfm/NewsItem?id=263289 29/11/2011

There are a number of historical records that prove to us that the relationship between the Muslim Sultans who ruled Zanzibar and the Christian missionaries was good. The Sultans provided places to build mission stations and Churches and to a point even donated items in the building of Churches[3]. During the end of the 19th Century, Zanzibar became a British protectorate, with the Sultan of Zanzibar having powers to supervise religious matters on the Island and the ten miles East African coastal strip which was considered to belong to Zanzibar. Even though he was given authority to supervise Islamic religious affairs the rights of non Muslims had to be protected[4].

In December 1963 Zanzibar got its independence from Britain. Only one month after the independence in January 1964, a revolution overthrew the Sultan of Zanzibar. In April 1964 the Revolutionary Council which was governing Zanzibar by then decided to merge Zanzibar with Tanganyika, forming the United Republic of Tanzania. The Union between Zanzibar and Tanganyika stimulated migration of people from Zanzibar to the mainland and from the mainland to Zanzibar. In recent years, with the increase of tourism in Zanzibar the migration of mainlanders to Zanzibar has increased. The migrants from mainland Tanzania are mainly Christians from northern Tanzania. This can be termed as the third era of encounter of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar. The outcome and challenges of this era will be discussed in more details in this paper because it is the era we are in now.

Generally speaking the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Zanzibar started with confrontation, occupation and oppression in the Portuguese era. During the 19th Century CE, the Missionary era it was more friendly and peaceful, a trend that continued during the colonial period. However during the close of the 20th Century CE and at the beginning of the 21st Century CE things began to change. Below are some of the reasons why the relations between Muslims and Christians became more tense.

To begin with during the last decade of the 20th Century there was an increase of activities by extremist Muslim and Christian groups in Tanzania, who taught intolerance and polarization. These groups arranged *Mihadhara*[5] and *Crusades*[6] which provoked the other.

Union Politics also caused the situation between Christians and Muslims to get worse. The majority of Christians in Zanzibar are migrants from Tanzania mainland. The migrants have managed to take well paid positions in the tourist industry, army, and government offices - especially departments which are under the union government. Indigenous Zanzibaris, who are mainly Muslims are not happy to see foreigners take over their territory while they feel left behind. Though this is more a Mainland-Zanzibar issue, it takes religious connotations since one group is predominantly Muslim and the other predominantly Christian.

The political situation in Zanzibar also contributed to poor relations between Christians and Muslims in Zanzibar. Christians were associated with the ruling party *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (CCM) meaning

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3. When the Anglican Cathedral was built in Mkunazini the Sultan donated the clock for the tower (www.zanzibarhistory.org/zanzibar_christians.htm) 29/11-2011
4. Chesworth (2010):4
5. Public debates where Muslims use the Bible to prove the superiority of Islam and the faulty of Christianity
6. Christian open air meetings. The term 'crusade', used by Christians in Zanzibar, is the same terms as where used in the Middle Ages for wars to recapture Jerusalem - wars in which many Muslims were killed. Both the term and the preaching in crusades were very offensive to Islam. For more information on Mihadhara and Crusades please confront Chesworth (2009)

the Revolutionary party. The main opposition party Civic United Front (CUF) had been in harsh confrontation with CCM since the 1995 elections. In 2001 the confrontation caused Zanzibar to produce internally displaced persons for the first time since the revolution. Since CCM were considered as enemies of CUF members, Christians who were associated with CCM also became enemies of CUF members. Some members of the opposition went on further to the extent of claiming that CCM had been importing voters from the mainland to win elections[7].

The Joint Committee of Religious Leaders

In 2003 Zanzibar witnessed a historic visit by Catholic Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald who was then the head of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. Archbishop Fitzgerald's visit came during a conference for both Christian and Muslim leaders hosted by the Catholic Church[8]. This opened new doors for cooperation between Christians and Muslim leaders in Zanzibar. On the 19th of August 2005 both Muslim and Christian Leaders formed a committee of religious leaders for peace. The committee had representatives from the Muftis Office, the Qadi's Court, the Wakf and Trust Commission and the Muslim academy on the Muslim side, and from the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, and the Lutheran Church on the Christian side. A media representative was also added to the committee in order to propel the message of the committee to a broader audience. The main role of the committee was, and is, to work for peace and tranquillity in Zanzibar and the members of the committee are appointed by their own leaders (i.e. Bishops, Muftis, Chief Qadis etc.).

Since the establishment of the multiparty system in Tanzania in 1995, previous elections had all been violent so in 2005 and in 2010 the religious leaders decided to take on their responsibility to help promote peaceful elections then and in the future. To achieve this goal they arranged pre-election meetings with political candidates and the police, military forces, the media and NGO representatives. After the election in 2005, 270 local peace committees were formed between 2008-2009 in order to bring the agenda of peace to the grassroots level.

It is encouraging that the election in 2010 was in fact peaceful. Zanzibar now has a government of national unity which means that CCM and CUF share power. Though the peaceful election in 2010 was an outcome of a number of factors, the joint committee also played a role in achieving this. A research conducted by Sheikh Abdalla Talib in 2009 for example, found that the degree of support, religious leaders provided in the 2005 elections, was appreciated by the majority in terms of justice, positive involvement and civic education, and that it helped the election to be comparatively more peaceful than previous elections.[9]

The committee also provides a forum where interreligious conflicts and problems can be discussed. The Catholic Priest, Father Damas Mfoi, who is also a member of the joint committee, gives the example that when he came to Zanzibar in 2003 Christians were abused mocked and tortured, and had no place to complain. Currently Christians can report such complaints to the joint committee.[10]

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7. Brents B. G and Mshigeni D. S. (2004): 62
8. Langas A. (2011):26
9. Talib Abdalla 2009

Challenges facing Christian-Muslim Relations.

Despite the apparent success of interfaith work in Zanzibar, there are some major challenges that Christian-Muslim Relations still face. The said challenges can be divided into political challenges, social challenges and religious challenges as elaborated here under.

Political Challenges

Political leaders are the key policy makers, and decision makers. However they frequently change their position on various matters as they are moved by the viewpoint of the majority of voters. This is also the case regarding their attitude towards the joint committee of religious leaders. Damas Mfoi sees this as a political challenge that the committee is currently facing. It has to be noted that there are some revival groups in Zanzibar that mobilise masses against the activities of the committee. Because three of the four Muslim institutions represented in the joint committee are all under the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in Zanzibar, it is crucial to the stability of the joint committee that political leaders understand and acknowledge the need for having a joint committee of religious leaders for peace.

Social Challenges

According to public opinion there is a moral breakdown in the society of Zanzibar. Things that were not common in the past such as drunkenness and prostitution have become more and more common. Muslims who are the majority in Zanzibar (estimated to be about 98% of the population), tend to associate the moral breakdown with the increase in the number of Christians on the island. In such a situation interfaith work is seen as facilitating moral breakdown.

The Christians who migrate from mainland Tanzania also lack understanding of Zanzibarian culture and of Islam, which makes it difficult for them to integrate themselves in the Muslim community of Zanzibar. This has caused several social challenges such as the Muslims in Zanzibar not being ready to sell land to the immigrants and not even renting them houses.[11]

Religious Challenges

Interfaith work has been considered by some Christians and Muslims as syncretism, the common word used to describe this in Swahili is *Dini Mseto*. The joint committee has often been accused of wanting to establish *Dini Mseto* in Zanzibar.

It is also a challenge for Christians to acquire places for worship. It is hard for Christians to buy land for the construction of churches. There are also some extremist Muslims who burn down or destroy already built churches. On the other hand there are some Christians who deceive Muslim landowners, saying that they are purchasing land for residential use, and later they use the land to build a church.

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10. Interview with Father Damas Mfoi Nov 21st 2011
11. Interview with Sheikh Said Nawako Nov. 22nd 2011

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Prospects for Future Cooperation

Despite the above mentioned challenges there is hope that if interfaith work continues there are opportunities for future cooperation on peace and development in Zanzibar as elaborated hereunder.

Sheikh Soraga, who is the General Secretary of the Mufti of Zanzibar, sees the joint committee and the local peace committees as playing an important role in creating peace and stability in Zanzibar. By promoting peace and stability the committees create a good environment for individuals to work for their own development, something which would be impossible if the tensions continued. Peace and stability also attracts investments, both local and foreign which helps the economy of Zanzibar to grow[12].

Sheikh Nawako one of the leaders of the Youth Interfaith Forum of Zanzibar (YIFOZA) endorsed by the joint committee, thinks that in addition to creating peace and stability interfaith work in the form of diapraxis can lead to personal development of individuals, which can make individuals more productive. Nawako cites examples of the activities of YIFOZA such as the interfaith computer course, and the interfaith English course as examples[13].

Bishop Shao, the Catholic bishop of Zanzibar pleads for interfaith to go beyond peace and stability and start working on social problems faced by both the Christian and the Muslim communities. Bishop Shao mentions the problem of drug abuse among youth in Zanzibar as one of the problems that the interfaith work should tackle.[14]

Father Damas Mfoi maintains that if the main agenda of the committee is peace and stability, then it is important to work also on the income gap between the rich and the poor, since the gap is not good for peace and stability.[15]

Conclusion

Generally speaking there is a common understanding that the work of the joint committee of peace and tranquillity is directly linked with the development of Zanzibar. The peace building efforts of the committee is contributing to a situation where development is perceivable. It is also generally agreed that the committee together with promoting peace and tranquillity has to do other more direct developmental activities such as educating youth, work against drug abuse, and work to reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor.

If peace is defined by the absence of violence, then the committee has achieved its goals. However peace is more than the absence of violence. Peace involves the contentment of people. Absence of violence in a society where people are generally not satisfied, is a fragile form of peace which can turn into violence as soon as a perceived just cause is pursued by violent means. Because underdevelopment is a major cause of discontentment it is important for the peace committee to promote development through its activities. On the other hand – considering the challenges

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12. Interview November 21st 2011
13. Interview November 22nd 2011
14. Meeting with Bishop Shao September 2011
15. Interview with Father Damas Mfoi November 21st

mentioned above – it is important to continue to focus on building peace by consolidating the various ways that conflicts are dealt with before they become violent.

The history of Christian-Muslim Relations in Zanzibar shows that the pendulum has swung back and forth between hostility and friendliness. Now that we appear to be emerging from a period of hostility it is important that the religious leaders continue to stand together in order for the pendulum not to swing back into another era of hostility. Rather than leaning back, celebrating the current absence of violence, it is a good time to use the momentum of peace to solidify the peace building role of religious leaders in Zanzibar and to initiate creative ways of standing together for the sake of developing society as a whole.

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Informants

    Bishop. Augustine Shao

    Father Damas Mfoi

    Sheikh Said Nawako

    Sheikh Soraga

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Appendix VIII

Christian-Muslim Relations in Sierra Leone

THE STATE OF CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONSHIP IN SIERRA LEONE: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR COLLABORATION FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 6-13 JANUARY, 2012

Introduction

Mr. Moderator,

Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Esteemed Religious Leaders,

I greet you and also bring you greetings and best wishes for a successful deliberations.

I. Brief Historical Overview

It is observed that the encounter of faiths had its historical meeting in Arabia. The three faiths of Paganism, Christianity and Islam first met in Arabia, then in Abyssinia and subsequently, they met in Africa[1] (Oldman and Gallack). Eventually, the encounter filtered into Sierra Leone.

The spread of Islam in Africa was characterized by three distinct periods of migrations: the first period, AD 638-1050, the Arabs rapidly overran the entire Mediterranean Region from Egypt to Morocco.

The second wave of Islam migration was during the long period of AD 1050-1750, during which Morocco, the Sahara Region and Western Sudan became Islamic. The third wave was the revival of Islam through the Wahabies, the Mahdi Movements and the Derwish Orders during AD 1750-1900s

The Arab Muslims of North Africa carried trans-Sahara trade to the Sahel. "*The Shore*" of the desert sea. In the process, they came into contact with Sudanese traders, members of the great family of the Mande tribes, who brought gold from the interior. A new social group emerged throughout the Sudan and conquered the Christian capital of Khartoum, thus opening the floodgates for Islam to penetrate through trade for gold, ivory and slaves.

From the 11th century, Islam spread in West Africa through trade and also through the militant Almoravids and Muslim duat (traders of Islam). It was during this period that great empires came into existence, such as Ghana, Mali, Songhai and Kanem-Bornu. Whole states or communities were Islamized officially.

The Holy War of Futa Jalon in 1725 which was partly political among the Fullas, Mandika and Yalunkas was the main cause for a stronger wave of Islam into Sierra Leone (Fife pp.14-15). As the Mali Empire continued its decline, and as trade with Europeans along the coast developed, more migrations continued. These Islamic immigrants settled and intermarried with members of ruling families.

Prior to the founding of the Freetown Colony in 1787, the two kingdoms north of Sierra Leone,

Moriah and Kaabu, whose inhabitants migrated from the Mande heartland, developed direct economic relations with the various ports along the coast. Many of them settled near the Peninsula of Freetown, which later became the colony.

About this time, the Islam introduced in Sierra Leone had assumed some flexibility imposed on it by the host environment (*Jalloh and Skinner PP-2-4*). Islamic clerics and traders began to influence the development of political and cultural institutions in the hinterlands of Sierra Leone.

Many Islamic clerics became scribes and interpreters to the indigenous rulers. The Islamic clerics became acculturated or were used as mediators in settling disputes among the indigenous people and in the process, they applied the Islamic laws in the mediations, creating need for Muslim Jurists. These Jurists had to be invited from Islamic countries to come and interpret the laws and take decisions, thereby establishing their influence. They established Islamic institutions that were firmly rooted in the political systems and cultural patterns of the northern hinterland (*Jalloh and Skinner, pp.9-11*).

When Islam was being introduced in Sierra Leone, it did not demand a sudden breakaway with the past as a condition for acceptance and conversion. It was as it were – "just join". It is on this background that one can safely say inter-religious peaceful co-existence in Sierra Leone was a historical one.

Islamic clerics influenced the development of political and cultural institutions throughout the hinterland of Sierra Leone. During the period between 1820-1830, over five thousand re-captives who were mainly Muslim of Yoruba origins from Nigeria, were also landed in Freetown. They were rescued from slave ships on the high seas and set free in the colony. They were referred to as the "Aku" Muslims of Yoruba descent.

Besides the intermittent clash between the Aku Muslims and the colonial authorities, there was no known conflict between Christians and Muslims, except in recent times. All conflicts were between the colonial administration and the Muslims.

Though Christian schools were the first to be established in Sierra Leone, though gradually Muslim schools and other organizations were subsequently established to help promote and propagate Islam. Both Christians and Muslims have lived and worked side by side in peaceful coexistence from colonial time. This peaceful coexistence of both religions is demonstrated through inter-marriages, sharing of food at special occasions, blood relations (relatives), attending the same schools, and belonging to the same social clubs, e.g. football, cricket, sharing the same prayer platforms at public prayers, attending wedding ceremonies, birthday anniversaries, funerals, etc.

II.   Collaboration for Peace

In 1992, when the late Bishop Michael Kiele and his clergy were manhandled by a number of military personnel, led by the then Secretary of State, (in the) South, the Muslim and Christian leaders were alerted and they made representation to the Head of State. The Secretary of State, (in the) South who led the group was withdrawn and demoted.

During the decade-long war in Sierra Leone, the religious leaders organized into what became known as the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL). In 1996, they put aside their religious differences and teamed up to seek ways of bringing the war to an end and reconciling the war-torn nation.

A lot of consultations were held among various religious leaders and organizations. While this "subtle" diplomacy was going on, several questions were raised from various quarters such as "**Consultation! Between us and them?**", "**We can never give up our church, religion for the mosque!**" on one side and on the other side,

"**We can never give up our Islam for any church!**". These were some of the reactions of the Christians and Muslims. The founding Religious Leaders replied that, "It was not a call to form a "**Christmus**" but a call to fight a common cause that will end the war." There was a clear understanding of affirmation of our theological standpoint and not to subsume each other. The Christians made their standpoint as follows: "**We do testify that Jesus is our Lord and personal saviour and in His redeeming blood, lies the salvation of all Christians, which the bible confirms and there is no compromising as the bible warns: But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed**" - (Gal.1:8).

Similarly, the Muslims would say "**I do bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad (PBUH) is the last and final messenger to mankind as the Quran states: If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the hereafter, he will be in the ranks of those who have lost**" – (Quran 3:85).

The above were our positions as religious leaders from Christianity and Islam. Though our common agenda was to pursue national peace and reconciliation, it was an encounter that would necessitate meeting together regularly, so key guidelines were necessary to be established.

It was agreed that the formation of the Inter-Religious Council (IRCSL) was on the following key principles:

1. We were not meeting on the "battlefield" of the Bible versus the Quran but the meetings did take place on the basis of our common humanity. The need to seek ways to end the ongoing carnage and suffering. The man/woman who is a Muslim is not essentially different from the man/woman who is a Christian. We are all related to God as His creation and objects of His love and concern.

2. Our cooperation was not on the "battlefield" of Christian versus Islamic doctrines. We said this from traditions that have always placed great emphasis on doctrinal correctness. Rather, it was on the basis of our common need. The Christian person needs peace as much as the Muslim. If there is no peace, it would be difficult to propagate any of our religions.

3. We did not cooperate on the "battlefield" of Christianity versus Islam. Christianity and Islam here refer to the human structures and forms which men have constructed to structure their relationship to God. The cooperation was on the basis of the life of the Christian in Christ. This means that the Christian does not come to the Muslim as a member of a religion that seeks to convert the Muslim. It is on the self-revelation of God and not on the basis of human concepts about God.

It was on this background of principles that the cooperation between the Christians and the Muslims established the IRCSL to end the war and move to reconstruction and renewal in Sierra Leone. Relentlessly, the IRSCL conducted a number of activities that culminated to the peace negotiation in Lomé, Togo. The activities included meetings with the rebel leader Foday Sankoh, for him to see reason to end the sufferings of the people of Sierra Leone.

A cross-section of religious leaders, including a woman, met the rebels in the bush. The meeting took place outside the capital, Freetown and it lasted about two hours and ended in a friendly and hopeful manner. The IRCSL was with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Lomé, when they developed and presented their position paper to late President Eyadema of Togo.

This preparation work with the top council of the RUF formed a strong basis for the formal peace talks that followed. The peace talks took about a month before a formal agreement was reached and on 7th July, 1999, the Lomé Peace Agreement was signed.

After the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement between the RUF and the Government of Sierra Leone, the IRCSL went on a prayer and Planning Retreat. During prayer time, the Muslims went into their own room while the Christians did likewise. Though we prayed separately, the agenda was the same.

The objective of planning the proposal, was to further equip and mobilize cooperation among the religious communities in Sierra Leone, to take concrete steps to bring stability in the aftermath of the signed Lomé Peace Agreement on 7th July, 1999. The proposal sets out activities in six thematic areas:

   i.   Disarmament and Demobilization;
   ii.   Human Rights Education,
   iii. Democratization, including special needs,
   iv.   Children,
   v.   Strategic Humanitarian Assistance, and;
   vi.   Truth and Reconciliation and a National Campaign of Reconciliation and Renewal.

The above programme of activities was carried out by IRCSL between July, 1999 to the end of November, 2006.

According to the IRCSL proposal, the Disarmament and Demobilization was crucial for the consolidation of peace and democracy. In disarming and demobilizing the estimated 45,000 combatants, the religious leaders fully participated in the exercise from city to village level. They were involved in visitation, counselling and providing religious literature and provision of some felt needs.

For human rights, the gross violations witnessed during the conflict rank as some of the worst in Africa's history. Families throughout Sierra Leone watched helplessly as their children and other loved ones were abducted, drugged, raped, maimed and forced to bear arms to kill their own relatives. Some of the religious leaders were involved in putting the framework for the setting up of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Though many civil society activists advocated for 'a war crime tribunal', religious leaders succeeded in advocating for a 'platform for soul cleansing'. IRCSL mobilized broad-based human rights campaigns through television and radio programmes, workshops and seminars.

For the democratization and other special needs, the general elections were slated for 2001 because for instance the disarmament and demobilization process was going at a snail's pace. The combatants who espoused no credible ideology, were trained for new roles to be productive and responsible members of a decent society.

In the area of children, hundreds, if not thousands were abducted and exposed to drugs and arms.

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Their reintegration was essential to heal the wounds and restore sanity. A number of children were received and reintegrated by the IRCSL.

Strategic humanitarian assistance was an approach embraced by IRCSL amidst the general relief work. The IRCSL identified pockets of acute needs that were of humanitarian concern pertaining to specific groups and got involved, such as the surrendered Sierra Leone army personnel, politicians, displaced paramount chiefs, etc. Many rebels and civil defence ex-combatants were afraid to testify to the TRC but again religious leaders intervened and persuaded perpetrators to testify.

III.   Challenges

When we speak of challenges, these can be divided into the following categories:

i.   Collective
ii.   Denominational
iii.   Christian
iv.   Muslim

The first challenge was to put our respective 'houses' in order. Collectively, we have a sociological challenge which is nation building.

Considering the magnitude of destruction and atrocities perpetrated against defenceless civilians and the entire nation, the role of religious leaders was crucial.

Humanitarian Concerns – a challenge; as already mentioned above, the religious communities played strategic roles in meeting the several needs of the Internally Displace Persons (IDPs) in the various Displaced Camps and even those who were staying with friends and relatives. During repatriation and resettlement, the other challenge came when the majority of the displaced communities did not have a house to return to.

Psychotherapy Challenge: The religious communities put appropriate structures and mechanisms for the healing of the minds and souls. The Government and the International community did so much for the war-affected Sierra Leoneans, through relief items but if the minds and souls were not attended to and detraumatized, big problems would have continued to shelter at our door steps.

Religious communities had no equal in guidance and counseling, leading confessions, forgiveness and reconciliation processes. If the deep-seated grievances and hurt were not healed and mended we would have had many more problems.

I am reminded of a Quranic quotation that says "God does not change the condition of people till they change what is in their hearts" (Quran 8:53, 13:11).

Prophetic Role Challenge: Though communism unfortunately states that "religion is the opium of the people", on the contrary, in our case in Sierra Leone, war-affected masses looked up to religious leaders for hope and assurance from the word of God. Indeed the Pastors and Imams did preach forgiveness and reconciliation.

They continued their prophetic roles even after the war.

The Religious Leaders did not wait to learn the lesson Pastor Martin Niemoue of Germany shared from his own personal life experience when he said *"In Germany, they first came for the Communists and I did not speak up because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak up because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Trade Unionists and I did not speak up because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Catholics and I did not speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time, no one was left to speak up".* The Church and the Mosque must be alert to their God given prophetic role and not be silent against the ills of society.

The Generation Gap – A Challenge: It seems as if the issue of the youth is a global problem and not just a Sierra Leonean one. After the war, there were large numbers of unemployed youths. In fact, there was **no employment**[1].

The last challenge this paper will consider for both faith-based communities is that we should work hard to minimize the suspicion of each other's religion. Both Christians and Muslims should work hard to minimize to the barest minimum, extremism and fanatism from our religious movements.

For the Church, the challenges are; Christians should endeavour to make Christianity relevant through going back to the old time religion of the Missionary Spirit.

The Church and the Mosque should cooperate with the government in their quest for the development of the whole person.

Development is part of our religious mandate. We are to develop the whole person, spiritually, socially, mentally and physically.

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1. Laurent Magesa, The Mission of the Church in Africa in the Post-Cold War International Order„ Africa Theological Journal, Vol. 22, No.1, 1993

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Appendix IX

Christian-Muslim Relations in Madagascar

THE STATE OF CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN MADAGASCAR : Challenges and Prospects for Collaboration for Peace and Development

1. Christianity and Islam in Madagascar

It is said that Muslims have been present in Madagascar from as early as one or two centuries after the death of Muhammad. The first Muslim immigrants to Madagascar were known as the Antalaotra (Anti-Alautsi) which means "men from overseas". They were descendants of Arab traders who came down from the east coast of Africa. They moved to Comoros Islands and established trading links with Madagascar. Islam was partly involved in their life wherever they settled in Madagascar. The language they spoke was a mixture dialects derived from Arabic and Indigenous African Bantu Dialects) and it has influenced the northwestern dialects spoken by part of the Malagasy people.

At the beginning of the 17th Century Christian missionaries started to explore and Christianize Madagascar. They were in touch with the Muslims where they worked. Their attitudes toward Muslims did not create terrible conflicts between Christians and Muslims. Perhaps there were some small disputes sometimes but hospitality and good neighborliness have been high values among them.

2. The National Council of Churches (FFKM) and the Muslim political initiatives

The involvement of the FFKM in politics is not new. Its position in politics is not to change the Republic of Madagascar into a kind of Ecclesiatic Republic but to educate people and political leaders to do good rather than evil and to demonstrate that non-violence can work even in the most unlikely situation.

The political situation in Madagascar was worse in 1992 – 1993. People demonstrated against the government. Tens of thousands of protestors, including members of the FFKM, marched towards the presidential palace to demand the resignation of President Didier Ratsiraka. Twenty to fifty of the protestors were shot down by the presidential bodyguards. To stabilize the political unrest the FFKM organized a national forum. Unfortunately, the political initiative of the FFKM in 1992 was not shared by Muslim leaders. The FFKM did not work together with Muslims when the need for our nation was reconciliation between the government and the opposition.

Meanwhile, the Muslim Democrat Party was formed. A famous Islamic preacher, Mr. Ali Ben Rapozy, was declared as a Muslim candidate for the first round of presidential elections in 1992. The party called all Muslims to wake up and demand their rights. The party motivated Muslims to work together to support a list of candidates that would consider and defend the interests of the Muslim communities.

Many Christians and Muslims have held important political and government posts in Madagascar. However, it is advisable that the FFKM leaders and Muslim leaders work together as peacemakers to

educate and sensitize people to understand the significance of conflict and reconciliation. It is believed that compassion, mercy, pity and reconciliation can be achieved among us through our willingness to live in peace and in good neighbourliness.

3. Some Possibilities for Peace

3.1- Living Together

There are no signs to distinguish between Christians and Muslims in our country. They live together in the same villages, selling goods in the same markets, children study together in the same schools, parents work together in the same factories and offices. Christians and Muslims are together members of the local authorities. There are no alternative positions based on religious affiliation. Some parts of Christian families are Muslims and some Muslims are married to Christians.

The most significant level of the relationship is good neighbourliness. In our daily life Christians and Muslims must learn the conversation of love, forgiveness, respect, listening and must learn to know one another as friends.

3.2 One Common Language

The Malagasy language unites the inhabitants of Madagascar. One language marks the unity of our nation and its people even if the physical appearances and the origins of the population are extremely diverse.

The term "*salama tompoko*" is used in everyday greetings among various tribes in Madagascar. The word "*salama*" is derived from the" Arabic word "salaam", which means "peace" or "good health". Our daily greetings "*salama tompoko*" provide a willingness to understand, analyze and regulate justice and human relationship in order to create long term peace. Whenever one says "*salama*", he or she participates in bringing justice, peace and healthy relationships. The primary goal with regards to the greetings "*salama*" should be implementing and sustaining peaceful and healthy relations in our nation.

Remember, Christian worship "*salama*" is proclaimed, Muslim worship "*salaam aleikum*" is announced and among various tribes "*salama*" is shared. All need peace.

3.3 *Fihavanana*

Traditional Malagasy social life is mostly based on *fihavanana*, fastened under *fihavanana* and united in *fihavanana*. The term *fihavanana* is not translated into one English word but it can be translated as kinship, friendship, solidarity, relationship, peace. The general concept of *fihavanana* can be extended to other tribes even when they are not blood relatives and it can be extended to other people even when they are not of the same religion. *Fihavanana* means people or groups of people who behave and treat each other amicably, feel for each other, help each other and share the good with one another.

When conflict occurs in a community the supreme goal is not to find the factual and objective root cause of the conflict but to extended *fihavanana* even when the circumstances are still tense. The old

wise men such as Church leaders, Muslim leaders, traditional religious leaders play the roles of arbitrators and mediators. They listen to the factions. They admonish the two adversaries to be reconciled due to the *fihavanana*. Under the authority of the wise men all have to obey their advice and decisions.

To preserve *fihavanana* is more important than to punish. *Fihavanana* is the deepest need for renewal of solidarity after disagreement or enmity in the Malagasy context which is expressed through many proverbs such as:

> "*It is better to lose wealth than to lose fihavanana*";
> "*it is not commerce that was first but the fihavanana*".

3.4 Love

Christians and Muslims need to challenge their members to examine the implication of peace, love and reconciliation in relationships with other human beings. The theme of our first conference on Christian-Muslim relations took place in *Ilafy*, Antananarivo-Madagascar, on May 4 – 7, 2010 based on living together in peace and love according to the Bible and the Qur'an. The conference was a meaningful sign of peaceful relations between Christians and Muslims in Madagascar. It was important to see Christians and Muslims sit together, listened to one another and learn from one another. The spirit of love towards other people creates possibilities for peace rather than pointing out one's weaknesses and failures. Christians have love as do Muslims. Love drives Christians and Muslims to behave in a peaceful way towards one another in a community.

4. Development Work

4.1 Same Problems and Common Interests

In our country many Christians and Muslims are poor and face many difficulties to find better jobs. There are Christians and Muslims who are suffering from different kinds of illnesses. Several Christians and Muslims live together in villages, towns, cities which are full of rubbish such as used papers, empty tins and bottles, waste food and dead plants. Climate change impacts both Christians and Muslims. In addition, natural disasters such as shortage of rainfalls caused droughts; also cyclones affect the economic situation of both Christians and Muslims in several places.

As Christians and Muslims live together they should be involved in a wide variety of social work to help people including during times of famine relief, desert control, tree planting, adult literacy, disaster reconstruction after cyclones and floods, digging wells to get clean water to drink and making the villages, towns and cities where they live clean also.

Muslims and Christians do not believe we can solve all the problems of human need. But we are called by God to be a sign in our communities and nations that God is concerned. God desires to save our nations from all that is evil.

Christians and Muslims should organize training programmes for a particular activity or work. The training should have a concrete goal of teaching people specific skills. The training will be based on rural development. Everyone who participates will be a source of knowledge for the better life of people in the future. The participants are typically invited because of their involvement in development work among their communities.

Appendix X

Christian-Muslim Relations in Liberia

Presentation on the State of Christian-Muslim Relations in Liberia
Challenges and Prospects for collaboration for Peace and Development

Presented by: Dr. Benjamin Dorme Lartey
General Secretary Liberia Council of Churches and
Executive Committee Member, PROCMURA

Introduction

Due to Globalization, our societies are becoming more intricate. Religious people and their leadership are called upon once again to redefine doctrines and dogmas against the background of new trends of societal norms evolved through human rights justification. Indeed conflicts are as a result of human right abuses in Liberia, Christians and Muslims working together can identify the challenges faced in conflict management, peace-building, reconciliation and development.

Role of Religious Leaders

♦ Religious people should stand for Justice, equality.

♦ Preach values that are fair to humankind's existence.

♦ Challenge governments to fear and respect God.

♦ Systems that breed conflicts should be challenged.

♦ Call for an Africa that is free of tribal conflicts, and faith-based conflicts;

♦ Call for a peaceful continent where youths, women and men will begin to focus on building and making Africa a heavenly place to live for all peoples.

There are more than 16 Ethnic groups dispersed in the 15 Counties of Liberia. These can be categorized into 5 blocks according to the level of a particular religious dominance over and against another; what we may term as Liberia's religio-graphy:

Christian Dominance

Montserrado, Margibi , Grand Bassa Rivercess, Sinoe, Maryland, Grand Kru, River Gee, Grand Gedeh Counties

Christian –Islamo Dominence:

Bong, Lofa, and Nimba Counties

Islamo-Christian Dominence

Grand Cape Mount, Bomi and Gbapolu Counties

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All blocks have some external influences that come through their faith and cultural values from Countries and ethnicities across the borders of Liberia. Without any doubt, religion is a strong force in Liberia and the rest of Africa.

The problem we are usually faced with is how we can access the input of the religious leaders within these blocks to bring some integration amongst them and their communities.

The State of Christian Muslim Relations/Collaboration

Christians and Muslims have continued to collaborate on the search for peace, healing and reconciliation. Liberia Council of Churches & National Muslim Council of Liberia collaboration gave birth to the Inter-Faith Mediation Committee (IFMC) in 1990 and up to 1997 when the conflict took another dimension.

The LCC at this time had created confidence among the Liberian People and averted a growing notion that the war (1990) was between Christians and Muslims as the call for jihad seemed to suggest.

It is very significant to note that the formation of the IFMC was a major achievement in Liberia because it helped to keep the war from degenerating into a religious one though criticized by both conservative Christian and Muslim groups. It was felt by the Christian group that the IFMC had given too much recognition to the Muslim community who were after all only a minority, while the conservative Muslim group on their part simply did not want to mix with Christians at any front.

The greatest opposition to IFMC was the NPFL which observed that the Leaders of the Muslim Community within the IFMC were mainly of the Mandingoes tribe. Following the 1997, the role of the religious leaders automatically changed from mediation and conflict transformation to conflict prevention and the name changed to IRCL. In 2000, Christian-Muslim collaboration continued until the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in Accra, Ghana in 2003.

Some Highlights of Events as a Result of Christian-Muslim Collaboration:

♦ The Christian and Muslim collaborative efforts allowed them to win the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Archbishop Desmond Tutu Peace Accord.

♦ Formulated the framework which formed the basis for the ECOWAS Peace Plan for Liberia (Cease Fire, Round table conference, Peace-Keeping force and security among others) all leading up to the 1997 Elections;

♦ Sponsored and effectively staged a mass stay-home action on March 9, 1995 and February 15, 1996 respectively, demanding disarmament before elections;

♦ Successfully launched a Civic Disarmament Campaign to assist in disarmament, repatriation and resettlement of displaced persons;

♦ Issued several position statements regarding the peace process and the violation of human rights;

♦ Intervened in the Mandingo/Lorma Crisis in Lofa County;

♦ Intervened in the Mandingo/Gio and Mano Crisis in Nimba County;

♦ Held consultative meetings with the religious communities in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Cote d' Ivoire, and established Collaboration with the leaderships to foster cooperation and collaboration on Peace, Security and Reconciliation in the Sub-region.

- Collaboration gave birth to the West Africa Inter-Religious Councils Coordinating Committee (WAIRCCC)
- Fully participated in bringing the warring factions and political parties to the conference tables in 2001 to 2003, culminating at the Comprehensive Peace Talks in Accra, Ghana in 2003.

Challenges and Prospects for Collaboration for Peace and Development

- Latent Conflict of interest of leaders for political and other positions:
- Intricate religious freedoms and human rights issues;
- Ethnic diversities and land ownerships/litigations;
- Marginalization in the process and methodology of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- The use of critical texts of Scriptures from both the Bible and Qur'an by some leaders that tend to insinuate violence, gender insensitivity, women and child abuse.

A major challenge however which must be critically considered is the current stalemate in relationship particularly within the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia, and by extension the Christian and Muslim Communities. Relationships amongst them tend to be suspicious and restrained.

Another major challenge centers on the issue of healing and reconciliation. Despite of the challenges stated, Churches and Mosques are widely respected. There is urgent need to revisit the Vision, Mission and current direction of the Council in today's Liberia, for the Council is gradually losing its influence and direction.

Prospective

The Government of Africa's First Female President, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, has embarked on an aggressive development program, and the Country is gradually changing, however without genuine healing and reconciliation in Liberia, Liberians could again slip into anarchy and violence. This has been experienced during the recent elections in 2011.

The role of the Religious Community is therefore paramount to be able to work to sustain and consolidate peace, healing and reconciliation. This is the only way development will be sustained in the interest of the Liberian people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Religious Community should become more involved in the healing and reconciliation of the Country. Accordingly, PROCMURA is requested to work with the Community and Government and Civil Society in this direction to avert a possible return to anarchy;
- That because healing and reconciliation is a process and not an event, there is urgent need to foster unity amongst the religious community to ensure that members remain vigilant and proactive. Accordingly, PROCMURA is requested to visit Liberia and engage the leadership at finding the cause for suspicion and disunity and to attempt to foster a rekindled collaboration;
- That because reconciliation can be used as a development tool, the Government of Liberia utilizes the Religious Community in development work to ensure sustainability.

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Appendix XI

Christian-Muslim Relations in Ethiopia

The State of Christian-Muslim Relations in Ethiopia: Challenges and Prospects for Collaboration for Peace and Development[1]
By Jürgen Klein

Introduction

Ethiopia has most probably the longest experience in Christian-Muslim Relations (CMR) in Africa. The millennia-old history of relations between the Abyssinians (*Habäsha*) and Arabs in trade and culture culminated in relations between the Prophet Muhammad and Abyssinian Christians in Mecca[2]. The Prophet trusted that his followers would be well received when they exiled to Abyssinia following the persecution they faced in Mecca. The encounter between the king (*Negus*) and the companions of the Prophet (*Sahaba*) in 615 A.D. has been called "the African matrix for interfaith encounters"[3]. This is probably the first documented Christian-Muslim dialogue held outside Arabia in an African-Christian context. Both sides did not go deeply into the doctrinal details like the question of the trinity including salvation in Christ against his prophetic role in Islam or the belief in a contextual Arabic monotheism. Instead, the argument of monotheism against harmful polytheistic religions was emphasized as a common ground[4]. This shows that religious understanding can be addressed in respect of differences for the benefit of the society at large as a higher value.

The peaceful encounter as the first model of CMR in Ethiopia and Africa was an example of African-Arabic diplomatic tolerance, a kind of a converging "half-way dialogue". It highlights the ability to concentrate on having enough common ground to establish peaceful bonds without getting lost into details of differences that would create a separating gap with the potential of leading into conflict and violence. The positive experience of the *Sahaba* resulted in a positive *Hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad: "Leave the Abyssinians in peace as long as they do not take the offensive"[5].

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1. Presentation at the African Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders Conference on Peace and Development, Addis Ababa, January 8-13, 2012, organized by the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa.
2. Presentation at the African Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders Conference on Peace and Development, Addis Ababa, January 8-13, 2012, organized by the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa.
3. Relations in sub-Saharan Africa", Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies, October 2010, vol. 27 no. 4, 261-274. Available at http://trn.sagepub.com/content/27/4/261.short?rss=1&ssource=mfr (all Internet documents accessed on 26 December 2011), 263.
4. Ja'far ibn Abi Talib, the speaker of the Sahaba, said: "O King, we were a barbarous nation, worshipping idols, eating carrion, committing shameful deeds... Such was our state until God sent us an apostle, from amongst ourselves... He summoned us to God, to believe in His unity, to worship Him and abandon the stones and idols which we and our fathers had worshipped in His stead." See Trimingham, J. Spencer. 1976. Islam in Ethiopia, 3rd Impression, (London: Frank Cass), 45, for other parts of the narrative see 44.
5. Trimingham, 46; quoting Abu Da'ud, ii. 133; Ibn Daiba', Taisir al-Wusul, iii. 110.

After this, as seen worldwide, during the 7th-21st centuries, CMR in Ethiopia[6] passed through various experiences including trans-cultural interchanges of ideas and practices, intermarriages, tensions and conflicts, clashes and wars, with patterns of superiority and suppression in both majority and minority contexts, with mixtures of political-religious and socio-religious interplays. After the downfall of the *Derg* (socialist military regime from 1974-91) and with the coming of a new constitution (1994-5), an astonishing trend to more pluralism with more religious freedom appeared together with an increase of polarisation and polemics expressed in fundamentalist and extreme views.

Challenges and Prospects for Collaboration for Peace and Development - Indicators of the State of CMR in Ethiopia

1. Socio-demographic Distribution

Out of a total population of 73.8 Million in 2007, Christians make up about 62.8% (Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church 43.5%, Protestants of many denominations 18.6%, Catholics 0.7%), Muslims 33.9%, and the rest are traditional believers and others[7]. The strong geographic dispersion of believers inhibits religiously motivated united mobilization. However, the frequency and intensity of CMR depend on majority and minority situations in the regional (*Kelel*), sub-regional (Zone and *Woreda*) and local (*Kebele*) distribution of Christians and Muslims[8]. The more the shares of Muslims and Christians in one locality are balanced or equal, the more variety of relations one may find with probably less tensions. On the other hand, the greater the imbalance, the less the variety of relations will occur with eventually more tensions. The socio-demographic unequal distribution of religious groups leads to regional and local majority and minority status tensions with tendencies of control by those in majority (for example the land question and opportunities to construct churches or mosques, see below). Regulations, if applied in a non-preferential mode provide a prospect against this tendency. This could be protected by the government.

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6.   Hussein Ahmed. 2006. "Coexistence and/or Confrontation?: Towards a Reappraisal of Christian-Muslim Encounter in Contemporary Ethiopia, in Journal of Religion in Africa, 36 (1), 4-22. See also Ford, Jr., F. Peter. 2008. "Christian-Muslim Relations in Ethiopia: A Checkered Past, a Challenging Future, in Reformed Review, 61 (2), 52-70; Østebø, Terje. 2008. "Christian-Muslim Relations in Ethiopia", in Kubai, Anne N. and Tarekegn Adebo (eds.), Striving in faith: Christians and Muslims in Africa, (Uppsala: Life & Peace Institute), 71-89.

7.   Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. 2010. Population Census Commission, Central Statistics Authority, The 2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia, Results for Country Level, Statistical Report, Addis Ababa. In terms of age groups 56,8% of the total population are of age 0-19 (conflict prevention), 33,2% are of age 20-49, and about 10% are of age 50 and above (conflict management). In August 2009, 749 local religious institutions have been registered at the Ministry of Justice, Registration of Associations Division.

8.   One finds Orthodox in the majority in the north (Tigray 95.6%; 4% Islam and 0.1% Protestant), in Amhara 82.5%; 17.2% Islam and 0.2% Protestant) and in Addis Ababa (74.7%; 16.2% Islam; 7.8% Protestant). Islam is generally in majority in the Oromia Region which is spread all over the country (47.5%; 30.5% Orthodox; 17.7% Protestant), in the east in Somali (98.4%; 0.6% Orthodox and 0.1% Protestant), in Afar (95.3%; 3.9% Orthodox and 0.7% Protestant), in the eastern Harari and Dire Dawa cities, and in Benishangul in the west (45.4%; 33% Orthodox and 13.5% Protestant). Protestants are the majority in Gambela (70.1%; 16.8% Orthodox; 4.9% Islam) and in the Southern Nations and Nationalities People Region (55.5%; 19.9% Orthodox; 14.1% Islam).

2. Socio-cultural and Ethnic identities

In Ethiopia, ethnic identities are stronger than religious identities, and cultural and social identities run across religious divides. Muslims or Christians would rather not split off from their ethnic belonging for religious motives. The fact that in most cases religious and ethnic or regional identities do no run parallel helps religions appear more as deescalating agents than contributors to escalations. Supported by the Constitution with its ethnic federalism, ethnic identity incentivizes people to remain loyal to kinship and to work for it rather than to engage in religious politicization. The psycho-social matrix with its cultural tendency toward respect is deeply rooted in the Ethiopian society. Most people are friendly to their fellow citizen regardless of religious and other differences, and try to avoid conflict. On public holidays both wish the other all the best. Both cooperate in cooperatives and self-help groups (*equb, eddir*). Ethiopians are well known for standing together in difficult situations irrespective of their religious or other social backgrounds. This culture of tolerance is unique in Africa.

3. Religious Identities

Religious and theological values, commandments and beliefs as well as their contextual interpretations within both mainstream Ethiopian Islam and Christianity provide a discourse rather aiming at love, peace, forgiveness and respect of diversity, rejecting conflict and the use of violence. Given the above, religious adherents are motivated to engage in peace activities. However, as a more complex state of ambiguity, on both sides sources could be identified that legitimise violence and intolerance, both in the Bible and in the Qur'an (Matthew 10:34; Qur'an 9:123). Fundamental and extremist (sectarian) views infiltrate mainstream religious thought with a tendency to polarisation, provocation and aggression. Religious leaders, however, did not succumb to extremist leadership, but are moderate. Moreover, they vehemently reject any incitement of violence, continue to work together on important social issues and engage in interfaith dialogue, even though they might be exposed for criticism.

4. The legal status of religious freedom and equality

Beside the Bible and the Qur'an, the Ethiopian Constitution provides not only a solid fundament for religious freedom and equality[9], but also for secularism. State affairs are officially detached from religious matters for neutrality, and religions ceased to interfere in State affairs. The strictness of secularism is expressed in prohibition of any religious influence in the educational context and in the involvement in politics. No religious institution endorses candidates for election to public office or involves in political campaigns as part of mutual non-interference. This restraint towards the secular realm is vital for peaceful co-existence. The Ethiopian government further requires religious institutions

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9.   Federal Negarit Gazeta of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. 1995. The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1st Year No. 1 (Proclamation No. 1/1995), Addis Ababa: FDRE House of Representatives. See especially Preamble (lasting peace, on the basis of equality without any religious or cultural discrimination), Art. 3 (equality of religions), Art. 11 (seperation of state and religion), Art. 25 (equality without discrimination on grounds of religion), Art. 27 (freedom of religious belief and opinion), Art. 29 (right of thought, opinion and expression), Art. 31 (freedom of association), Art. 32 (freedom of movement), and Art. 90 (education provided free from religious influence), and others.

to be registered in order to enjoy legal and recognized status[10]. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) was awarded legal personality without having to be registered[11], and other faith groups are subject to special laws[12]. Apart from these religious institutions that engage purely in spiritual work, their developmental wings are treated separately and granted NGO status under the Charities and Societies Law[13]. The granting of tax exemption and the provision of legal entity status can be viewed as a positive development in the exercise of religious freedom in Ethiopia. In addition, Christian and Muslim holidays are officially recognized[14]. The Constitution envisages a democratic society in which pluralism of belief is an essential feature[15]. It celebrates religious pluralism with the nationalities cultural, linguistic and religious diversity.

5. The land question

According to the Constitution, rural and urban land is exclusively owned by the state and people of Ethiopia and cannot be sold or exchanged[16]. The government is supposed to provide land for free use for religious communities. There are increasing requests for land and constructions of churches, mosques, schools and cemeteries. From time to time tensions arise over the allocation of land to religious communities[17]. Another source of conflict related to land comes with a private individual who gives his residential house to a religious organisation, or by an individual who buys a house, which then would be converted into a church or a mosque later on. This happens at times without official permission or without the consent of neighbouring communities of other faiths. Evangelical

10. Formerly every three years at the Ministry of Justice, recently at the Ministry of Federal Affairs, Directorate of Religion and Faith Affairs, which had been established in June 2001 E.C.

11. Empire of Ethiopia Negarit Gazetta. 1960. Civil Code of the Empire of Ethiopia, Proclamation No. 165 of 1960, 19th Year No. 2, Addis Ababa 5th May 1960, Art. 398 (1-2) and 407 (1).

12. The Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) registered 1988 E.C., the Islamic Da'awa and Knowledge Association registered in 1984 E.C., the Ethiopian Ulamas Association in 1994 E.C., the Al-Wehada Islamic Propagation Association in 1997 E.C. The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus registered in 1961 E.C., the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia in 1997 E.C. For other local and foreign based religious institutions refer to their local representatives and head offices, for a complete list of registered faith groups refer to the Ministry of Federal Affairs, Directorate of Religion and Faith Affairs.

13. FDRE Federal Negarit Gazeta. 2009. Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009, 15th Year No. 25, Addis Ababa.

14. The Finding of the True Cross (Mäsqäl), Ethiopian Christmas (Gänna), Ethiopian Epiphany (Timkät), Ethiopian Good Friday (Seklät), and Ethiopian Easter (Fasika); Muslim holidays include the break of fasting at the end of Ramadan (Id Al-Fetir), Arefa (Id Al-Adha) and the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad (Mawlid). Government offices further warrant a two-hour lunch break on Fridays for Muslims to attend Friday prayers.

15. Berhane Zikarge, 2009. The Scope of Religious Freedom and its Limits under the FDRE Constitution: A Survey of Contemporary Problems and Challenges, A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Law, A.A University (Master of Laws, LL.M), Addis Ababa. Available at etd.aau.edu.et/dspace/handle/123456789/2140.

16. FDRE Constitution Art. 40 (3).

17. Many times reported in Addis Ababa at construction allegedly without legal permits (2001-3), in Gondar town January 2008, and in Dembi town September 2008, in Harar city in 2009 because of loudness of amplifiers and speakers, and in other places, the question of the proximity of plots led to the conflicts. Precautions to be taken by local authorities could be helpful in this regard. In Dessie town July 2009, a conflict flared up on historically religious claims of land.

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Protestants and other minority denominations have complained that they are perceived as newcomers and remained disadvantaged in the allocation of land when compared with the EOTC or the EIASC, especially in Addis Ababa and in other major towns. The allocation implementation therefore continues to be a challenge unless it is managed in a way free of preferences and with equal opportunities for all according to guidelines that need to be more developed.

6. Secularism at governmental and educational facilities

In Ethiopia, as another question on how to balance secularism and religious freedom as a continuing tension, there are emerging concerns about the scope and limits of religious expression in the context of public schools, colleges and universities over the past years. Generally, students should be allowed to manifest their religious beliefs, but without proselytizing or creating disorder. The debate over prayer[18], school dress codes (headscarf and veiling)[19], dietary requests[20] and religious insignia, have resulted in an attempt to regulate the issue[21]. However, the controversy[22] still challenges relations between government institutions and religious groups, and CMR.

7. Sensitization on fundamentalism and extremism

Despite the mainstream religious tendency to peace and the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom for officially recognized faith groups, there are instances of open conflict among Orthodox Christians, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and Muslims in the recent years.

a)   Post-1991 developments and the coming of the constitution not only opened the door to more religious freedom expressed publicly and privately, to more parity and encounters between the religious leaders and members, but also resulted in a growing influence of fundamentalist Christian and Muslim teachings with extreme positions shown also in an increase of polemics and extreme polarizing views. These views influence especially the youth, but at times also moderate adults toward provocations and aggression against the other, and could possibly culminate in violent conflicts. The impact of purist-reform and fundamentalist Islamic and Christian movements, often labelled as "Pentecostalisation" or "Islamization" has created new forms of antagonism. In its worst form it practices the disrespectful downplay of the other. In its milder form it seeks to prove oneself right and the other wrong. This can be studied in the

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18. Controversies about group prayer (Salat Al-Jamaat) and fixed places for the fulfilment of religious duties as Salat is one of the five pillars of Islam and a constitutionally guaranteed right.
19. Especially Muslim female students wearing the veil (niqab, hijab) as one of different opinions in Islamic groups' interpretations of the Sharia, ranging from moderate to extreme conservative views. A general consensus lies on favouring a modest dressing of women (and men), whether covering the face or not, and leaving it to the cultural and contextual understanding of modesty. However, in the Ethiopian as in other contexts, the wearing of the niqab is considered as disrupting the educational necessity of eye contact and face to face communication as well as for the need of identification.
20. Seperate butchering and dishes, as both religions have different ways of slaughtering and preparation of food.
21. FDRE Ministry of Education. 2008. Directive on Secularism in Educational Institutions, Addis Ababa.
22. See discussion for example in the Islamic magazine "The Muslims Issue", Yemuslimoch Guday, 01-No. 12 Hamle 2003 (July 2011).

available local populist publications in which each group wrote from its own perspective about the other[23], and in imbalanced and stereotyping mass-media presentations (books, booklets, magazines, newspapers, CD, VCD, DVD, television, radio, internet and other) of extreme contents that create negative feelings and hate. Some of the extremists confuse or conflate religion with politics. Some perceive Ethiopia as a Christian "island", denying the deeply rooted tradition of Ethiopian Islam. Others wage open campaigns against their religious institutions leadership. Some became financial institutions and perceive proselytism as a lucrative business for their manipulative propaganda. More control in each religious group of what is going to be published on the market would help to minimize polarisation. Time and again, the level of knowledge and understanding of the mainstream members of religious groups about the own faith and about other religions have to be improved. The lower the level of education on the religious or theological level is, the more the fundamental and extremist views find futile soil. The sensitization at the grass-root-level through trained staff and balanced material provide a prospect against this trend.

b) **Occasional violent clashes** came along with extremist influences that fuelled provocations ending up in violent conflicts. Incidents of recent clashes in the South-Western Jimma area in 2006 and 2011 show the influence of fundamentalist and extremist positions within both religions. The group's name "*khawaraij*" or "*kawariya*"[24], allegedly an offshoot of the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromiya (IFLO) and calling themselves "Oromiya's Muslim Unity"[25], has possibly links to other extremist groups in the geo-politic arena. The mainstream of that religious group does not agree with the extremist form. Both Muslims and Christians oppose as untrue religion any form of extremism that encourages violence and manipulates especially young people to practice it. They use promises of financial profits and training opportunities. On the other side, recent conflicts stimulated more moderately minded Christians and Muslims

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23. Belay Abakiya. 2011. bäithiopia bekrestiyan-muslim genenyunät lay bämatäkor bäamarenya qwanqwa mätshaftoch sälamawi yekrestiyan-muslim genenyunäten kämabärätatät antsar acher melkäta, Hamle 2003 Eth. Cal. (July 2011), Addis Ababa. In his study paper, Belay Abakiya has collected about 70 Amharic books dealing with CMR from the Christian and Muslim point of view about the other, and found out that the majority (more than 90%) of them are polemic and antagonistic in their nature, using false comparisons, and instead of narrowing the gap between the two religions they are widening it.

24. Derived from Arabic khârijites, khawârij, literally meaning "those who went out", a group that first emerged in the late 7th century AD over questions of the caliphate (the right followers of the Prophet Muhammad), and spread in southern Iraq and Iran. They set themselves apart from mainstream Sunni and Shi'a Islam with some extremist expressions. As such, the term became a generalization for extremist and violent individuals who are not accepted in mainstream Islam. See Wikipedia, "Kharijites", available at http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kharijites&printable=yes.

25. Birhane Zikarge. 2009. The Scope of Religious Freedom and its Limits, ib., according to Jimma Zone Security Assessment Report of the Oromiya Administration and Security Bureau, Hedar 27, 2001 E.C. (October 2008). They started to infiltrate Ethiopia since 1992 and became active in the major areas of Limukosa, Sekka, Omonada, Chorra, Deddo, Gomma Woredas and in Jimma town. They are organised with assigned members in the areas with domestic and foreign intelligence committees, fundraising committees and harbouring and escape routes committees for those who have to flee because of their criminal acts. They mobilize people against infidel (Kafirs) leaders, propagate to accept only the Sharia and reject other laws, implement forced conversion, and call on people to alienate, harass and black mail people who do not accept their ideology. They incite Muslims to stay away from traditional Sufi mosques, avoiding group prayers (jama'at) and hate and stigmatize Christians.

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to work together to diffuse the tensions and strive toward peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. This is a sign that <u>religious diversity</u> can be accepted to a certain degree. Nevertheless, respect and dialogue still stand versus scepticism and suspicion in the mainstream religious understanding of the population. Only in-depth religious studies and interfaith dialogue within peaceful CMR contribute to peace and development issues.

c)   Both religions are in constant search of their identities in a situation of growing acceptance of <u>pluralism</u>[26] in tension to exclusivist views that tend to absolutism and exclusion (non acceptance) of others. Religious and theological dialogue within the frame of peaceful CMR can help to cope with the challenge of extremism and its ideological agenda. This would help to reduce the fear of pluralism that already goes along with the pluralism concept of the Ethiopian Constitution and the society at large. Getting a clear demarcation line of what falls into genuine and authentic religion, of identifying polemicists and extremists with their negative tendencies, demands sensitization at local communities' level through trained opinion makers and leaders. This would help to moderate the opinion of fundamentalist views and even radical groups, by stressing tolerance, respect and interreligious cooperation.

8. Propagation and Proselytism (winning converts)

Both Islam and Christianity are religions that intend to grow and expand their faiths because they are convinced that they "have the right way" that they would like to share with all humans. The right of manifestation and propagation, without coercion and limited to the protection of public safety, peace, health, education, public morality or the fundamental rights and freedoms of other, is supported by the Constitution[27]. Competition in propagation and proselytism (persuading members of other monotheistic religions to follow the religion of the agent of propagation) is therefore natural, but becomes problematic when not respecting the identity and integrity of the other religious groups, or when insensitive to local cultures.

Fundamentalism is characterized by exclusiveness and absolutism, with the exclusion that there might be another "true" religion. Inviting to one's own faith, based on a fundamentalist view, therefore naturally creates apologists and polemics by its rival nature, since each group tries to show that it is "better" than the other or continuously proving the other wrong, instead of showing that it is "different" in otherness.

Guidelines for propagation (witness, mission, <u>da'wa</u>) within the family of monotheistic religions would help to enable both to reach out to each other without creating conflicts and without proselytizing aggressively. Whereas there are endeavours on the Christian side[28], are there similar

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26. Eck, Diana L., 2006. "From Diversity to Pluralism", On Common Ground: World Religions in America, Columbia: University Press, Reprint. Pluralism is not synonym or to be confused with tolerance, diversity or plurality, but requires knowledge of difference and active engagement with diversity in dynamics of meeting, exchange, interaction, constructive dialogue and engagement based on mutual values and goals.

27. FDRE Constitution, Art. 27 (3) and (5).

28. Recently such guidelines have been prepared intra-religiously by the World Council of Churches. 2011. Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World, Recommendations for Conduct, World Council of Churches-Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue-World Evangelical Alliance, Geneve. Available at http://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/christian-witness-in-a-multi-religious-world.html.

developments on the Islamic side? <u>Religious training institutions</u> with improved research and interreligious study programs may provide material for such substantial guidelines. Mission and *da'wa* in line with honest dialogue and mutual respect would help to minimize suspicion and methods that degrade the other to objects and targets of one's own interest. Targeting the other in aggressive forms, in coercive and deceptive methods, presenting the other in negative and exaggerated forms and caricatures, and corrupted forms of witness or persuasions must be prevented. Leaders must keep their house in order in this regard. Both need to get a clear understanding of the individual right of religious freedom that includes to be converted and to change one's religious affiliation without getting punished for it or the facing of consequences for apostates (Constitution Art. 27).

9. Intra-religious unity (within Christian denominations and within Islamic groups)

In order to communicate with one another, improvement of intra-religious unity of the various groups and denominations is needed, so that the various groups can jointly work together (ecumenism, the concept of *umma*). Unity among Christians and unity among Muslims in officially accepted "umbrella organisations" is required for an organised encounter of both faith groups.

10. The role of Mass-Media

The reporting of mass media (television, radio, newspapers and other) plays a crucial role in formation of the social mindset regarding CMR. Training seminars and information days for journalists may help to reduce the production or nutrition of stereotypes.

11. Networking of institutions involved in CMR

The ministry of CMR is organised in different ways within the religious groups and NGO's. It is carried out either by the spiritual or development departments within the religious groups, or is commissioned to responsible persons within the structure of the religious group. However, there are no CMR programs or responsible persons in certain religious groups at all. The creation of CMR programs at section level in all religious groups would allow more effective networking. Concerted efforts of all institutions involved in CMR toward collaboration for peace and development are worth to be improved *(see Appendix)*.

12. Academic research and training

Religious and interreligious studies at the academic level can be improved by establishment of Religious Studies or academic CMR Programs at universities, colleges and seminaries. The establishment of a national Institute for Interreligious Studies for research would enhance CMR as well as inter- and intra-religious relations and conflict management.

13. Strengthening cooperation in joint societal action toward peace and development

In Africa and Ethiopia, poverty, diseases, wars, natural disasters and other factors demand cooperation and collaboration of all religious groups who intend to create peace instead of conflict. The Constitution provides for all peoples of Ethiopia as a whole, including religious groups, the right to participate in national development[29]. Registered development wings of religious groups have to find ways how to cooperate in joint societal action. Some organisations provide a platform for cooperation (see

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Appendix). Activities in the field of HIV/Aids, Harmful Traditional Practices–Anti-Female Genital Mutilation are fields of common cooperation. Climate change and environment protection have become burning issues. More common areas need to be identified based on religious ground, ethics and values. The dialogue of life and action (practical tasks) follows the necessary dialogue of the word (intellectual task). These are the parameters for a contextual approach that needs to be explored in theological and interreligious studies, aiming at finding common ground[30].

Conclusion

It is an illusion to believe that we can live in a world free of conflict. But what can be believed is that religious people can contribute to better prevent and manage conflicts, and that they can reduce the amount of violence and damage that come out of conflicts. Building the bridge of peace (Mt 5:9; 1 Peter 3:15; Surah 16:125 and 8:61), networking and collaborating together for peace and development of a nation and the African continent at large are a genuine result of constructive CMR that require on both sides a transformation of the mind (Romans 12:2, Surah 5:48) toward tolerance and respect, following and improving the example of the first encounter of Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia. On a long run, this may change the general mindset of the mainstream population that is nurtured and fuelled by stereotypes and by patterns that rule the mind in a negative way. Ambiguity as the state of complexity (complex interplay of multiple variables, challenges and prospects) in search of authentic and genuine religious identity in balance with the legal provisions in a given society is challenging all institutions and persons involved in CMR worldwide and in Ethiopia in the 21st century.

Appendix: Who is involved in CMR in Ethiopia?[31]

Religious Institutions

- ➲ Interreligious Council of Ethiopia (IRCE, also Forum of Eth. Religious Institutions)[32]: Established in December 2009, it includes the following members: Eth. Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC), Eth. Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC), Eth. Catholic Church (ECC), Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Eth. (ECFE), Eth. Seventh Day Adventist Church (ESDAC), and the Eth. Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). The Council aims at facilitating the values of tolerance and respect among various religious groups in Ethiopia. It recently has been established at sub-city level in Addis Ababa, and is going to be established in the regional level of Ethiopia.

- ➲ Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). The EECMY has a CMR Program at the church office level (national operation) since 1969 (office for Program for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa, PROCMURA), and started a CMR Program at degree level at the Mekane Yesus Seminary since 2003.

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29. FDRE Constitution, Art. 43 (2).
30. This idea has gained momentum especially with the declaration of "A Common Word". 2007. Available at www.acommonword.com.
31. This list tries to give an overview of what is known to the presenter and does by far not claim to be complete.
32. Historically, the IRCE goes back to meetings of religious leaders in times of conflicts and wars One of the first documented meetings was the Interreligious Seminar on the „Call of the Motherland", in Addis Ababa, Megabit 19-21, 1970 Eth.Cal. (28-30 March 1978).

- Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE): CMR Office at the head office level (national operation) since 2010, and included one course at the academic level (Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, EGST, master level).
- There may be more CMR programs or sections unknown to the presenter until now.

NGO/CSO's (national and international)

- Norwegian Church Aid (NCA): NCA-Ethiopia has been engaged in peace building and conflict transformation since the Ethio-Eritrean conflict (1998) and contributed a lot through the religious leaders of the two countries. On the Ethiopian national level efforts have been made in addressing violent conflicts between and among different ethnic groups due to social, economic, cultural and religious differences. It supports the capacity development of the Ethiopian religious communities in their relation building for peace and development (IRCE on national and regional level).NCA is working with capacity building and mobilization of religious leaders and faith-based communities in Ethiopia for peace-building in violent conflicts.
- Ethiopian Inter-faith Forum for Development, Dialogue and Action (EIFDDA): EIFDDA was initiated in 1999 as a country level extension of World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) and registered in 2006. Since its establishment in December 2002 as an alliance of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in Ethiopia, EIFDDA has brought together FBOs with rich development experience in diverse locations of the country especially in the fields of food security, HIV/AIDS, peace building and conflict resolution as well as in other social service delivery activities.
- Interfaith Peace-Building Initiative (IPI): IPI is working actively in Ethiopia since 2003 to promote interfaith cooperation, a culture of peace, harmony, constructive dialogue, and the Golden rule. IPI is a member of the United Religions Initiative (URI), an international peace organization. IPI organized special interfaith peace gatherings in commemoration of the UN International Day of Peace and the Golden Rule Day proclamation.

Governmental institutions

- Ministry of Federal Affairs: Tasks include registration of religious groups and institutions, and provision of guidelines, seminars etc.
- Ministry of Culture and Tourism: A programme "Harnessing Diversity for Sustainable Development and Social Change", supported by UNDP and UNESCO (2009-2013) aims at contributing to sustainable development of Ethiopia, particularly by promoting cultural diversity. The programme promotes community based inter-faith dialogue.
- Ministry of Education: Directive on secularism in educational institutions (2008) based on the Constitution.
- Ministry of Justice.
- There may be more ministries involved in CMR, unknown to the presenter until now.

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Academic institutions, researchers and scholars

- ➲ Addis Ababa University (with importance for CMR and interreligious studies).
  - ♦ Research and articles of Prof. Dr. Hussein Ahmed and others[33].
- ➲ International researchers and scholars with importance for CMR.

Other

Embassies, cultural institutes and other institutions

- ➲ US Embassy, German Embassy and German Cultural Center (Goethe Institute).
- ➲ Islamic Research and Cultural Center (IRCC), Addis Ababa.
- ➲ Other not known to the presenter until now.

Mass-Media

Relations with international organisations in view of CMR

- ➲ PROCMURA Ethiopia Area Committee (through EECMY since 1969).
- ➲ All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), represented in Addis Ababa by its envoy Rev. Iteffa Gobena.
- ➲ Religions for Peace – African Council of Religious Leaders (RfP-ACRL, a permanent steering committee of the African Union designed to advance cooperation between the AU and religious communities on the African continent, formed at 1st AU-Interfaith Dialogue Forum held on 15-17 June 2010 in Abuja, Nigeria), cooperates with African sub-regional platforms, initiatives, national Interreligious Councils, and All African Council of Churches (AACC, with envoy of AACC to AU in Addis Ababa).
- ➲ Religious Leaders Peace Initiative in the Horn of Africa (RL-PIHA).
- ➲ Universal Peace Federation (meeting of UPF-Europe with Interreligious Council of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa on 10 July 2011 to promote interreligious dialogue and cooperation between people of different faith).
- ➲ Partner Churches and Mission organisations.
- ➲ Catholic Overseas Development Agency (CAFOD).
- ➲ Sant' Egidio cooperation with AU for peace, intercultural and interreligious dialogue and HIV/Aids (15 July 2010).Network of Ethiopian Muslims in Europe (NEME) and Canada. Other Islamic organisations unknown to the presenter until now.

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33. Temesgen Yohannes. 2011. The Situation of Inter-religious Studie in Ethiopian Higher Education: the Addis Ababa University Case, Presentation Paper at the Academic Consultation on Christian-Muslim Relations in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, 1-5 August 2011, prepared and organised by the EECMY. The author prepared a list of studies carried out in relation to CMR and interreligious studies at the AAU.

Appendix XII

Christian-Muslim Relations in Egypt

Challenges and Prospects for Development

History

The Egyptian people, nature and temperament like religiosity emerged since the time of the ancient Egyptian and Pharaonic temples which were scattered throughout Egypt.

Egypt since 30 BC, was a Roman province, under the rule of Roman governors, who were appointed by the Roman Emperor Nero, nicknamed "the happy boy". The Roman leadership came with Roman traditions which saw the introduction of the many Roman gods such as Jupiter.

In this time Saint Marks came to Alexandria and with him the Gospel which started to flourish and spread in Bekaa and Rabua.

Constantine ended the persecution of Christians, in the year 324, and thus making Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire.

Islam and its Entry into Egypt

The leader *Amr ibn al-Aas* was victorious over the Romans at the Battle of *Ojnadan* and asked for permission from Caliph Omar Ibn Khattab to go into Egypt and rule it effectively marking the end of the Roman rule in Egypt and the beginning of the Islamic era. Governors and *Amr ibn al-Aas* were the first Muslim rulers and treated other religions with tolerance especially Christianity and this is reflected in the verses of the *Quran* and *Soorahs*. The first verses of *Surat Al-Baqarah* states that Muslims believe in all prophets of God from the first Adam (peace be upon him) until the Final Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) as well as in Sura Maryam. Companions (God bless them) have been brought up on these verses and learn how to treat Muslims and non-Muslims, especially the people of the book as evidence by that which happened during the reign of the Caliph Omar Ibn Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), who began his reign in Egypt in 22AH. The Crown of Egypt (Amr ibn al-Aas) happens to be that (Ibn 'Amr Ibn El-Aas) raced Coptic and the Coptic won but Ibn Amr Ibn El-Aas beat the Coptic and said to him (Take it and I'm the son of Alackerman) and went Coptic to Omar Ibn Khattab to complain to him so the caliph sent to the Amr Ibn El-Aas and his son and ordered the Coptic to beat the son of amr Ibn al-Aas and said to Amr Ibn El-Aas (when did you enslave people have their birth mothers free).

This situation has continued to handle the good and tolerance between Muslims and Christian for more than 14 centuries.

Egypt has bore witness to the spirit of coexistence, cooperation and citizenship between Muslims and Christians in the revolution of 1919 and the subsequent revolution of 1952. The motto, and one only which we have lived with is based on the respect of the Crescent and the Cross. Lately, the Revolution of January 25 2011 whose motto was Muslims and Christians in one hand, and which is still in force, allowed for prayers to be offered by each for the common cause.

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Nature of population between Muslims and Christians of Egypt

First, we find heterogeneity in cohabitation, which means that people do not monopolize a particular piece of land in Egypt.

Second, the absolute freedom for both of them in business transactions from the sale and purchase of land and real estate.

Third, the absolute freedom in the performance of prayers for both of them.

But there are many challenges facing the good relations between Muslims and Christians of Egypt which have appeared during the last twenty years and continue to pose a challenge:

- ♦ First; external interference laden with extremist ideas aimed at destabilizing the country and the stability of the establishment of unity between Muslims and Christians.
- ♦ Second; the absence of a distinct role of the *Al-Azhar*, which is a prestigious institution with its mild thoughts.
- ♦ Third: Illiteracy: A lot of people did not receive any education and consequently it has led to the emergence of some cases of religious intolerance and of opinion.
- ♦ Fourth, political interference that has led to sedition among the populous for individual gains.
- ♦ Fifth: misinterpretations of religious texts by both Christian and Muslim groups leading to misconceptions and misperceptions.
- ♦ Sixth: media, has been known to blow out of proportion and fixate on strife between Muslims and Christians and consequently deteriorating relationships.

Proposals to go out from those challenges:

First; *Al-Azhar* should work towards establishing unity and religious awareness of the nation. It should also ensure that religious preachers and intellectuals are conscious of matters of religion and therefore express the reality of Islam and Muslims, as well as that of Christians and Christianity. Unfortunately without these steps unscrupulous people who constitute militant groups from both sides take the country to the Department of Strife and Conflict through their actions thereby harming chances of pacific relations between Christians and Muslims.

Second; strong measure should be taken to safeguard from external intervention in the internal affairs of the country. These measures should also include keeping at bay thoughts of intolerance and of violent conflicts from creeping in to the minds of Egyptians.

Third; education and cultural awareness that results in religious awareness should be promoted.

Fourth, there should be a promotion of a strong sense of citizenship and of religious freedom, entrenching the reality of pluralism and the acceptance of others.

The Future of Relationships between Muslims and Christians in Egypt:

The contemporary question in some people's minds is about what if Islamists come to power in Egypt? What will happen to Christians in Egypt under an Islamic government?

Some people are worried about the above question, but from experience and works of Egyptians, there should be no cause for concern because the relationship between Muslims and Christians after the revolutions became stronger as was manifested in Tahrir Square where Christians and Muslims came together under the banner of social and political change, this lasted right up to the parliamentary elections.

For example:

The Islamic Party has branded itself as the party of freedom and justice, one open to all Egyptians, a slogan it carried through to the elections. The party has indeed had more than a hundred Christian members most notably *Dr. Rafiq Somuial Habib*, who was deputy party chairman. This was the first time in the history of Egypt, and goes to show the evolution of the relationship between Muslims and Christians. This very manifestation of Christian and Muslim cooperation paints an optimistic view of future relationships and very well creates good prospects for development and prosperity for all Egyptians.

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Appendix XIII

Christian-Muslim Relations in Jos, Nigeria

PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION:
JOS CRISES EXPERIENCE

A PRESENTATION BY:
LANTANA BAKO ABDULLAHI
SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND JOS NIGERIA AND
JUSTINA MIKE NGWOBIA
JUSTICE PEACE AND RECONCILIATION MOVEMENT
JOS NIGERIA

JOS PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

- Nigeria was once regarded as a viable state, and a hope for democracy in Africa.
- Ethnic and regional acrimony and conflict halted the first experiment with democracy in Nigeria in the 1960s.
- Plateau State is located in the North Central Zone of Nigeria.
- Plateau State has about 3.2 million people according to the 2005 census figures.
- It is divided into 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and has over 40 ethnic groups.
- Plateau State was known and distinguished as the "Home of Peace and Tourism".
- It served as a model to other states of the federation and attracted many tourists from different parts of the world.
- Jos is a city built by colonialism. British development of the mining sector led to the growth of Jos on peripheral lands at the boundary of Berom, Anaguta and Afizere territories.
- Large numbers of Hausa/Fulani and others were brought to work the mines.

Others like the Yoruba, Igbo and Urhobo moved into the city with missionaries and others coming for clerical work and commercial opportunities.

- Throughout their African colonies, the British depended on systems of indirect rule, and Jos was no exception.
- The status of traditional leaders continues to be an issue of contention between the various groups in Jos.

Source: JOS WACA REPORT

CHRONOLOGY OF VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN JOS, PLATEAU STATE

- 1945: Jasawa-Igbo riots over control of local markets
- 1966: Igbo massacred by Jasawa and Berom
- 1994: Riots between Jasawa and Berom-Anaguta-Afizere after a Jasawa is named chairman of Jos North LGA

- 2001: Riots between Jasawa and Berom-Anaguta-Afizere after Jasawa is appointed co-ordinator of the National Poverty Eradication Program for Jos North LGA. Escalates to general Muslim-Christian violence.

- November 2008: Riots between Jasawa and Berom-Anaguta-Afizere after contested election results. Escalates into general Muslim-Christian violence.

- January 2010: Riots between Jasawa and Berom-Anaguta-Afizere after property dispute.

- March 2010: Fulani herdsmen attack Berom villages in retaliation for losses in January 2010 violence.

Source: Jos WACA Report

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

- Issues of indigeneity and settlership has to do with identity and how the definition/possession of one form of privileges certain people have over others- usually in relation to some material advantage.

- The creation and proliferation of local government areas (LGAs) which are directly funded by the federal government, making control of them a lucrative business.

- The lack of state and local authority control over police forces.

- The colonial history of Jos (and especially the history of indirect rule and creation of traditional leadership structures in Jos).

- The high level of ethnic heterogeneity of the state and segregated settlement patterns frequently coincide with religious identity and political allegiances in Jos.

- Youth bulge coupled with high levels of youth unemployment .

The media's tendency to emphasize the significance of the religious division of Jos into Muslim and Christian population.

MANIFESTATION OF CONFLICTS IN PLATEAU

- Jos and most of Plateau State in which the Beroms, Afizere, Anaguta and others regarded as indigenes have long been pitted against the Hausa/Fulani who are regarded as settlers.

- Tensions between the many ethnic groups in Jos have periodically erupted into violence, with incidents of violence more frequent since 1999

- Violence continued in the southern zone including the Yelwa eruption in April 2004 (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

- The 1999 constitution facilitates the discrimination between indigene and settlers.

- Citizenship is primarily by indigeneity (descent), and considerations of residency are secondary.

- Nigeria has several kinds of pluralisms which include ethnic, religious and political.

- Destruction of churches, mosques, private businesses and houses in most cases prompted reprisal attacks.

- Perceived marginalization of the minor ethnic groups vis-à-vis the unequal 'privileges of "indigenes and "settlers".

- Active perpetrators and suspects arrested in connections to the crisis were jobless youths.

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- ♦ Underlying issues leading to the previous episodes of violence had not been addressed, and tensions remained high.
- ♦ Conflict in Jos was seen as having a high probability of recurrence, but also high potential for actionable responses

CONSEQUENCES/IMPACT:

- ♦ In the 2008 violence, A report from the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Search and Rescue Committee on the Jos Crisis indicated that a total of (129) Christians were killed and (8, 229) Christians were displaced, during the Jos crisis. The reports also stated that a total of 368 were injured.
- ♦ Similarly a report from the Jos North Muslim Ummah indicates that a total (632) Muslims lost their lives. The report added that a total of (20,000) Muslims were displaced and (5,320) Muslims were injured.
- ♦ Though there is no direct connection of elections to religion, people were seen aligning to members of their respective faiths when voting.
- ♦ The organized level of attacks with sophisticated arms, appearance in fake police/army uniforms, looting and destructions of valuable properties and lives of innocent people.
- ♦ Neighbourhoods are easily identified by the exclusive ethnic and/or religious segregated character of such communities.
- ♦ Even buying and selling is currently being conducted in segregated markets
- ♦ The means of livelihood of a significant number of men, women and youth were destroyed.
- ♦ Displacement of people as refugees in different parts of the state.
- ♦ Many affected victims have chosen a permanent relocation option as the best alternative.
- ♦ Suspicion/mistrust between Christians and Muslims as well as "indigenes" versus "settlers" has increased.
- ♦ Influx of arms and weapons of destruction such as explosives, riffles, sword and knives to Jos.
- ♦ The curfew often imposed has its own negative impact on the economic and social activities.
- ♦ abuse of human rights by the security agents, deployed for peace keeping in the state.
- ♦ Atrocities/crimes are committed against the dignity and liberty of women and girls.
- ♦ Women and children have become susceptible to post traumatic stress and depression.
- ♦ Widowhood has increased and women have to bear responsibilities as sole bread winners of the family.

WOMEN'S ROLE IN PEACEBUILDING

- ♦ Women have been able to mobilize effectively and set up networks, and support groups to enhance their empowerment in the aftermath of violent conflicts.
- ♦ Providing training for women at local level on leadership, peacebuilding and participation in governance.
- ♦ Creating platforms for dialogue with stakeholders to promote participation of women in decision making and politics.
- ♦ Transfer of skills and expertise to empower women economically.

RESPONSES/INTERVENTIONS

Government and non-governmental organizations at all levels, as well as individuals are engaged in pre and post-conflict peace building in the state.

♦ Key stakeholders' appeal to people to embrace peace and shun all forms of violence.

♦ Others promoting this call include NGOs/Network of NGOs, Local Media etc.

♦ Stakeholders' support to the displaced in the various camps, through the provision of food stuff, clothing, water and trauma healing.

♦ Deployment of security operatives in strategic places within Jos and environs has helped reduce violence and spillover.

CHALLENGES:

♦ Bad Governance has been associated with the high rate of poverty , unemployment and illiteracy which has been a panacea for violent conflicts.

♦ Elections will continue to be a potential trigger for violence, so long as political office remains a primary means of self and group enrichment.

♦ Risks posed by the effect of government policies/programmes in the areas has resulted into violence and tension

♦ Poor funding affects peace building activities not only in Jos but in Nigeria at large

♦ Actors in the Jos conflict, especially youth, lacked a working knowledge of Nigerian political structures and rules.

♦ The near absence of post-conflict trauma healing programs are missed opportunities that could facilitate healing.

PROSPECTS FOR PEACE:

The world is no doubt becoming a global village and diversity has indeed come to stay.

The rights and privileges of both the "indigenes" and "settlers" in the state should at all times be respected.

♦ The abundant tourism potentials in the state can only be fully appreciated when people from diverse backgrounds are welcomed in a peaceful environment.

♦ Seek genuine reconciliation through dialogue, interaction, understanding and forgiveness.

♦ Federal arbitration of issues of indigeneship and citizenship are necessary to adequately address issues associated with "indigene" and "settler".

♦ The reportage of some media outfits on the Jos crisis, most especially the international media has increased tension among the populace. The media is a powerful tool of communication that needs to be objective and seen playing significant role in the peace building process.

♦ The need to adequately improve the living standards of the people cannot be overemphasized.

♦ Non-release and implementation of relevant recommendations of the past commission of inquiries. The government needs to arrest and prosecute perpetrators of violence.

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- Strengthen the level of security within and around Plateau State. Better mechanisms to be put in place for responding to early warning signals.
- Both the state and federal government must collaborate in a bid to finding a lasting solution to the crisis in Jos and indeed Plateau State.
- Civic education should be used as a means of increasing knowledge of the rights and obligations of Nigerian citizenship, including education on legal and nonviolent means for the redress of grievances.
- Sustained support for IDP reintegration, including psychological counseling for victims of violence.

CONCLUSION:

- Most People in Jos viewed the conflict as ethnically based between the Hausa/Fulani and the Berom/Anugata/Afizere groups.
- In all the violent conflicts in Jos religion was used as a means of mobilization and as a way to target victims of violence.
- The ethnic and indigene-settler cleavages were the most critical in understanding conflict dynamics in Jos.
- If the ethnic conflict (especially the indigene-settler conflict) could be successfully managed, then religious differences would diminish in importance, or cease to be an issue.
- The potentials for peace in Jos presently far outweighs the potential for violence

The civil society groups in Jos are committed and determined to ensure sustainable peace is achieved in Jos

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING AND GOD BLESS

Appendix XIV

Christian-Muslim Relations in Denmark

The State of Christian-Muslim Relations in Denmark: *Challenges and Prospects for Collaboration for Peace and Development*

by Malene Fenger-Grøndahl, Abdul Wahid Pedersen and Mogens S. Mogensen

Denmark has been a Christian country for approximately 1,000 years, and the state of the nation is closely linked to the religion as well as to any other factor, which has influenced the development of the nation during that period of time. For many centuries Denmark has been more or less completely a Christian country. A small contingent of Jews entered Denmark about 300 years ago, but otherwise Christianity has not been religiously challenged.

Since the second half of the 20th century, nevertheless, Christianity has been challenged by the emergence of Islam in the society. Initially there was no challenge, as the Muslims came from 1967 onwards as guest workers, and they only had eyes for the money, they could earn in Denmark and send back to their families, but the more they settled in, the more they started looking into their religion. In the 80's the first schools and the first mosques were established. It should be noted that there are no purpose built mosques in Denmark until now, so the mosques that were established in the 80's were simple industrial buildings turned into prayer places. From the 80's onwards thousands of refugees came to Denmark, many of whom were Muslims. By now Islam is the second biggest religion in Denmark numbering about 200,000 to 250,000 people or between 4 and 5 % of the total population of the country. Along with Muslims, adherents of other religions such as Hindus and Buddhists came to Denmark.

Conflicts

When we talk about Islam and Christianity, there are some differences and points of possible conflict. Some of these points and issues have been played cleverly by various opinion makers and even politician over several years in an obvious attempt to position Muslims against Christians in a religious conflict. This nonetheless is not a popular view.. Mostly people of the two religions live side by side as good neighbors without any major problems. But when potential conflict issues are raised at the highest echelons of society, it creates an impact all the way down.

This has created some ripples on the surface of the polished relations, and some of these ripples have taken on enormous proportions such as the caricature crisis that erupted early 2006 as a consequence of a number of drawings published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands- Posten late 2005. These drawings were intended to insult, hurt and ridicule according to the newspaper itself, so they were actually made with the sole purpose of creating trouble. And they sure managed to do exactly that.

For ten years from 2001 until 2011, Denmark had a minority government formed by the liberal and the conservative party and held up by a party classifying itself as being against Islam; the Danish People's Party. This unlucky constellation became the cause of a decade of constant bickering in the public media of Denmark. Politics and legislation was shaped on the basis of suspicion of the Muslims

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wanting to turn Denmark into another type of country; wanting to take over, wanting to implement *Sharia* laws, wanting to force Islam onto the general population and other similar speculations

Islamic-Christian Study Center

Before that – during the 90's there was a strong move towards finding common ground among Muslims and Christians in Denmark, the peak of this being the establishment of the Islamic-Christian Study Center, which is a joint venture between members of the two religions. It was established to stop the slowly emerging conflict between the religions and to create a platform of common interest, where in-depth dialogue could take place in a safe zone. The center, which today has turned into a more academic institution, was initially centered around a number of smaller study-groups, where the same members would meet at regular meetings over several years, thus getting to know each other, and through this process creating an atmosphere of confidentiality and security, making it possible to dig deep into subjects that could never be examined in this way, if it was not in a setting like this.

The Islamic-Christian Study Center in Copenhagen actually was such a great model, that is has become the inspiration for comparable setups in other parts of the World. When setting up a dialogue center of this kind, it is important to remember, that a dialogue does not necessarily strive to reach a goal, as is the case with a negotiation. The dialogue simply aims at providing a platform for exchange of views and ideas, where the partners should be on equal footing, thus creating a space for mutual respect and confidence.

It was often said among members of the dialogue groups at the Islamic-Christian Study Center, that there is nothing wrong in wishing for the others (from the other religion) that they would see the light and truth of the religion, one self holds, but that there should be no attempt to win the other over. The wish should simply be a deeply felt wish in the heart, out of love for the other, but it is crucial that the participants in the dialogue respect the freedom of faith of the other.

Christian-Muslim Dialogue Forum

In 1998 the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church appointed a committee to study the relations of the church with non-Christian religions, Islam in particular. In 2000 the committee published its report, in which it proposed a number of initiatives to develop better relations with Muslims. In 2001 the church set up an organization called "DanChurch Interfaith Relations" (Folkekirke & Religionsmøde) whose main focus initially was on Muslims.

At the height of to the Cartoon Crisis in February 2006, DanChurch Interfaith Relations decided to launch a "listening initiative" among 22 mosques and Muslim organizations representing a wide variety of Muslims in terms of ethnic background, geographical location, religious orientation and size of the groups. The listening team was composed of two Christians and one Muslim. In the letter sent to these groups it was stated that it was important to create "the possibilities for an increased mutual openness and understanding of each other as well as of the future role of religions in the Danish society … Whether we are Christian or Muslim we perceive ourselves as members of a religious community called to serve a God bringing compassion and justice into the world".

The listening team was warmly received by the Muslim leaders who expressed a strong wish to discuss the situation of Muslims in Denmark and the relations between Christians and Muslims. One of the Muslim leaders stated, "*Our basic attitude is to work for dialogue and for the development of our common society. Denmark is also our society.*" Later the same year Christian and Muslim leaders were called together for the first national dialogue conference. In the joint press release issued at the end of the conference it was stated "The conference showed that it is possible for Christians and Muslims to meet in mutual confidence and thus follow another way than that of conflict." One of the participating imams concluded, "*We have to develop a joint forum for dialogue which will contribute solutions to the problems in society*".

Following the first conference a "Christian – Muslim Dialogue Forum" was inaugurated and this forum has ever since organized annual dialogue conferences with 20-25 Muslim and 20-25 Christian leaders, gathering in mosques and churches or in Muslim and Christian schools. The themes of the conferences have been:

- ➲   Neighborhood and Citizenship
- ➲   Religion in Freedom and Freedom in Religion
- ➲   Together in Denmark with Differences and Similarities
- ➲   Self-critique among Christians and Muslims
- ➲   Religious Education

The "Christian – Muslim Dialogue Forum has also been organizing joint study days and joint study tours to Turkey and Egypt, just as it has issued joint statements.

Serious Christians and Muslims in Denmark have realized that regardless of the interests of certain media, opinion makers and politicians, it is of utmost importance that good and cordial relations are nurtured between the societies of believers, because if this is not done, all will become subject to the whims of the drive towards conflict.

The Role of the Media

The media reporting on religion in Denmark can be understood and analyzed on several different levels. Among these *the structural conditions* of economy, media support and legislation regulating media outlets' activities as well as their concrete consequences in form of stability or changes in the media landscape, regarding media diversity etc. Another level of understanding is the *social context* and sentiment regarding religion – and the way it is reflected in political and public debate and in the media as well.

As a consequence of the quite small population there are very few magazines providing news and analysis on political, social or economic issues, and more specialized magazines mainly exist in form of very academic outlets. In the area of religion there exists a few small magazines linked to different Christian denominations, but none of them have a broad distribution among non-members of the church or members with only weak connections to the church. There are a few very small magazines covering Islamic issues and a couple of Internet sites with Islamic content, produced by non-professional volunteers and without traditional journalistic principles as the editorial guideline.

There has so far not been any economic basis for establishing any bigger Muslim or Islamic media outlets although a few attempts have been done. For smaller religious minorities like Catholics,

Buddhists and Hindus there exists no media outlets aimed at the general public.

In general the media coverage of religion is therefore left to the major news media outlets, whose coverage of the issues generally reflects the social context of a secular, Protestant dominated society where the idea of religion as a driving force in politics, ethics or social issues is seen as something alien to the national identity and culture.

Regarding *the social context and sentiment*; the reporting on religion has to be understood in the frame of the religious landscape of Denmark and the conflict areas and political and public discussion on these issues.

Religiously Denmark is dominated by a long standing Christian tradition in the form of Protestantism, with a part separation of state and religion, and a general notion of secularism as an ideal. At the same time the relation between state, nation and Church is not so simple, since the major denomination, The Danish Lutheran Church is state-funded and state-supported, and the more detailed relation between state and church has never been implemented as legal basis in national law. The construction is close to the concept of a state church.

During the last 5 to 10 years there has been a reoccurring debate inside the Danish Lutheran Church itself as well as among politicians and part of the public about the possibility of separating state and church as it has been done in Sweden. The debate has partly been initiated by the fact that several smaller Christian communities, such as Baptists and Catholics have complained about some of the privileges given to the Lutheran Church, claiming that these privileges represent examples of religious and unlawful discrimination, and there has also been attempts to file such complaints by atheists and Muslims.

The fact that Denmark has become more multi-religious, with bigger number of Muslims, Catholics, Evangelical Charismatic Christians of different kinds, Hindus, Buddhists and others seem to have fostered an often heated debate on the position of religion in society as a whole and in the public sphere particularly. Discussions on Muslim headscarves in work places, schools, hospitals and among judges has been covered extensively by most media outlets. In addition, more sensationalist examples of religious fundamentalism and extremism among Muslim youth has been discussed and described in alarmist ways by most media outlets.

Surveys and statistics on religious denominations and opinions on religious issues show that a big, but diminishing majority (around 80%) of the Danish population are still members of the Lutheran Church, whereas the number of Muslims is probably around 300,000. Most members of the Lutheran Church are not regular church goers, but mainly make use of the Church for baptism, weddings and funerals, as well as part of the tradition during Christmas and to a lesser extent around Easter. Very few have a daily religious practice, but a growing number of young people seem to have personal faith, and also more people now than before tend to believe in a personal God.

Among Muslims and especially among Christian immigrants from Africa and Asia and the Middle East the religious identity seems to be much more based on daily religious practices and attendance of religious masses. The growing activity in migrant charismatic Churches has nevertheless not been a subject of public debate of any importance compared to the debate on Islam as a living religion in Denmark.

In the debate on national identity, globalization and religion, the general trend seems to be a connection of 'Danishness' with secularized Protestantism and a part separation of Church and State in form of the 'Danish model'. Very often this 'model' is presented as more 'natural', 'rational' and 'modern' than other models. And the notion of Christianity and Christian values is typically used as synonymous with Protestantism and a 'moderate' worldview. This also means that Catholicism in the broader public generally is perceived as 'not true Christianity', 'old-fashioned' and 'alien' to Denmark, and this might have played a major factor in the media coverage of the supposed 'sex scandal' in the Catholic church.

September 11 and later on also the so called Cartoon crisis (as a consequence of the publication of the infamous Mohammed cartoons by the newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*) fostered a big media interest for Islam in its more extreme forms, and for a couple of years Islam and Muslims was intensively covered from that perspective, adding very little room for the mention of Islamic traditions of pragmatism, social responsibility or spirituality and dialogue.

The last couple of years, though, have seen a more nuanced and conscious covering of Muslims and Islam in the Danish media in general, resulting in a more broad and diverse picture of Islam and Muslims. The general angle on Islam, though, is still a problematic factor in politics; war and terrorism remain the dominant prejudicial views about Islam and thus presents an obstacle to integration into a secular society.

The debate on Islam is still very prominent in Danish media, but there seems to be an agreement amongst most journalists and editors that the audience might not have an interest in a continuation of a massive coverage on this subject.

Possibly as an effect of the negative media focus on Islam, the Danish population is, as compared to other populations of EU countries – more afraid of and negative towards the existence of 'foreign' religions in Denmark, whereas they are not more negative towards Ethnic minorities than many other EU citizens. This might be explained by the fact that most Danes in general consider religion – as a personal conviction and driving force in a person's life – a negative phenomenon.

There are on the other hand signs of a growing interest in spirituality in the loose sense of the word, seen as an alternative to atheism, consumerism and dogmatic formalized and institutionalized religion. Most Danes at the same time have an idea of Hinduism and Buddhism as characterized by exactly such a 'loose' structure, much in contradiction to the actual practices among immigrants with Hindu or Buddhist backgrounds, and that is probably part of the reason why there are rarely any critical articles about practices or traditions in Buddhist or Hindu faith communities.

Tendencies in Christian – Muslim Relations

Seen in an overall perspective, it can be argued that the relations between Christianity and Islam or between Christians and Muslims in Denmark are pointing in two directions simultaneously. Strong forces are at play, attempting to create a clash or a conflict, using every trick in the book to achieve these means. During 2011 a prominent Danish Muslim spokesperson had to press charges against a member of parliament for slander. He eventually won the case. This particular Member of Parliament has been known over the years for her relentless hatred of Islam, and time and again she has lashed out against Islam and Muslim personalities in the public media. Obviously it creates a significant impact, when such high-ranking figures in a society launch attacks on minority groups in the country.

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Many Christians backed the Muslim spokesperson during the process, and a nationwide collection of funds was launched by non-Muslims to help him meet the massive expenses accumulated during the process. The Member of Parliament had her expenses covered by public funds.

But at the same time we see long lasting relations between Muslims and Christians consolidating into regular friendships and joint events of various kinds, the annual meeting of community leaders being just one of the many. Even during Ramadan, it is rather common that Muslims invite Christians of the local community to join in and share meals at the time of breaking fast. So at the same time as there are forces pulling towards a stronger polarization of relations, there are similarly strong forces pulling towards a better common understanding and a will to stand up for and with each other whenever needed. So in spite of Denmark having had the dubious honor of being the pinnacle of right-wing policies in Europe for a decade, and having been the home-ground of the infamous cartoons half a decade ago, it may still be expected that Denmark also can – and hopefully will - be in the forefront when it comes to cordial relations between Muslims and Christians.

Christian-Muslim Relations in Cameroon

AFRICA CHRISTIAN & MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT HELD FROM 8TH TO 13TH JANUARY 2012 IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

<u>Presenter:</u> Rev. Goyek Daga Robert, President of the Council of the Protestant   Churches of Cameroon and President of the EFLC

<u>TOPIC:</u> *A presentation on the state of Muslim-Christian relations in Cameroon: Challenges and Opportunities for collaboration for peace and development.*

Presentation Outline

I-   BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

II-   CURRENT RELIGIOUS SITUATION

III-   CHALLENGES

IV-   POSSIBILITIES / POTENTIALS / OPPORTUNITIES

V-   THE BENEFITS OF DIALOGUE

VI-   THE CURRENT STATE OF CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN CAMEROON.

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of new religions in Cameroon is relatively new compared to some neighbouring countries like (Nigeria and Chad). They came in at different period of times.

I. Brief historical overview of coexistence between Islam and Christianity in Cameroon

a) - Islam

Historically speaking, Islam was the first to be introduced in this territory we now call Cameroon. According to Engelbert Mveng, a Cameroonian historian, it was officially introduced in 1715. However, it should be noted that the Muslim presence was noticed long before that date because of its proximity to the State of Kanem-Bornou, founded since the 11th century. But it was not so until the call for jihad by Ousman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) in the 18th century when the Fulani, who entered peacefully in order to graze their cattle, rebelled and became masters over the natives. Entire tribes and isolated groups followed the new religion, but most of them remained wary because of enmity.

It is the Islam that came from Adamawa, which while wanting to help the king of the Bamoum who was threatened by his neighbours, rooted itself in countries like Bamoun, Vout, Kotopo, Kwandja etc. It was followed several years later by Christianity in the southern part of the country from the 19th century.

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b) – Christianity

Contrary to Islam, which entered from the northern part of Cameroon, Christianity came in from the south through the channel of Protestant Baptists missionary. Indeed Alfred Saker settled in Douala in 1845, more than a century after the Muslim presence in Cameroon. It should be noted here that the Christian religion remained confined to the south of the country. It was not until 1920 before Christianity reached northern Cameroon through Nigeria with the Fraternal Lutheran Mission of the United States under the supervision of the SUM (Sudan United Mission)

II. Current Religious situation

The demographic weight of each of these religions is linked to history. Islam is firmly established in the three northern regions of Cameroon where it entered. Muslims have exported it to the south among the Bamouns, which remains the only ethnic group (in the West) to join massively. It is confirmed that three-quarters of Muslims in Cameroon, according to the latest census published in 2010, are mainly northerners. That Muslim presence has not prevented the emergence of Christian communities scattered here and there throughout the north. While unable to consume entire ethnic groups, Christianity was able to especially root itself in the terrain of traditional religion, which still has under its control a significant number of people. The two religions, if not all three live together peacefully and share the same territorial, socio-economic and political space. This makes them dependent on each other.

III. Challenges

In addition to the groups and clans that these religions share there are mixed families or couples. The management of the city is an issue that involves all the religious tendencies; Muslims, Christians and followers of traditional religion. Thus, there are a number of challenges:

- ❑   Sit down together to talk about our respective faiths
- ❑   Break the barriers that separate us
- ❑   Create a structure (inter-religious Dialogue) that will lead both groups into addressing common issues (health, development, peace) while remaining in their beliefs.
- ❑   Avoid provocative speeches that undermine hard-won peace from the beginning.

IV. The possibilities / potential / opportunities

The presence of different religions in one country, region, city, village, neighbourhood, clan and family is already an asset. The way, although slippery, is apparently prepared to open a frank dialogue between the religious brothers and sisters. The presence of theologians on both sides can be a catalyst. An educational programme on interfaith dialogue in our schools and training institutes can serve as a springboard and thus promote social, economic and political cohesion. The fact that Muslims and Christians invite themselves and assist in joint celebrations: sheep party (**Eid al-Adha)**, Ramadan, baptism, marriage, religious leaders' installation and major events both regionally and nationally is a positive factor. Religious tolerance advocated by the Cameroonian government encourages different religions to see a common vision. History of Cameroon since its inception has not known moment of tension between the followers of Islam and Christianity. The geographical position of Cameroon in Central Africa is a great advantage for the whole of Francophone Africa (Central and West) even Anglophone.

V. The benefits of dialogue.

A good cohabitation between Islam and Christianity leads to a lasting peace which remains the sine qua non condition for sustainable development. This will promote the development of joint projects, joint management of the city and a mutual discovery which will result in a culture of religious tolerance.

VI. The current state of Christian-Muslim Relations

In Cameroon, the structures that govern inter-religious dialogue are still in the embryonic stage. These are mostly occasional meetings at major moments in the life of the nation that bring together two major religions. A movement known as ACADIR (Cameroonians Association for Interreligious Dialogue) is intended to be a structure for inter-religious dialogue, but in reality it is not well known. Its aura is not reflected enough in the area of practice, and its headquarters is in Yaoundé where Islam is not well established as in northern Cameroon.

CONCLUSION

In the world today, Cameroon, despite its multiplicity of ethnic groups, about 300, is a land of peace for all religions. They only need organised meeting structure or dialogue structure especially in the area where Islam has a strong presence. This will enable us to know each other better, to respect one another for the development of our society.

Appendix XVI

The Unique Role of Religion in Civil Society

PRESENTATION ON THE UNIQUE ROLE OF RELIGION IN CIVIL SOCIETY

By Sheikh Abu Bakarr-Conteh,
President;Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone

Opening

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, lord of the worlds, Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. We praise Thee with the best of praises and thank Thee with the best of devotion for sparing our lives and health to be present here to participate in this great assembly and workshop organized by PROCMURA

I also bear testimony that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and Prophet Muhammad is His messenger and the seal of all prophets and messengers of history. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon all of them as well as upon all of us here present.

INTRODUCTION-THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Mr. Chairman, your excellences, Fellow participants, esteemed ladies and gentlemen. The Sierra Leonean delegation in the persons of Bishop Tucker of the Anglican Church, Reverend Moses Khanu, a journalist and my humble self, feel highly honoured to participate in this experience sharing forum. We want to express our profound thanks and appreciation to the PROCMURA team for their invitation and on behalf of the Government and people of Sierra Leone, we want to extend gratitude especially to the Government and our brothers and sisters in this country for their warm reception and hospitality accorded us since our arrival.

THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The concept of civil society has for sometime been a controversial topic in both the academic and political arena.

Some like **Hamdy Hassan** of Cairo University believed that it in fact did not receive the appropriate attention from proponents and opponents as they felt that the concept was rather foreign.

Indeed, the concept civil society has evolved over the years to represent different pictures for different people and society. In the 17th and 18th centuries Europe drew a close link between civil society, law and social contract. There was the separation between the state and church hence politics and religion/tradition.

Mr. Chairman, esteemed participants, you will agree with me that today civil society is right at the heart of the development of the nations of the world. We are those private social organisations and institutions that aim alongside the state to make significant contributions to the development of Africa in every sphere.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to bring out here or highlight a few success stories and some challenges but let me first borrow a statement from Mr. Hamdy Abdul Raham Hassan "*that the existence of a real civil society, independent of both state and family, and based on the concepts of civilization and tolerance, will lead to full integration on all national, regional and continental levels.*" Let me now highlight a few success stories of peace, security and governance as a result of concerted efforts.

You know Sierra Leone is easily recovering from its baseless brutal past with an inclusive effort from the government, civil society and relevant international players including the United Nation. It is a known fact that our hard won peace is still fragile but some space has been made for civil society and non-governmental organisations in peace, security, governance and related sustainable development issues. In spite of all these, the CSOs and NGOs look forward to more room and financial support to enable them make more meaningful contributions in putting the state on the right footing for peace, security and development.

Some Success Stories – Peace, Security and Governance

Civil society partners have been observing elections since 2000 and are determined to have long term observers in place 10 calendar months before the community elections in 2012 and to have observers at every polling station in 2012.

Accountability mechanisms have been strengthened; financial management reforms are underway, corporate governance is also under scrutiny and being discussed.

Gender and Child Right Acts have been enacted. Human Rights are being addressed. New Disability legislation has been enacted. Justice sector and customary law reforms are under way as well as in other sectors. The inclusion of civil society has been enhanced over a period of time, indicative that they have made a mark in the development of the country.

Sierra Leonean artists made commendable contributions to the violence free elections campaign for the 2007 by taking the message of peace and political tolerance throughout the country. They are pursuing again a non-violence campaign for the 2012 elections with many stakeholders taking part.

The civil society has been instrumental in causing some level of improvement in the advancement of women in Sierra Leone as evidenced by women in senior positions in the civil service and other employment. The seat of the Chief Justice is now occupied by a woman. We now have a reasonable number of women in parliament and also as chairpersons and members of Boards of parastatals. The passing of the Three Gender Acts and the Apology of His Excellency, our President Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma to the women of Sierra Leone as mandated by the TRC recommendations went a long way in enforcing the position of women in the country.

The unflinching civil society strides towards development having contributed to the universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention treatment, in addition to impacting on the unification and the strengthening of the health care delivery system.

We all know that civil society groups made up mostly of the youth are crucial to upholding peace and security. A youth Commission Bill has been proposed but it is yet to be fully implemented by government.

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Civil Society groups are involved in monitoring the free health delivery, mobile NGOs are involved in providing free health services to add value to group's initiatives.

The civil society groups in their efforts to create a condusive atmosphere for economic and social development have embarked on monitoring of political parties activities, pockets of political intolerance that can serve as recipes for political violence.

They are also quick to acknowledge that the 2012 elections have potential to be chaotic in the country. Therefore, they have appealed to the UN to initiate serious political engagement prior to the 2012 in order to drastically minimize political and electoral violence.

SOME CHALLENGES

Sierra Leone is still struggling with its fragile state status. A reconciliatory framework is still imperative and the presidential apology to the women of Sierra Leone was a welcome and commendable event. However this needs to be re-emphasized at every level.

Accountability is still a problem; there is a need to strengthen some institutions particularly those capturing revenue on behalf of the government such as NRA, councils and oversight on government procurement processes. Independence of the security sector to freely and fairly protect lives and property before, during and after crises is pivotal for stability.

Youth employment is a critical factor in the run up to the elections; concerns about the potential polarization of the National Youth Commission if allowed would prove to have been a waste of time and resources. It is imperative that the government stands firm for the NYC not to be seen as a political entity.

Civil society is desires to creating a wider civil society monitoring network. The National Election Watch (NEW) has observed that the trend of violence in all recent public elections including by-elections is increasing. Intimidation, intolerance by the political players is strongly resurfacing in election processes and strongly condemns it. These acts of impunity with regards to political violence issues and electoral fraud are undermining efforts to deal with political violence. Therefore, the response by both the police and the court should be strengthened around these issues.

HIV/AIDS has development implications, the prevalence has to drop, we need to draw attention to the national response.

The role of civil society in building and maintaining peace for development has been highlighted in the above activities.

Civil society should be seen as being active in the political, social and economic development of the state. Often however, we tend to miss our steps and give course for people to misunderstand us. When civil society over rallies around issues and our membership begins to swell, thus forming what **C.D. BHATA (Role of Civil Society in Conflict Resolution, see www.nepaldemocracy,org)** refers to as the **THIRD SECTOR** with **NGO's** opening shops for workshops on issues they might not even know much about, then we are in for an identity crisis.

Some even push as far as sharing power in legislatures and accepting positions in governments after they have out-rightly opposed their modes of governing.

THE POSITION OF RELIGION IN CIVIL SOCIETY

As religious bodies, we still sometimes find it even more challenging to find an acceptable place within what is called *CIVIL SOCIETY.*

After the incidents of September 11th and current developments in other parts of Africa like in Nigeria, one senses the difficulty of positioning religion especially within the realm of the Civil Society of today.

Nonetheless, we have seen how responsible theology/religion is contributing to making the world a place worth living. There are instances where protracted and seemingly intractable conflicts are put under control not with bullets and bombs, nor troops of armed soldiers but with the honesty and diligence of Civil Society, especially the religious arm.

My country Sierra Leone is a case in point. In Sierra Leone, it was the *INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL* that initiated the much trusted peace negotiations that helped in concluding the war. The Council was formed in 1996 principally to collectively address uprisings and situations of unrest. The Council had its first National Conference in the following year of its formation, 1997 on *THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE RECONCILIATION, RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION OF SIERRA LEONE.*

During the **Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC),** the **Inter Religious Council of Sierra Leone** made a united statement condemning the violence. This led to the AFRC requesting that the IRCSL serves as a *mediator* between the Junta Leader and the ousted President, Alhaji Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabba. That action from the rebel leaders demonstrated how religious leaders are highly respected and listened to by their followers.

The IRCSL held a two days strategic planning workshop in 1998 to reaffirm its purpose, structure, goals and constitution. We put together intervention strategies and actions in the process of peace building and conflict management. We put out fact finding missions to the conflict affected zones to identify causes of the conflict, observe effects of the conflict and engaged in discussions with those affected.

We then formulated advocacy strategies as we targeted relevant stakeholders of the conflict, dialogued with perpetrators as a way of confidence building and maintained a high level of neutrality. We then embarked on solidarity and pastoral visits to all affected areas to witness the dehumanizing conditions the people were in.

In partnership with Religions for Peace, we put in place education and outreach programmes, training of human rights programmes with components of peace and reconciliation.

In 1999, the IRCSL negotiated with the Rebels to secure the release of over 50 hostages mostly children. The Council was very proactive during the crisis and was instrumental in the attainment of our peace, in the political, social, economic and moral transformation of Sierra Leone.

The IRCSL engaged in what was known as *TRACK ONE DIPLOMACY (Track II Diplomacy should be the name of this interaction where non-state actors come to play, Track I Diplomacy is strictly between state parties or officials of the state)* with the International Community, state and non-state actors, helping to develop a response to a complex emergency with immediate and acute needs.

OFFER

The Council's (IRCSL) efforts were appreciated by the international community and an observer status was initially granted to the Council to all peace talks and then later given full participatory status in all peace negotiations. The Council's active participation led to the **LOME PEACE ACCORD.**

ACTION TO CONSOLIDATE THE PEACE

The Council being inspired by the absolute faith they have in their Lord. He is always with them in their relentless efforts to accomplish their moral responsibility. They embarked on some of the many things that can help people break out of the cycle of trauma and stress such as :

a)   Counselling procedures

b)   Provision of material support

c)   Food and

d)   Spiritual as well as physical healing

The Council was able to let people become aware of the dangers of war and that in any war situation, like in Sierra Leone, there are hardly no true winners and therefore, wars should be avoided in their entirety.

The Council succeeded in its advocacy role to change the perception of the people and was able to let them become nationally more cohesive than ever before. The Council won the sympathy of a lot of international bodies of all shades: **WCRP, AACC and CWS** and others sent us relief items to help rehabilitate and reintegrate our people.

We instituted skills training programmes for making life somehow manageable. The Council played a commendable role in establishing the **TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION** (TRC) and the Council's leadership was appointed as President of the **TRC** IN 2002. The Council maintained humanitarian strategic assistance in areas of active need.

We went on to develop and implement a pilot project in democratization in the town of **TOMBO** in the Eastern outskirts of the capital, Freetown, with representatives of churches and mosques identifying and addressing community needs.

In 2003, the Council took the lead role in social reconstruction including human rights education and multimedia programmes promoting religious tolerance and initiated a one year community based reconciliation project sponsored by UNDP. Recognizing the significant role of our women in building and maintaining peace for development, the Council launched the women's desk in 2003.

The district offices of the Council continued in 2004 in educating people in their respective districts on the TRC and the youth desk was also established. In 2005, the Council inaugurated the **KAMARA MEMORIAL** in the **KONO DISTRICT**, the eastern region of Sierra Leone at a site of atrocities during the conflict. The council organized developmental programmes that helped to heal the wounds such as basic literacy skills, income generating skills, deal with the crisis of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

The Council came into the scene through teaching and campaigns on pulpits and other religious functions to drive home and strengthen the message of peace and development as enshrined in the two main divine scriptures-**THE HOLY BIBLE AND THE HOLY QURAN.**

THE RELIGIOUS BODY of the Civil Society has a much significant role in bringing, building and maintaining peace for development in any nation. It is an undisputable fact that the religious body in Africa has the biggest constituency of all sectors. In fact in Sierra Leone, for any national programmes to gain the expected momentum, the involvement of the religious body is crucial. Hardly is there a community in Sierra Leone and Africa as a whole without a religion and a structure that oversees that religion.

It goes without saying that religious leaders are respected and listened to by their followers. Yet, refute this if you can, in some parts of our sub-region, religious leaders are reduced to offering prayers in big occasions.

Leading prayers is really our duty but the trust and confidence that you have in us as spiritual leaders does not even begin with that. We should be allowed and supported to take the lead in building and maintaining peace in our lovely continent.

When after the guns are silent, the dust is settled, civil society-the religious body will be called upon to preach compassion, forgiveness and mercy. Why will the world not listen to us and give us the opportunity to fight the wars with weapons-the weapon of peace? Why are we always called upon to rebuild lives and not allowed to build them?

In Africa, religion is the biggest civil organisation that has ever existed. It is the most structural and orderly body that we know that spends very little to reach our people with messages (at least in my country). We have the capacity and capability to rebuild citizens' trust in our governments if only we behave as role models in all aspects of life. We should be able to be the **QUDWATU HASSANAH** (**PERFECT ROLE MODEL)** as the exponent of Islam was described as being the **embodiment of the quran-KHOLGOWO AL-QURAN.**

Religious leaders are described to be the inheritors of the prophets-**AL-OULAMAAEU WARATHATU AL-ANNBIYA**. We should be allowed to promote the rights and interest of our people without being misunderstood. We should be allowed to continue our role of holding addressing crisis and resolving conflicts with justice, for we have been commanded by Allah in **Quran 4: Verse 58:**

"Verily, Allah commands that you should render back the trusts to those to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice. Verily, how excellent is the teaching which He (Allah) gives you! Truly, Allah is Ever All-Knower. All-Seer."

Also in **Quran 5: Verse 8:**

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah as just witnesses, and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just that is nearer to piety; and fear Allah, verily, Allah is well-acquainted with what we do."

Appendix XVII

List of Participants

PROGRAMME FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN AFRICA (PROCMURA) PROGRAMME DES RELATIONS ISLAMO-CHRETIENNES EN AFRIQUE (PRICA)

AFRICA CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, January 8th - 13th, 2012

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"Our aim in PROCMURA is to harness our common humanity for peace and not to explore our animality by pushing and shoving and making worse a dire situation."

Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah
General Adviser of PROCMURA

"Ethiopia is the motherland of all Africans. Africans who come to Ethiopia should therefore remember that they have come home. Indeed PROCMURA has brought us home to discuss family issues – issues of peace and development. "

His Eminence Abune Berhaneyesus D. Souraphiel
*Metropolitan Archbishop of Addis Ababa
and President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Ethiopia*

"Boko Haram has now become synonymous and indeed the scapegoat for all sorts of crimes. One cannot therefore bandwagon all incidents of crime and violence in Nigeria under Boko Haram, but rather look at them critically to ascertain what has been carried out by the extremist group and what has been carried out by criminals who claim to be members of the group."

Sheikh Dr. Khalid Abubakar Aliyu
Secretary General of Jama'tu Nasril Islam (JNI)

"PROCMURA by choosing the theme of Peace for Development, has touched on the heart of the matter when it comes to Africa's spiritual and material development. Religious leaders around the continent play important roles in promoting peace and development; this is being recognized by governments, regional bodies and the African continental body, the African Union."

Rev. Iteffa Gobena
*The All Africa conference of churches (AACC) Ecumenical Envoy to the African Union (AU)
and immediate past Chairperson of PROCMURA*

"In countries where religious leaders, have been able to speak with one voice on national issues, political leaders and the citizenry as a whole have acknowledged with respect their moral and prophetic authority to speak to the nation. Such countries are among the most peaceful countries on the continent. "

Most Rev. Dr. Robert Aboagye-Mensah
The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Vice President for West Africa