

PEACE AMONG THE PEOPLE

Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities

Documentation of the second International Interfaith Conference
on Peace and Inclusive Communities

Zanzibar, Tanzania, September 2019

Edited by Kambale J.-B. Kahongya Bwiruka and Jochen Motte

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For Human Rights

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Volume 21

“Peace among the People”

Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities

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Conference on Peace and Inclusive Communities

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PEACE AMONG THE PEOPLE – PREFACE

Under the theme: “Peace among the People. Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities” with particular focus on radicalism and religious extremism, the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) in collaboration with the Zanzibar Interfaith Centre (ZANZIC) organized an interfaith conference in Zanzibar from 20 – 23 September 2019.

Seventy participants, from eleven countries in Africa, Asia and Europe representing Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Buddhist religious communities came together in order, not only to learn from the interfaith context in Zanzibar and to share experiences from interfaith contexts in different countries and regions, but also to discuss strategies¹ and best practices in interfaith action for building peace and inclusive communities.

At the end of the conference a joint message has been released and made public in a peace march at Stone Town on 23 September 2020. Participants, as expressed in this message, believe that God “calls upon... religions to walk hand in hand and to work together as beacons for peace, to establish networking structures and to continue our common interreligious journey for peace and inclusive communities.”² Therefore, representatives from the different religions present at the conference committed themselves to address jointly global injustices and to fight radicalism and violence.

The first conference under the same theme “Peace among the People. Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities” took place in Germany in 2017 and the documentation is available.² With the second interfaith gathering in Zanzibar, the pilgrimage for Justice and Peace was continued. The message and the contributions from the conference are published in this documentation.

The UEM expresses special thanks to the Interfaith Centre Zanzibar (ZANZIC), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania / Eastern Coastal Diocese (ELCT-ECD), the Catholic Diocese of Zanzibar, the Anglican Church of Zanzibar, the Waqf and Trust Commission of Zanzibar, the Mufti’s Office of Zanzibar, the government of Zanzibar and all Members of the Preparatory Committees who made it possible that the conference could take place peacefully and successfully.

1 *Message of peace for people of all faiths*, the paragraph 6 “Our common call for peaceful collaboration”.

2 Rathgeber T. & Motte J., *Peace among the People. Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities. Documentation of the International and Interfaith Conference on Peace and Inclusive Communities*, Wuppertal, Germany, 13-16 July 2017.

It is our hope that through this conference and its message, interfaith actors for peace and inclusive communities may be strengthened. In a globalized world where common challenges – as the Corona virus pandemic (COVID-19) made it obvious in 2020 – affect all of humans wherever they live and whatever religion they follow, faith based people have to work and act together to protect and to save lives.

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MESSAGE OF PEACE FOR PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS

Preamble: Peace among the people

Message from the Interfaith Conference, hosted by the Zanzibar Interfaith Centre (ZANZIC) and the United Evangelical Mission in Zanzibar on 20–23 September 2019.

We, 70 participants from 11 countries in Africa, Asia and Europe, representing Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Buddhist religious communities, gathered in Zanzibar on 20–23 September 2019. We experienced the hospitality of the people of Zanzibar. We encountered the traces of different religious traditions that have existed on the island over centuries and we saw these traces in the contemporary interfaith activities initiated by our hosts at the Zanzibar Interfaith Centre.

We were encouraged on our interfaith journey for peace by the Second Vice-President Ambassador Seif Ali Iddi, who represented the Government of Zanzibar during the opening session.

From our different contexts, we shared our experiences with the various threats that extremism and violence pose to our societies and we discussed how we could jointly act to build peaceful and inclusive communities in the world. We also shared the message from the conference with the public in a march for peace.

1. The 'Zanzibar spirit' of learning together

We learnt that people belonging to different faiths – Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and local religions – have coexisted peacefully in Zanzibar for at least five hundred years. They support one another in times of joy and sorrow. The government recognises and grants freedom of worship to the people of all religions. The intra- and inter-faith dialogue in Zanzibar is a good example of pluralistic cooperation that can be used elsewhere to promote peace among people who practise different religions. Another good example is the Zanzibar Interfaith Centre, which offers a diploma in interfaith education and conducts interfaith seminars on peaceful coexistence and on entrepreneurship for women and the youth. We commit ourselves to promote interfaith dialogue and joint social action in pursuit of peace and development.

2. Our common belief in unity

Although we are people of different faiths, together we believe that God (and *dhamma* in Buddhism) unites us and transcends all that may separate us from each other. This higher power calls upon us and empowers us to overcome violence together and to live out the potential for peace in our respective religions, nurturing a society without exclusion.

We have shared, on the one hand, stories about religious communities using violence against others and stories about religious communities protecting each other from violent attacks by religious extremists on the other. We commit ourselves to make sure that the unity and solidarity among people who belong to different religions is maintained through good relations, dialogue, seminars, consultations and joint socio-economic action for promoting peace and alleviating poverty.

3. Our common position on injustice

We have realised that injustice is a universal experience. We are aware that religious followers are often involved in fomenting injustice. However, as people who follow different religions, we strongly believe that Almighty God is a God of justice. God imbues human beings with dignity. The various forms of injustice and violence that cause suffering to human beings and the rest of creation are neither the fate of the people nor the will of God. The injustices prevalent in our present world include human rights violations such as slavery, human trafficking, forced labour (including child labour) and xenophobic attacks against migrants and refugees. These problems are largely due to poverty and exploitation. The root causes of these problems are systemic injustices fuelled by the greed of the people in power, who tend to manipulate others and exploit nature and people for their own benefit. Religion is often used to justify injustice and to legitimise violent acts, thus making the problems even more complicated. In many instances, injustice triggers acts of radicalism.

As people of faith, we commit ourselves to work together and in cooperation with all people of goodwill so as to overcome the various injustices that destroy communities and have the potential to extinguish life on this planet. One thing that many religions have in common is the doctrine that each person is special in the eyes of the Creator. This doctrine needs to be underlined so that we may respect our fellow human beings as our brothers and sisters, whatever their ethnicity, culture or religion. This must be cultivated in families, schools, places of worship, communities, the professional environment and the public

sphere, and should be reflected in the structure of society. We the people of faith commit ourselves to care for others and to share our resources with our fellow human beings and with all creation. We understand our special responsibility to children and the youth.

4. Our common observation on conflict potential

We experience conflicts of different forms in different parts of the world. We, therefore, believe that there is a need for just power-sharing among all communities and a need to address the various religious agitations generated by the inequitable distribution of resources and by economic, social and political marginalisation. We commit ourselves to enlighten children and the youth through the school system and through various forms of religious education on interfaith relations. We will also use the media to bring the interfaith message against radicalism to young people.

5. Our common call for peace

We have shared impressive liberating experiences from Sri Lanka, where victims of religiously motivated violence were empowered to react to the violence they had suffered with forgiving love, instead of taking revenge on the perpetrators. In a very existential way, they related their inner suffering and pain to their deep religious source of hope in God. This gave them a healing process that included both professional trauma healing and an insistence on the legal accountability of the government. We have learnt that the deepest source of our common call for peace is not only our affirmation of the moral values we have in common, but also our experience in our respective religions of God's power for healing and forgiveness.

Trusting in the reconciling, transformative and encouraging power of God, together we commit ourselves:

- to discover and share these deep experiences of the liberating and reconciling power of God in our religions, and through this to strengthen and deepen our common call for peace and its impact on people's lives.
- to encourage people of different faiths to cross borders through encounters, dialogue and bridge-building, and thus treat the religious convictions of others with respect and talk about each other in a positive and peace-building way.

6. Our common call for peaceful collaboration

God calls upon our religions to walk hand in hand and to work together as beacons of hope and peace, to establish networking structures and to continue our common interreligious journey for peace and inclusive communities. We commit ourselves to establish interfaith training centres where the youth, clergy and people of all faiths can study each other's religions together. Platforms and activities for young people belonging to different faiths need to be strengthened so that young people can work together to establish networks of cooperation for promoting peace and justice in the world.

We call upon all people of faith and goodwill to join us on our journey for peace and inclusive communities. May the 'Zanzibar spirit' spread throughout the world and encourage us to proceed on our common journey together.

I.

**GENERAL
INTRODUCTION**

INTRODUCTION

Kambale J.-B. Kahongya Bwiruka

The second interfaith conference, which focused on *religious radicalisation*, was held in Zanzibar from 20 to 23 September 2019 and drew 70 participants from 11 countries in Africa, Asia and Europe (Zanzibar and Mainland Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, Cameroon, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Germany and Israel). These participants represented Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Buddhist religious communities. The conference was a kind of follow-up to the first interreligious peace conference which was held in Wuppertal, Germany, in July 2017, and which dealt with the interreligious aspects of peace and inclusivity. It also focused on how religious actors in different societies might contribute to holding states accountable in promoting, protecting and fulfilling human rights and human dignity.¹

The choice of Zanzibar Island was made deliberately. The population on the island is overwhelmingly Muslim. However, several religious communities not only coexist peacefully, but also have collaborated in building peace for more than five centuries. If at times there have been circumstances that have almost jeopardised this peaceful coexistence on the island, the government has, however, adopted regulations to promote and maintain peaceful collaboration of all inhabitant from various religions in Zanzibar. In the same vein, religious leaders have established the *Zanzibar Interfaith Centre*, which is a tool for promoting interfaith dialogue and mutual learning. The centre receives members of all the communities on the island. To meet their economic needs, they learn sewing and other artwork. But for peaceful religious cohabitation, learning is also about discovering the richness of other people's religions. This centre is a visible tool for interfaith pacification and for the socio-economic and professional empowerment of young girls, women and other people.

The conference also aimed to assess how far the participants of the first conference had gone in promoting inclusive communities in their respective communities, what progress had been made since 2017 and which challenges they had been facing since then. The results are unequivocal. According to the reports from the three continents – Europe, Asia and Africa – local and regional initiatives have been taken by religious leaders to act and to bring together different

1 Rathgeber T., & Motte J., *Peace among the People*, 2017, *Op. Cit.* p. 9.

religious forces, not only to prevent, but also to manage conflicts of religious nature. Collaborative initiatives by religious leaders and political actors were also mentioned as a successful experience, as it was envisioned at the Wuppertal conference. The handling of the recent conflict in Sri Lanka, where religious leaders, political actors, judicial officers and psycho-clinical teams worked together in dealing with the violence that plagued the country after the terror attack on churches during a service on Easter Sunday on the 21st April 2019 is one of the successful stories.

Moreover, the focus of the Zanzibar conference – *radicalism and religious extremism* – gave the participants an opportunity to understand better this phenomenon, which is threatening the peace, tranquillity and cohesion of peoples in the world. It will be remembered, for example, that the conflict in Syria, which began as peaceful demonstrations for democracy and socio-economic change in 2011, in the context of the Arab Spring, gradually turned into an armed rebellion and into a war with religious overtones in 2014.

In fact, politically, the war in Syria opened doors to several foreign fighting powers to get involved in the conflict. Considering that chaos in a religious perspective, it appears that the Organisation of the Islamic State, which was



gradually build up through several waves of fighting groups, tried to establish caliphates throughout the Middle East. Indeed, the socio-political context was favourable for that adventure, because after the demolition of the states of Afghanistan and Iraq in the previous years, the war in Syria was too much for that region. Surprisingly, the Islamic State has received supporters and fighters from European countries. French, German and other European citizens – men and women, both young people and adults – crossed the borders to fight on the side of the Islamic State. Although it might surprise everyone, it should be remembered that, by the beginning of the Syrian war in 2011, many fighters had already joined the Free Syrian Army in order to fight the regime of Bashar el-Assad. These fighters were supported by some European countries, Middle Eastern states and the USA. However, the drastic change in 2014, which turned the political war into an almost religious war, has been a big challenge.

Therefore, in the European context, many questions were raised on how European citizens could have been so easily radicalised and on who contributed to radicalise them. The reasons for the radicalisation of people in European countries which are ruled using democratic principles are also highlighted. On the social level, people have begun to express serious concerns about the effectiveness of the social integration of immigrants, the educational systems and the acceptance of Islam in Europe. Politically moreover, people point to the populist and anti-migratory discourses. On the religious level, a question is asked about the Islamisation of Europe, but more importantly about the nature of the inter-religious dialogue involving religious leaders, especially Christians and Muslims.

In this situation, Israel finds itself in another configuration. After the painful experience of the Shoah and the creation of the Israeli state in the Middle East, Israel is often perceived as a threat by some of her neighbours. Israel herself sees the creation of her state as a guarantee for their refuge and unity. But, for some of the Jewish people, this unity does not include necessarily Israeli Arabs. Similarly, if the Jewish appreciate the creation of their state, only some of them consider this act to have a religious character and, therefore, they suggest that the Israeli state should develop principles of a religious state. Other Jewish advocate however, for the separation between religion and state.

Even though the Zanzibar conference cannot solve the political problems of states, it tries to propose a basis for sincere, interfaith dialogue between various actors in each region in the world so as to achieve peace.

With respect to the Asian continent, we have realised that religious radicalism has reached the family level. This is illustrated in the terror attack that was carried out in Surabaya, Indonesia, in May 2018. In that attack an entire family with four children under the age of 18 were blown up by bombs in Christian

places of worship. With this event, it became obvious that religious radicalisation is no longer just a man's business. Instead, people of all ages and all genders are involved in it.

In this regard, Africa is no exception. Many female terrorists – members of the Boko Haram terrorist movement – have been blown up by explosive belts in West Africa. The terrorist acts carried out by women and children have changed the traditional image of women and children, who used to be seen as innocent victims of male manipulation and violence. Women and children have become perpetrators of violence in the name of religion. This terrible active participation of women and children can no longer leave religious actors indifferent. Indeed, religious actors are wondering about the causes of the radicalisation of people of all ages and all genders.

For this reason, the Zanzibar conference considered carefully different suggestions to handle the situation in the local, regional, continental and global contexts. But also, owing to the upsurge of violence against religious officials, the participants expressed their commitment to peace, emphasising on the promotion of peaceful values in each religious organisation.

FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OF INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS IN ZANZIBAR

Gaudence Peter Mushi

1. Introduction

Zanzibar is made up of two sister Islands, namely Unguja and Pemba. The population of Zanzibar is about 1.6 million. The population consists of Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Bahi'as and followers of other minority faiths.

In 1890, only a few years after the Berlin conference, Zanzibar became a British protectorate and gained independence from Britain in December 1963 as a constitutional monarchy, with the Sultan as the head of state. However, the bloody Zanzibar Revolution, which occurred a month later and in which a number of Arabs and Indians were killed or expelled from the islands, resulted in the establishment of the Republic of Zanzibar. On 26 April 1964, the Republic merged with Tanganyika to form the United Republic of Tanzania, of which Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous part.

For centuries, the islands of Zanzibar and the whole of the East Coast of Africa were virtually an Arab world, from which the trade in slaves and ivory serviced much of the Middle East.

This area grew to so much importance that, in the 1830s, the Sultan of Oman moved his capital city from Muscat in Arabia to Zanzibar. The remains of their palaces are still present on the island, and Zanzibar is a majority Muslim island to this day.

2. The Augustinian missionaries (Portuguese): 1499–1698

Christianity was first introduced into Zanzibar by the Portuguese. Moving up from the south after successfully rounding the Cape of Good Hope in 1488, Portugal became the first European power to gain control of the islands in 1499. For the next 200 years, Christianity would remain on the islands.

The fortress near the harbour in Zanzibar Stone Town (Old Fort) is a site of an earlier Catholic chapel which was built by the Augustinian missionaries.

Reference is made in John Baur's *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa* to an Augustinian Friar in Zanzibar who "enjoyed the friendship of the Sultan."

Augustinian archives refer to Zanzibar as “the most fruitful mission centre.” East Africans associated these Friars with service to the Portuguese traders and military personnel. Whatever else the Augustinian Friars’ activities might have been, all came to an abrupt end when the Sultan of Oman attacked Zanzibar in 1650, killing many of the foreigners, including the Friars. In 1698, Zanzibar fell under the control of Saif bin Sultan, the imam and Sultan of Oman; this brought to an end Portuguese control of the islands. Therefore, Zanzibar became an increasingly important part of the Oman Empire, and from 1837 onwards Sa’id ibn Sultan made it his main place of residence. He built impressive palaces and gardens in Zanzibar. After his death in 1856, Zanzibar was separated from the Oman Empire, because his son, Majid, succeeded him in Zanzibar and in other parts of the Coast of East Africa, while his rival brother, Thuwaini bin Saïd, inherited Muscat and Oman. Although Majid consolidated his power around the local slave trade during his 14 years of reign as Sultan, his successor, Barghash bin Saïd, helped abolish the slave trade and largely developed the country’s infrastructure.

Meanwhile, after the Portuguese retreat, only a few Goan Christians remained on the islands. They had neither a church nor priests, but maintained their community through private devotions.



The Sultan allowed people of all faiths to conduct religious services as they saw fit. Religious freedom was guaranteed and people who belonged to different faiths interacted unhindered.

The influx of Westerners into Zanzibar began to include the occasional passing missionaries and the clergy from the ships that anchored in the harbour. In 1844, more permanent Christian missionaries arrived in East Africa, i.e. the Lutheran minister Joseph Krapf and his two companions who were working for the English Church Missionary Society. Based in Mombasa, they visited Zanzibar and over the next few years produced an excellent Kiswahili dictionary. However, they never established a church in Zanzibar.

3. The Capuchins: 1857–1858

In 1857, the Vicar Apostolic to the Gallas, Guglielimo Maasaja, sent two Capuchins to Zanzibar so that they could establish a church there. The first Capuchin to come to Zanzibar was Gabriele da Rivalta. However, da Rivalta aroused the suspicions of Sultan Majid through his questions about the mainland and had to leave the island soon after the Sultan withdrew his “Letters of Introduction” to local chiefs on the mainland, even though the letters had already been given to him.

He was followed by Leon des Avanches who, it seems, had done some research on pastoral possibilities, because, in March 1858, he told Propaganda Fide that Zanzibar could be a starting point for missionary work in East Africa.

Later that year, Des Avanches also had to leave the island as a result of a political incident with the Sultan. In May 1858, Des Avanches bought a slave girl at a market in Zanzibar; he was accompanied by an American called Greer, a captain of a ship from Reunion. He baptised the girl and gave her to the wife of a slave dealer who wanted to send the girl to Greer’s sister. Des Avanches was accused of violating anti-slavery treaties. His passport and consular protection were withdrawn, which led to his expulsion from Zanzibar.

4. Lasting Christian missionaries in Zanzibar: 1860 to the present

In 1860, Sultan Seyyid Majid permitted three priests and six nuns from the diocese of Reunion – a French Island in the Indian Ocean – to begin work in Zanzibar. He offered them support in their work of looking after the sick and the poor, as well as in teaching their converts useful kinds of trade.

Two years later, the Bishop of Reunion entrusted the mission to the Spiritans and, the following year, Frs Anthony Horner and Edward Baur arrived in Zanzibar.

When Msgr Armand-Joseph Fava, a Spiritan and Vicar General of Bishop Maupoint, came to Zanzibar in 1860, he was greeted warmly by Sultan Majid, who was being accused by the Arabs of destroying the economy by signing the treaties for abolishing slavery.

From the very beginning, Msgr Fava had a vision of what the mission should be. His plan was to emphasise agricultural and industrial work and his explanation of this plan raised a lot of expectations for establishment of workshops and training of craftsmen. This attracted the Sultan, who gave his full support to Msgr Fava. Because Msgr Fava had refused the recruitment of ex-slaves for Reunion, he won the trust of all parties. By not seeking to expand the Church into the interior, he also gained the confidence of the Sultan. The Arabs seemed friendly and the Sultan paid frequent visits to the mission station.

In 1863 when the Spiritans took over the mission station, they followed Msgr Fava's plans to ransom slaves, educate them and, later, convert some of them to Christianity.

5. Sultan Seyyid Majid bin Said (1856–1870)

Sultan Seyyid Majid gave his full support to the Spiritan missionaries in their efforts “to look after the sick, to nourish the poor and to teach them useful trades” (Zanzibar Journal). In 1868, he gave Fr Anthony Horner a suitable compound for starting the ‘Christian Freedom Village’ for the ransomed ex-slaves. The Bagamoyo Journal often referred to him as “[o]ur good friend.”

6. Sultan Seyyid Bargash bin Said (1870–1888)

On 21 July 1875, on the invitation of Fr Antony Horner, Sultan Bargash paid an official visit to the headquarters and mother's house of the Spiritan missionaries in Paris, France. He was warmly welcomed by the Superior General, Fr Schwindenhammer. Through his visit, Sultan Bargash demonstrated his close relations to the Spiritan missionaries of Zanzibar and Bagamoyo.¹

1 L.A. Ricklin, *La mission catholique du Zanguebar: travaux et voyages du R.P. Horner, missionnaire de la congrégation du St. Esprit et du St. Cœur de Marie, Vice-préfet apostolique du Zanguebar, Membre honoraire correspondant de la Société royale de géographie de Londres*, Gaume & Cie, 1880, [Harvard University, 2008].

Sultan Bargash built much of the infrastructure in Zanzibar (especially Stone Town) such as piped water, telegraph cables, the Bububu railway, buildings and roads. He made a huge contribution to the ultimate abolition of the slave trade in Zanzibar by signing an agreement with Britain in 1870. The edict he signed made the sea-borne slave trade illegal and the slave market in Mkunazini, which later became the property of the Anglican Cathedral, was shut down in June 1873.

The history of the Anglican Cathedral in Mkunazini began after Dr Livingstone's expeditions in East and Central Africa between 1853 and 1856. He made strong speeches against slavery and the slave trade whereby he wished to change the uncivilised and dark lives he saw in his expeditions. He also reported about wars among ethnic communities, the slave trade and the ivory trade and all other evil events he saw and the need for missionaries in East and Central Africa. The society of University Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) was formed 1860 so that it could stop the slave trade and spread the gospel of Jesus Christ in this part of Africa. The first group of UMCA missionaries, led by Bishop Charles Fredrick Mackenzie, arrived in Central Africa in 1861, not in Zanzibar but in the Shire highlands, which is today Malawi. Charles Mackenzie became head of the University Mission to Central Africa in 1860 and was consecrated bishop in Cape Town one year later. He is the first missionary bishop in Nyasaaland (now Malawi) and was called the Missionary Bishop of Central Africa. In 1861, he sailed up the Rivers Zambezi and Shire with a small group to start work in the region, but he died of malaria in 1862.²

The land of the former slave market in Mkunazini was acquired by the missionaries in September 1873 and the cathedral was erected from December 1873 to 1880 by Bishop Edward Steere. After his death, Bishop Charles Allan Smithies succeeded him; he became the first bishop of the UMCA to be called the Bishop of Zanzibar.

The Khoja Ismail Moslem Sewa Haji Paroo had deep roots in his Moslem faith. However, he was also friendly with the Spiritan missionaries. Beginning in 1877, he outfitted their caravans to new places in the interior. While in France in 1889, he was warmly received by the General Superior, Fr Ambrose Emmonet. In his last will of 6 November 1896, he identified Fr Etienne Baur as first trustee. He bequeathed to the Spiritans a substantial amount of money so that they could do charitable work.

² Charles Mackenzie (Bishop) in [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Mackenzie_\(bishop\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Mackenzie_(bishop)), consulted on 23/05/2020.

RECENT EXPERIENCE AND CHALLENGES OF INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONS IN ZANZIBAR

Lusungu Mbilinyi

1. Introduction

Interreligious relations in Zanzibar during the beginning of the millennium were both very positive and constructive on the one hand, and very negative and destructive on the other. The relationship between people was affected by various economic, social, political and global factors. It is important to note that when it came to factors that negatively influenced interreligious relations, theology played a very limited role, and when it came to conflicts, religious affiliation was used as a mobilising tool for pushing a non-religious agenda. In other words, religion was instrumentalised. However, being aware of the instrumentalisation of religion, religious leaders had purposefully used their theological understanding to build a resilient society, promote interreligious co- and pro-existence in the archipelago.

In this paper, I highlight the various economic, social/cultural, political and global developments that contributed to the tense interreligious relations in Zanzibar and highlight the practical and theological responses that religious leaders in Zanzibar had taken to ease the tension. I also talk about the different challenges that were encountered during the journey and highlight the lessons that can be learnt from the Zanzibar experience.

2. Economic factors influencing interreligious relations in Zanzibar

Historically, Zanzibar was once a very rich island. The riches of Zanzibar came mainly from trading and from the growing of various kinds of spices, especially cloves (this is the reason why Zanzibar is also called the Spice Islands).

With respect to trading, Zanzibar was the main trade hub for slaves from the interior of East and Central Africa, copper from Katanga, gold from as far as Sofala and forest products such as bee wax and ivory in the pre-colonial era. With colonialism and the distribution of the African hinterland among Euro-

pean powers and the abolition of the slave trade in 1887, Zanzibar was left with one major economic activity, i.e. agriculture.

The agriculture sector in Zanzibar was mainly dominated by the production of spices, which had high prices and high demand throughout the world. The main spice was clove, which was introduced into Zanzibar in about 1818. At the beginning of the 20th century, Zanzibar was producing about 90% of the total cloves in the world. Since independence in 1963, clove was the major source of foreign currency for the Zanzibar population. However, the aging of clove trees, price fluctuations and stiff competition from Indonesia, Madagascar and Sri Lanka resulted in a decline of the income from clove. Zanzibar had to quickly find an alternative economic activity. The natural alternative activity became tourism. Given Zanzibar's beauty, conducive weather, rich history and strategic location, the tourism industry has become the most profitable income-generating activity on the island.

However, owing to the fact that the majority of the population were Muslims and because of the nature of the tourism industry, especially the kind of tourists that are attracted to Zanzibar, it became difficult for the local population to participate in the industry. Tourism involved selling alcoholic beverages, working in an environment where women are not dressed according to Islamic and Zanzibari¹ cultural norms (female beach tourists walk on the beach dressed in bikinis, which contradict Islamic teachings and Zanzibari culture). Even the souvenirs which are sold to tourists are viewed by some imams as shrik (ascribing partners to God, art that mimics or tries to recreate something that God has created is viewed by some imams as a way of elevating oneself to the position of God).

As a result of the local population's avoidance of the tourism industry, the majority of people who worked in the industry came from Mainland Tanzania, especially from Arusha and Kilimanjaro. This is due to the fact that these areas already had experiences with the tourism industry, since they have famous tourist attractions, among them two of the seven world natural wonders, namely the Ngorongoro Crater and Mount Kilimanjaro. The other workers in the tourism industry came from Kenya.

The majority of those who worked in the tourism industry were Christians, owing to the fact that most of the people in Kilimanjaro and Arusha are Christians. Because the tourism industry became the main source of foreign currency and the fastest growing economic activity in the archipelago and because other economic activities like agriculture and fishing, although they employ the ma-

1 Zanzibari is used to refer to which belong to Zanzibar (inhabitants, assets, culture and traditions).

majority of the population, were declining in terms of the total revenue they generate, the income inequality between the Christian migrants and the Muslim indigenous people started to become apparent, and this did not happen without any resentment from the indigenous people.

3. Social/cultural factors influencing interreligious relations in Zanzibar

Zanzibari culture and social life are a product of almost a millennium of melt-down of cultures from all over the dhow countries (countries around the Indian Ocean which were connected by the Monsoon winds trade) and the East African coast. There is also some Portuguese influence in Zanzibar, since it was colonised by Portugal for about 200 years, and British influence owing to the fact that Zanzibar became a British protectorate during the scramble for and partition of Africa. However, the strongest influence in the organisation of the social and cultural life of Zanzibar is probably that of Omani Arabs. This lies in the fact that there is a long connection between Zanzibar and Oman, and Stone Town was even the capital of Oman. Many Zanzibaris have families in Oman, and there are many back-and-forth visits between Zanzibar and Oman.

Arabic culture is highly influenced by the Islamic religion, to which more than 90% of the population belong. These long-standing ties with the Arab



world have made many cultural practices, which are often ascribed to Islam, to be considered as normal practices, even by indigenous Christians (mainly Roman Catholics and Anglicans). The practices include things like the wearing of hijab by women, the learning of Arabic in Madrasa, having names that are often considered to be Muslim (the former Anglican Bishop of Zanzibar was called Bishop John Ramadhan and the current one is called Bishop Michael Hafidh).

However, the case is quite different when it comes to the Christian population that migrated to the islands from the mainland. Many practices that seem normal to even indigenous Zanzibar Christians are considered strange or Islamic by the migrant Christians. It is difficult for the majority Muslim population to understand this 'new Christian trend' because they're used to seeing a different kind of Christianity.

4. Political factors

In 1964 Zanzibar merged with Tanganyika to form Tanzania. In this union, Zanzibar maintained a part of its autonomy. In spite of the benefits that both parts of the union enjoy, the union faces certain challenges. The challenges include, but are not limited to, the sovereignty of Zanzibar, Zanzibar's place in Tanzania's foreign policy, trade policies that seem restrictive to Zanzibar and the distribution of funds from various sources of government revenue.

The question of sovereignty, for example, became a hot debate in 2008 when the then Prime Minister of Tanzania, Mizengo Pinda, said during a parliamentary session that Zanzibar was not a state.² Although this statement resonates with the thinking of some Tanzanians, it's contrary to the self-understanding of Zanzibaris.

The question of sovereignty also arose along with the question of international policy in 1992 when Zanzibar joined the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) without consulting with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania. The end-result was that Zanzibar withdrew from OIC, since OIC accepts countries which have full sovereignty. However, the reaction of the Union Government steered up a discussion as to what extent Zanzibar, as a semi-autonomous nation, can get involved in international affairs.

Being an island with limited land resources, Zanzibar concentrated on tourism and trading as economic activities alternative to agriculture. Given the challenges facing the agriculture sector mentioned earlier and the social, cultural and religious restrictions for the local population to engage in the tourism

2 In Kiswahili: Zanzibar sio Nchi, in the sense of independent state.

industry, the major economic activity for many indigenous Zanzibaris became trade. However, taxation and the trade policies made by the Union Government were deemed as unfavourable for Zanzibar.

In 2011, the Union Government started a constitutional review process which involved collecting views from the public on what the new constitution should look like. This opened a Pandora's Box of grievances against the union itself in Zanzibar to the extent of the union being regarded as a new form of colonialism. People from the mainland were considered as black colonialists and there was hate speech against them. The fact that the mainlanders were associated with Christianity led to anti-Christian rhetoric which, with the time, translated into physical violence against Christians, Christian places of worship and the religious leaders, both Christian and Muslim, who were against hate speech and violence.

5. Religious leaders' response to interreligious tensions in Zanzibar

The response of religious leaders to the interreligious tensions in Zanzibar was ambivalent. It was destructive in the sense that sometimes it led to more tensions, on the one hand, and it was constructive, in the sense that religious leaders tried to understand the sources of tensions and to find a proper way to deal with the problem, on the other.

Considering the destructive engagement of religious leaders in interreligious tensions, it is important to mention that there were religious leaders on both sides who saw in the above-mentioned economic, social, cultural and political situation an opportunity to broaden their religious influence. Such religious leaders used divisive rhetoric to portray the religion of the other as an enemy of their own religion and portrayed themselves as heroes against the enemy. In addition, the negative, divisive rhetoric included saying things like the ruling party, Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), was a Christian Crusade Movement and, therefore, anti-Islamic, or that the main opposition party, the Civic United Front (CUF), had an anti-Christian, Islamic agenda. This dangerous, divisive rhetoric instigated fear, hatred and mistrust among people following different religions.

As if this was not enough, various kinds of rhetoric from the international media, especially social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and various online-based imams, tele-evangelists and preachers were used to spread hatred and instigate violence against people who followed other religions. Not all these preachers came from Zanzibar; most of them were not even talking

about Zanzibar, but their teachings were contextualised and spread by the local preachers on the ground.

Furthermore, visiting preachers and teachers from the mainland went to Zanzibar and stayed there for a short period, teaching their versions of Christianity or Islam, which in many ways were completely out of context and disruptive to the harmonious living in Zanzibar.

Generally speaking, in the assessment of Muslim and Christian leaders at various levels, the teachings that were used to divide people in Zanzibar did not have a theological basis, in many cases. And even if they had a theological basis, it was a theology which, in the best-case scenario, was built on a poor theological understanding or completely wrong and unacceptable interpretations of the revelation entrusted to the respective religions.

Thus, in 2005, religious leaders decided to form the Interreligious Committee for Peace and Tranquillity in Zanzibar. For about 15 years, this committee has been in cooperation with Caritas Tanzania, Norwegian Church Aid, Danmission, the Church of Sweden, the Danish Embassy in Dar es Salaam, the Norwegian Embassy in Dar es Salaam, the Canadian Embassy Dar es Salaam, the Zanzibar Interfaith Centre, the United Evangelical Mission and other stakeholders. They have taught and campaigned for peaceful coexistence and proexistence in Zanzibar. The committee has condemned poor or wrong interpretations of the Holy Scriptures which support or propagate violence. The committee has also trained imams, pastors, madrasa and Sunday school teachers, the youth and youth leaders, law enforcement and security personnel, parliamentarians and politicians in the importance of peace and peaceful coexistence, the importance of not politicising and instrumentalising religion, how to recognise and fight dangerous religious interpretations and the concept of freedom of religion and belief.

To make sure that the younger generation is not left out, the Youth Interfaith Forum of Zanzibar was formed, with generous support from Danmission, Norwegian Church Aid, the Church of Sweden and the United Evangelical Mission. Furthermore, to enable women to take part in interfaith encounters as well, Upendo Women Empowerment was formed; it's a non-profit interfaith company that brings together Christian and Muslim women and gives them life skills, credit and sewing skills. Furthermore, a women's desk was established at the Zanzibar Interfaith Centre.

On the academic side, a study centre was established at the Zanzibar Interfaith Centre. It conducts research, provides studying opportunities for researchers, publishes training materials, organises academic meetings and conferences and trains, in collaboration with Tumaini University Dar es Salaam College, practitioners in intercultural relations.

It should be noted that the seminars, workshops and training given to various groups had a very strong theological basis. Various social issues were raised and dealt with by respected Christian and Muslim theologians, who used their traditions to tackle the issues.

6. Conclusion

Although at the beginning of this millennium interreligious relations in Zanzibar faced many challenges and the picture painted by the international as well as the national media was that of church burning, religious leaders being shot at or being attacked with acid, hate speech and instigated violence, the factors behind these actions was not theologically justified. Instead, economic, social, cultural and political factors that steered up grievances and corrupt, religious leaders used religion to steer up violence for their own political gain. The coming together of religious leaders on the Joint Committee of Religious Leaders for Peace and Tranquillity has helped to reverse the situation, build a strong bond and solidarity among followers of different religions, respect for freedom of worship and belief and promote constructive religious engagements.





II.

**INTERRELIGIOUS ACTION
FOR PEACE
AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES –
OPENING AND WELCOME**

Address

by Alex Gehaz Malasusa

Honourable Ambassador Seif Ali Iddi, the Second Vice-President
of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar
Distinguished guests,
Fellow participants,
Peace be upon you!

Let me take this opportunity to thank Almighty God for giving us the time to congregate in this wonderful gathering in the name of peace to all people!

I thank you most sincerely, Vice-President, for agreeing to grace this important event.

In this regard, I would also like to thank the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar for accepting and allowing us to hold this conference here in Unguja. I can say confidently, on behalf of our guests, that they have enjoyed the hospitality of the people of Zanzibar and that they will continue to enjoy it. I thank you in particular for allowing all the participants on the island. This was the first sign of the success of this conference.

Dear Guest of Honour, peace is a precious gift which God has given humanity. The main purpose of this conference is to remind ourselves of the importance of peace and our responsibility for keeping peace. History and experience show that, when religions are used to disturb peace, humanity suffers much, because we lack the time and space to engage in economic, social and even religious activities. Lack of peace hampers the development of our societies. We religious leaders have a great responsibility for keeping peace and reminding and rebuking the few who like to use religion to cause tensions and conflicts.

Bringing this conference to Zanzibar was not an accident. Zanzibar has been a 'melting pot of cultures' for over five centuries. Our tour of the beautiful Stone Town yesterday enabled us to see that Stone Town is 'an open-air museum' of tolerance of cultures and religions.

It is an open secret that, in spite of having different religions and cultures, these isles have remained peaceful. People who practise different religions coexist here and in peace.

It is our prayer that we remain peaceful and that Zanzibar continues to be a symbol of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence. It is also our prayer that Zanzibar continues to be a beacon of hope for humanity and a World Class for those who want to come here and learn how different cultures coexist peacefully. Let's continue to pray so that God continues to grant us peace.

Dear Guest of Honour, my primary duty was to make the welcoming remarks. However, allow me to thank the following before I conclude my remarks:

- United Evangelical Mission for facilitating this conference.
- Our distinguished guests for accepting our invitation and coming to participate in this important conference.
- The people of Zanzibar for their hospitality and welcoming gesture.

Our time here, and the sharing of experiences would bear fruits as we will learn from one another and continue to be a hope to humanity.



Address

by Jochen Motte

Second Vice-President,
Your Excellency Ambassador Seif Ali Iddi,
religious leaders,
representatives of the Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish
and Christian communities present,

On behalf of the United Evangelical Mission, I'd like to welcome you to the 2nd International and Interreligious Peace Conference, which is being held here in Zanzibar.

Let me express my sincere thanks to the Ambassador and Second Vice-President of Zanzibar for making it possible for us to meet here in Zanzibar.

Two years after we met at the first conference on peace, which was held in Germany, we've congregated here in Africa, on the island of Zanzibar, so as to continue our common pilgrimage and journey on the interreligious action for peace and inclusive communities.

I remember that, as we're ending our gathering in Wuppertal, Germany, by marching into the city centre, Bishop Keshomshahara, Vice-Moderator of the UEM, approached and asked me whether we could continue this pilgrimage and plan for a second conference which would bring together faith actors for peace in Africa – in Tanzania, precisely in Zanzibar.

Sheikh Soraga, Bishop Keshomshahara and Bishop Malasusa immediately formed an Interreligious Preparatory Committee, which comprised Muslim as well as Christian sisters and brothers.

On behalf of the UEM, I'd like to express my sincere thanks to you for all you have done, together with all people involved from Tanzania and especially from Zanzibar, to make this consultation possible and to welcome us today. I'd also like to express my thanks to the local Preparatory Committee and the ZANZIC for working hard so that we could meet here.

Let me also express my thanks to the partners from Germany, the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland, the Evangelical Church of Westphalia and Justitia et Pax for co-organising the 2017 conference and for being part of this pilgrimage today here in Zanzibar. Thanks are also due to the Muslim and Jewish friends from Germany.

Those who participated in the 2017 conference called upon their respective religions to walk hand in hand and to work together as beacons of hope and peace. “Grateful for the common call we have heard and for the communion we have experienced, we will establish networking structures to continue our common inter-religious journey for Peace and Inclusive Communities.”¹

We have come together again – welcoming also new friends and partners – here in Africa to learn from our hosts what it means to work for peace with people of different faiths. This is also an opportunity to learn how to walk together so as to build better communities and work against extremism and violence.

The last two years have proved, through terrible deadly attacks, that extremism, racism and violence still pose a deadly threat to our societies and communities.

On 15 March 2019, Brenton Tarrant, a 28-year-old Australian man, killed 51 people and injured 49 others during a Friday prayer at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. The attacks have been linked to an increase in white supremacy and alt-right extremism, which is on the rise in the world. On 21 April 2019, on Easter Sunday, three churches, three luxury hotels as well as a housing

1 Rathgeber T. & Motte J., *Peace among the People...*, *Op. Cit.*, p.79.



complex were targeted in a series of coordinated terrorist suicide bombings in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Some 259 people were killed, including at least 45 foreign nationals and three police officers. And at least 500 people were injured. The church bombings were carried out during Easter services in Negombo, Batticaloa and Colombo. According to the Sri Lankan government, all seven suicide bombers were Sri Lankan citizens who were associated with a militant Islamic group.

We together want to send from this gathering a clear message to all those who directly or indirectly and through their actions and words contribute to the spread of messages of hate and a culture of death.

In that regard – fortunately – we see ourselves as part of a broader community of faith-based actors. Last months, from 20 to 23 August 2019, the 10th World Assembly of Religions for Peace took place in Lindau, Germany. Some 900 women, men and youth from 125 countries and 17 different religious families gathered there. Their message reads in part:

Our heart's inner-most experiences of the sacred and outer-most social lives cry out to be connected in a state of positive peace that Religions for Peace calls, "shared well-being." Our different experiences of the sacred make clear that we are, at root, relational: radically related to the sacred and to all that is caused or embraced by the sacred. As fundamentally relational, our wellbeing is intrinsically shared. Helping the other, we are helped, injuring the other, we wound ourselves.²

The Religions for Peace Assembly calls upon faith-based actors to prevent and transform violent conflicts to promote just and harmonious societies, to work for sustainable and integral human development and to protect the earth.

I am convinced that the participants in this conference have rich experiences and knowledge of interfaith action for peace in the different dimensions described above. It is my expectation and hope that, by listening to each other, by sharing stories of interfaith action for peace and by exploring common strategies for preventing hate and violence, we can strengthen each other on our common journey for peace and inclusive communities.

I especially remind you all we are invited on Monday 23 September by the organisers here in Zanzibar, for a public action in the city of Stone Town to share the message of peace and inclusive communities with the people.

I wish all of us fruitful and peaceful encounters and discussions and I would like, once again, to thank our hosts for making this gathering possible.

2 Religion for Peace, 10th World Assembly Declaration, online <https://rfp.org/declaration-of-the-10th-world-assembly-of-religions-for-peace%EF%BB%BF/>, consulted on 23rd June 2020.

Address

by Fadhil Suleiman Soraga

Honourable Bishop Alex Malasusa of the Evangelical Lutheran Church
in Tanzania, Eastern Coastal Diocese,
Honourable Rev Dr Jochen Motte, Executive Secretary for the Justice Peace
Integrity of the Creation of the United Evangelical Mission,
Honourable Most Reverend Bishop Augustino Shao of the Catholic Diocese
of Zanzibar,
Religious leaders from different parts of the world,
Media people, ladies and gentlemen,

Salam halikum!

Your Excellency, Second Vice-President, allow me to start by thanking our Lord,
the most merciful, the most gracious, for keeping us together.



Before you, Your Excellency, are people from different nations, different faiths, different tribes and different genders. This is what we learn from the holy Qur'an, specifically from Surat Ujrat: *"Oh mankind indeed, we have created you from a single pair of man and women male and female, which is Adam and Eve respectively. And have given you continents and tribes, just to identify each other. Verily, the most honoured of you inside of God is who hightiers of you."* This holy principle of the holy Qur'an is, Your Excellency, in application through the gathering before you.

Secondly, Your Excellency, let me thank you for joining us at this very important conference. We know how tight your schedule is. I don't know whether my colleagues here know that you've just come from Dar es Salaam. You've joined us nonetheless. You could have sent anyone to represent you here. I know this is your culture, this is your nature. You attend any religious activity.

Yesterday, I was at the big mosque in Zanzibar, which has been built by the Sultan of Oman. I took the opportunity to introduce this conference. I asked all the Zanzibaris who participated in the prayer to pray for this conference, to pray for our guests who have travelled from their own land to Zanzibar.

Your Excellency, my primary task is to welcome you. That's why I'll not make a speech. On behalf of the organising committee, I thank you very much and wish to take this opportunity to welcome you, Your Excellency, to deliver your speech.

Thank you very much!

Address

*by Ambassador Seif Ali Idd,
Second Vice President of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar*

Honourable Most Reverend Dr Alex Gehaz Malasusa,
Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania,
Eastern and Coastal Diocese,
Honourable Most Reverend Dr Augustino Shao,
Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Zanzibar,
Honourable Most Reverend Michael Henry Hafidh,
Bishop of the Anglican Church, Zanzibar Diocese,
Honourable Pastor Volker Martin Dally,
General Secretary of the United Evangelical Mission based in Germany,
together as the host of this conference,
Honourable religious, government and community leaders present,
Peace be upon you! Praise the Lord!

First of all, we are obliged to thank Almighty God for giving us good health and for enabling us to attend the opening session of this crucial international inter-religious conference here in Zanzibar. On behalf of the Government of Zanzibar,



I'm honoured and have a great joy to welcome you all. You're most welcome to Tanzania; you're most welcome to Zanzibar.

This is an opportunity for all our guests to visit some tourist attractions located on our beautiful island. I would like to assure you that we in Zanzibar enjoy peace and tranquillity. Zanzibar is a Spice Island; we have been endowed with different types of spices such as cloves and cinnamon, which form part of the economic activities of our people. We are thankful to Almighty God because, as an island, Zanzibar makes it possible for our people to enjoy the blue economy. For decades, Zanzibar has been exotic to tourists from all over the world. Thanks to its geographical position and to the hospitality of its people. I request that you spare some time and enjoy the beautifulness of Mother Nature, the historical sites and the investment zones at Fumba and Nyamanzi.

Dear brothers and sisters, I must admit that I am deeply touched by the theme of this conference, which reminds us of the importance of keeping and enhancing peace and of the involvement of the whole society in safeguarding peace in the world. Let me assure you that the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar fully supports this cause.

It is pleasant to see religious leaders from different places and from diverse cultures come together to promote peace. We in the national leadership learn much from the rainbow nature of this gathering. The Holy Quran says in Suratul Al Imran, verse 103, and I quote: *"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided"* (Al Imran, 3:103). And Psalms Chapter 133, verse one says, and I quote: *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"*

We are very encouraged to see you religious leaders from different religions continue to support the government in the area of peace and security in our nation.

Dear brothers and sisters, this conference will enhance the relationship between different religions and will ensure that the peace we enjoy is sustainable and that the believers of all religions continue to exercise the freedom of worship according to what their holy books say. The Holy Qur'an says in Suratul Anfal, verse 61, I quote: *"But if they incline to peace, incline thou to it as well, and place thy trust in God"* (Anfal 8:61). The Bible also says in Psalms 119, verse 165, I quote: *"Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble."*

This is huge grace and we, therefore, ought to thank Almighty God for the peace and the initiatives as there are other nations which do not have the peace we enjoy today. In such nations people cannot sit together as you are doing today. Congratulations. I've given these examples to remind you of what you know, that is, the question of peace has been clearly stated in all holy books.

Dear brothers and sisters, I'm informed that this conference has been organised by the Office of the Mufti of Zanzibar, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, the Waqf and Trust Commission, the Anglican Church – Zanzibar Diocese, and the Catholic Church – Zanzibar Diocese. I'm also informed that this conference has gathered more than 70 religious leaders and scholars from Africa, Asia and Germany. I'm informed that different topics will be discussed and that the topics mainly focus on enhancing peace and stability among all people in the world.

I hope this conference is taking place here in Zanzibar because of Zanzibar's long-term reputation of religious tolerance. In spite of the fact that over 90% of the population of Zanzibar is Muslim, religious tolerance has been imminent and the people have coexisted on this island for centuries.

The modern history of Muslim-Christian interactions in Zanzibar goes back to 1840 when the German Christian missionary, Dr Johanne Krapf, visited Zanzibar to seek permission to build a church in Mombasa, which was then part of Zanzibar. Sultan Majid helped Dr Johanne Krapf (1810–1885) and fully assisted the missionaries. Thirty-three years later, Bishops Steere and Tozer came to Zanzibar and built the Anglican Cathedral at Mkunazini. Part of the land on which the cathedral was built was donated by the Hindu customs master; Sultan Seyyid Barghash donated the clock at the cathedral's tower. We can affirm that the missionaries lived in peace and love with the Muslims they found in Zanzibar. They had regular cordial debates with the Muslim clerics of the time, including Shaikh Mansab bin Ali of the renowned clerical family of Zanzibar.

The Omani rulers who were based in Zanzibar were open and tolerant towards the Christians in East Africa. In 1868 Sultan Majid of Oman (1834–1870) gave a vast tract of land to the 'Fathers of the Holy Ghost' in the north of Bagamoyo on the mainland coast so that they could build the first mission station in East Africa. The work on the granted land is still active today. When the first printing press was established in East Africa when the region was under the reign of Sultan Bargash (1837–1888), the missionaries used it to print Christian literature in Kiswahili to support their efforts on the mainland. They were helped in their translations by the local scholars Sheikh Abdel-Aziz bin Abd and Al-Ghani Al-Amawi who, in 1872, co-authored the translation of the Catechism and the Bible.

Zanzibar has had more than 170 years of history of Muslim-Christian relations and before 1987 we had had nothing but cordial relations between all the religions in our country. The highest denomination of Zanzibar's independence stamps carried the theme of religious tolerance. The stamps showed the Catholic and Anglican cathedrals, a Sunni and a Shia mosque, and even a Hindu temple. For many years the Christians have been living in peace and harmony with their

Muslim brothers and sisters in their communities. They've been doing things together without considering the differences in their faiths. The Christians celebrate and mourn together with Muslims when something happens in their communities. The Muslims attend funeral services in churches, just as the Christians do.

Dear brothers and sisters, the constitution of Zanzibar provides for freedom of worship and the government generally respects this right in practice. The constitution does not recognise any official state religion and recognises eight days as religious holidays, four days for the Christians and four for the Muslims. Both the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar insist that every person has a right to practise his religion as long as he or she does not break the law. However, there have recently emerged groups of people which operate under the 'umbrella' of religion and which use religion as a shadow to disturb peace and stability in different areas in the world. These groups, if left unchecked, Zanzibar like any other place would not be safe. This is why this conference is extremely important to our nation. I request all the participants to use your time here to exchange experiences, ideas and skills so that religion is never again used to destroy peace in our countries. Instead, all religions should preach PEACE, PEACE, and PEACE!

Our two governments are very serious when it comes to the issue of peace and will never tolerate any group which intends to destroy the peace and security of our country. The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar recognises and respects the initiatives of religious leaders which are aimed at enhancing peace so that the society can live in happiness, love and peace. The government will always support these initiatives. I once again congratulate you on the huge steps that you're taking to ensure that peace prevails in our countries.

Finally, I sincerely thank you for inviting me to this special event. For our guests, once again welcome to Zanzibar and, when you go back home, please continue being ambassadors of peace and ambassadors of Zanzibar. Tell the whole world the wonders of Zanzibar, our history of religious tolerance, the hospitality of the people of Zanzibar and the peace we enjoy. Those who come from Mainland Tanzania, this is your home. I wish you a successful conference and I hope that the deliberations will positively contribute to the enhancement of peace in Zanzibar and elsewhere in the world.

With these few remarks, I now declare the conference on 'Peace among People – Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities' officially open. Thank you very much for your attention.





Margarate Salli Efungani (at the microphone)

III.

**INTERRELIGIOUS ACTION
FOR PEACE AND INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITIES –
FROM WUPPERTAL 2017
TO ZANZIBAR 2019.
RESULTS, ACHIEVEMENTS
AND NEW CHALLENGES**

INTRODUCTION

Abednego Keshomshahara

1. Introductory remarks

The conference on peace which was held in Wuppertal, Germany, in 2017 was attended by people from different religions from all over the world. The religions included Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. The conference focused on issues of increased extremism, racism, violence, wars, poverty, corruption and misuse of political and economic power. The conference challenged abuse of religion for political purposes. The conference also condemned violence and the exclusion of people in the name of religions.

In view of the above challenges, the participants committed themselves to continue with peace building, interfaith dialogue, respect for other religions, knowing each other and transforming our societies so as to achieve harmonious cohabitation.

2. On the way from Wuppertal to Zanzibar

We thank God that on the way from Wuppertal to Zanzibar, we've achieved some good results as far as interfaith dialogue and harmonious living are concerned. In some regions and countries Muslims and Christians have been joined together by interfaith projects and joint social action which include the provision of health and educational services as well as entrepreneurial activities for boosting the economies of people who belong to different faiths. A good example is here in Zanzibar where interfaith project within ZANZIC Centre is joining Muslims and Christians for knowing each other through various projects such as interfaith seminars, entrepreneurship via tailoring project for women, diploma courses on interfaith education, etc.

The fact that the committee that prepared this conference was made up of Muslims and Christians shows clearly that the Wuppertal conference has produced many invaluable fruits. Besides these achievements, the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) published a book based on the presentations and discussions of Wuppertal. The book contains many insights into the magnitude of religious radicalism and ways of combating extremism among religions for the purpose of maintaining peace worldwide.

Again, given that people of different faiths can travel together, eat together, drink together, hug each other and pray together, this is a good symbol of love, peaceful living and realisation of some of the goals that were set in Wuppertal.

In 2018, I was part of the pilgrimage visit to Indonesia which was sponsored by UEM and the World Council of Churches for the purpose of learning more about the interfaith projects which are being implemented in Indonesia against religious radicalism. It was good to note that interfaith dialogue was enabling Christians and Muslims to meet and discuss issues so that the two religions could coexist peacefully. However, we noted that there was a blasphemous law which affects the Christian minority in the country.

3. New challenges

The success stories notwithstanding, we still hear in the media how religious conflicts and violence continue to disturb many people in countries like Sri



Lanka, where a church was bombed and over 100 people died during Easter masses in 2019. Religion should play its role of making human beings human. A religion which preaches peace should not be a source of chaos and disharmony in a society. Hence, the questions are: How can we reach many people from the grass-roots level to the upper class via villages, communities, schools, colleges, universities and politicians? How can we enlighten our fellow believers in our respective churches and mosques on the relevance of interfaith relations, dialogue and joint social action for peace?

4. Our hope and basis for fostering peaceful cohabitation

It is my hope and firm conviction that this conference will challenge all of us to use the results of our learning and discussion to transform ourselves and the societies, of which we are a part. We ought to value and respect one another as sisters and brothers without prejudices, stereotypes and a judgemental mentality. There is a need for all of us to know that, as people who belong to different religions, we are born together in hospitals, we played together when we were children, we go to school and learn together and we celebrate weddings and our birthdays together. We do business together. We are treated together in hospitals. Sometimes people of different faiths die together and are buried together. They even wait for their resurrection together in graves. Let us, therefore, promote peace and harmony for the betterment of our people whom we serve and the societies, of which we are a part, at large. May God of peace and from whom peace comes bless our conference so that it can bear the fruit of peace for the whole world.

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN PROMOTING TOLERANCE, MUTUAL RESPECT, UNDERSTANDING AND PEACE

Henriette Hutabarat-Lebang

1. 2017 joint message of hope from Wuppertal

The message reflects the participants' confidence and commitment to work for peace and inclusive communities. We can share many stories from our contexts in Indonesia. However, within these 2 years, we have seen the escalation of conflicts and violence in many places around the world, owing to increased politisation of religion and race! The question is: How do we move forward to address



the escalating and complicated challenges? The Interreligious Action for Inclusive Communities needs to be inclusive, namely to address the issues integrally, including overcoming prejudices, respect for differences, unity in diversity, considering economic injustice, fighting against human rights violation, addressing unethical use of information technology, considering the ecological problems, protecting refugees and striving against human trafficking.

2. Interfaith and intercultural dialogue within the context of a changing world

Interfaith and intercultural dialogue is a must in the context of the challenging issues we are facing: injustice, growing intolerance, increasing racism and religious extremism. In addition, we need to have interfaith and intercultural dialogue so as to build good relationships among people who belong to different cultures and faiths, and encourage and facilitate people from different backgrounds to work together for the sustenance of life on this planet, which is home to all people.

3. The urgency of dialogue in a globalised world

Talking about the era of globalisation, following characteristics can be mentioned:

- *Rapidly changing society*: communications technology – the interconnectivity of people, overcoming distances, artificial intelligence, the Industrial Revolution
- *Inhuman economic and infrastructure development* – the widening gap between the rich and the poor – issues of injustice often trigger conflicts along the lines of ethnicity, culture, race and religion.
- *People on the move*: migrant workers, human trafficking, internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers owing to economic hardship, ecological disasters, community conflicts and wars.

4. Indonesia: a pluralistic changing society

Indonesia is founded on the principle of Pancasila (five principles) with the motto: Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity). This includes:

- Gotong Royong, a spirit of caring about and supporting each other, which is very much embedded in most of the local cultures in Indonesia,

- The seeds of tolerance are rooted in our traditional culture, cemented by various expressions of wisdom traditions. Indonesia is a community-oriented society. However, some of its community-oriented values have been eroded.
- Competition for economic profit tends to promote individualism, materialism, consumerism and greed – a tendency to accumulate power and wealth driving to identity crisis and radicalism.

5. Practical suggestions

Religious leaders play a very important role in helping people to understand well the teachings of their respective religions and to embody those teachings in their daily life. Therefore, in order that people can respect others, each religious community must deepen its understanding of human beings and of all creation on the basis of the teachings of its religion and engage in dialogue (share their perspectives) with other religious communities. This will help overcome misunderstandings between people who belong to different cultures and religions, or religious illiteracy as a result of the openness and willingness to listen to and learn from each other – overcoming prejudices.

6. Inclusive religious teachings and exposure to the life of others

Sharing religious leaders' sermons and the curricula of their religious teachings is very important in cultivating the openness of people to relate with and respect their neighbours from different cultures and faiths. In addition, organising exposure programmes for religious leaders, particularly the youth, including visits to places of worship and to religious institutions may be very productive. This could include Exchange programmes which involve experience such as "live-in program" whereby participant are invited to spend some days living in the house of their guests of different faiths. This experience of a kind of "immersion" may facilitate a deeper engagement and may improve mutual understanding and tolerance.

7. Local wisdom

Indonesian communities have rich wisdom traditions that promote the spirit of tolerance. This can be seen in how the people of that country greet each other, share food and ask for forgiveness, especially during cultural or religious festivals.

These practices need to be encouraged to strengthen solidarity, friendships and cooperation in a community. In addition, the provision of religious education at home and in faith communities, especially through mosques or churches or temples, is crucial.

8. The role of religious education

At school religious education plays a strategic role in promoting understanding and acceptance of students belonging to different faiths. However, the religious education offered in Indonesian schools promote “segregation” in the way that during the session, students are divided on the basis of their religions. These sessions could be used to learn about other religions. Thus, the leaders of different religions could contribute in presenting their own religions to others. This could also make students discuss common concerns in society such as corruption, injustice, ecological disasters and religious extremism from different religious perspectives.

9. Religious communities welcoming strangers and advocating for the needy

The number of people crossing borders and cultures keeps growing. In this setting, religious communities are playing an important role not only in welcoming strangers, especially those who are in need and those who are victims of injustices and brokenness in their communities, but also in advocating for internally displaced persons, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers as well as victims of ecological disasters and human trafficking. This energy is to be found in the fountain of their deep spirituality and in working hand in hand to promote the dignity of the needy. Religious communities also have responsibility for promoting the culture of peace through the media which should never promote neither hatred nor a spirit of intolerance. Religious communities should teach healthy communication which can provide a counter narrative to extremists. Religious leaders should also reflect, through their lifestyle, their teaching about the spirit of caring for other and sharing resources with others. This is crucial in the context of our world, which is characterised by greed and some people’s tendency to accumulate power and wealth for their own benefit. We noted that communal conflicts are often triggered by social injustice.

10. Transformation needs a mental revolution

Religious communities play a significant role in promoting the transformation of society by promoting the values of honesty and integrity (consistency of talks and deeds) and in spreading the culture of tolerance as well as peace with justice which are based on the teachings of one's religion.

PEACEMAKING EFFORTS OF THE BUDDHIST ORGANISATION *DARMSHAKTHI* IN SRI LANKA AFTER WUPPERTAL

Ven Madampagama Assaji Thero

1. Introduction¹

The peace-making ministry of Ven M Assaji Nayaka Thero is to be understood in the same context with the efforts of the Muslim leader Laffir Madani² and the Christian president of the Methodist Church, Asiri Perera.³ Geographically, all

1 Edited by Kambale J.-B. Kahongya Bwiruka

2 Laffir Madani, Religious radicalisation in Sri Lanka.

3 Asiri Perera, Sri Lanka positively moving towards religious harmony after the Easter Sunday terror attacks on 21 April 2019.



three come from Sri Lanka and on the sociological side, they are all eminent religious leaders. Although belonging to different religious organisations and traditions, they work in cooperation to build peace among people, regardless the origin of the conflict. Most the mentioned conflicts were caused by members of one of their religion organisations. Therefore, in their different presentations, they refer to the highly documented Easter Sunday Terror attack which occur on 21 April 2019.

According to different media, three churches and three luxury hotels in the commercial capital, Colombo, were targeted in a series of coordinated Islamic terrorist suicide bombings. Two hundred and fifty-nine people were killed, including at least 45 foreign nationals and three police officers, and at least 500 were injured. The church bombings were carried out during Easter services in Negombo, Batticaloa and Colombo; the hotels that were bombed were the Shangri-La, Cinnamon Grand, Kingsbury and Tropical Inn.⁴

2. Basic requirements for peace-making according to the Bouddhist Ven Thero

I understand through my experience in peace-building activities that span more than three decades that a religious leader who is willing to play a role in building harmony and peace among different people from different faiths and ethnic groups should develop three basic characteristics. Possessing such characteristics will contribute immensely to the prevention of unrest between religious and ethnic groups.

1. Commitment/sense of sacrifice
2. Will power
3. Patience/tolerance
4. Devoid of suspicion

There are a few basic values that should be taken into consideration while one is involved in a peace-building process. The values are:

1. Strong faith in oneself
2. Due respect for other religious and ethnic groups
3. Inner peace
4. Prioritising the teachings and values of one's own religion
5. Involving in sincere peace-making efforts by having the above characteristics as the fundamentals

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019_Sri_Lanka_Easter_bombings, consulted on 2nd July 2020.

3. Joint action by a faith-based organisation

During the past years, the Darmashakthi Organisation has successfully held 12 symposiums on a district basis. Each symposium lasted two days and was attended by religious leaders of the respective districts.

The symposiums and workshops were aimed at raising awareness among religious leaders from different faiths and familiarising them with methods and approaches to mediation and conflict resolution in case of religious or ethnic conflict. Furthermore, emphasis was put on how religious leaders could work together in public fora. We formed peace committees consisting of religious leaders in different districts so that they could work together in peace-building activities and were given a plan of action suitable for each district.

A workshop on promoting reconciliation through transitional justice mechanisms was held at the Moratuwa Aqua Pearl Holiday Resort on 15–16 August 2018. It was attended by 60 well-known religious leaders from all four major religions in Sri Lanka. The participants came from all the districts in the country.

Among the resource persons at the workshop were the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Buddhist Affairs, the Secretary to the Inter-religious Dialogue Unit in the Prime Minister's Office and many other players in transitional justice. The National Peace Council of Sri Lanka [NPC] and the Methodist Church collaborated with the Darmashakthi Organisation in making the event a great success.

It should be pointed out here that, through our actions, we resolved many conflicts and took stern steps to thwart many conflicts of an inter- and intra-religious nature during the period of two years.

4. Joint action after the attack on Christians

The tragic event that shook the country on Easter Sunday morning posed many challenges to the faith-based actors in Sri Lanka. A small group of Muslim extremists blew up themselves in Christian churches while devotees were attending Easter services. A few tourist hotels were also targeted. Nearly 250 innocent souls were lost and hundreds of people were injured and maimed. A group of Buddhist extremists seized the opportunity. After they had fuelled hatred towards the Muslim community and stimulated violence against them, they owned their properties, businesses and places of worship.

With our contacts and religious leaders in the volatile areas, we prevented many violent actions before they were carried out. This contributed to the protection of the lives and property of many innocent people. In the Christian-

predominated areas of Negombo and Kotahena and in the Muslim-predominated areas of Kurunegala, Narammala and Minuwangoda, our team coordinated efforts to prevent any possible violence and its escalation.

We held another two-day workshop at the Agriculture Research Institute Training Centre in Colombo to discuss ways and means of preventing the escalation of violence and any possible violence in the volatile areas. We analysed the root causes, remedies, short- and long-term solutions and reconciliation measures.

In Anuradhapura, a group of Buddhist extremists, backed by a local politician, attacked worshippers at the Methodist Service Centre. We succeeded in containing the situation through discussions with the Buddhist and Christian leaders in the area. We urged that law and order be maintained, the fear of the general public removed and the security of the priests be established. Along with two prominent priests from the Methodist church, I got involved in the matter.

5. Collaborating with political leaders for peace

A Buddhist monk, who is a Member of Parliament, began a fast unto death in front of the Kandy Temple of Lord Buddha's tooth relic with a political motive. He insisted on the resignation of Muslim politicians from their ministerial posts and governorship who were suspected of having worked with the extremists who had blown up themselves during the Easter Sunday incident. Many Buddhist extremist groups gathered at Kandy on the pretext of being in solidarity with the fasting monk, but at the same time, they were creating a favourable situation of attacking Muslims and their businesses in different parts of the country.

Along with many top religious leaders from the Buddhist community, the Darmashakthi Organisation immediately requested the President and the Prime Minister to get involved in our efforts. Our efforts were successful and we prevented another huge unrest and bloodshed that was about to happen in a few hours' time.

An influential intruder in a mosque in Colombo created an issue in order to take over the management of the mosque. We mediated the conflict and helped the law and order officers to solve the problem and restore the board of trustees, thus preventing unwanted clashes within the Muslim community.

I have highlighted here only some of the efforts and mediation to establish peace and harmony which involved Buddhist communities in Sri Lanka. The Darmashakthi Organisation is always prepared to mediate interreligious conflicts and work for peace and harmony.



Ven M. A. Thero in the middle of Bishops A. Malasusa and A. Keshomshahara (picture above), Soekirman offering a specific batik as gift to the UEM





IV.

**RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION
GLOBALLY AND REGIONALLY
TODAY AS A CHALLENGE
TO FAITH-BASED ACTORS
IN DIFFERENT SOCIAL
AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS**

RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION GLOBALLY: THE CASE OF ISRAEL

Irith Michelsohn

1. Israel, homeland for refuge and unity for the Jewish people

Some 71 years after the establishment of the modern state of Israel, its Jewish population remains united behind the fact that Israel is the homeland for the Jewish people and a necessary refuge from rising anti-Semitism around the globe. However, alongside these sources of unity, a major new survey by the Pew Research Centre also finds deep divisions in Israeli society – not only between Israeli Jews and the country’s Arab minority, but also among the religious sub-groups that make up Israeli Jewry.

2. Different groups in Jewish society

The Jewish people are divided into four categories: Haredi (commonly translated as “ultra-Orthodox”), Dati (“religious”), Masorti (“traditional”) and Hiloni (“secular”). Although they live in the same small country and share many traditions, highly religious and secular Jews inhabit largely separate social worlds, with a few close friends and little intermarriage outside their own groups. In fact, the survey finds that the secular Jews in Israel are more uncomfortable with the notion that a child of theirs might someday marry an ultra-Orthodox Jew than they are with the prospect of their child marrying a Christian.

3. Religious belief and the state of Israel

The divisions in Jewish society are also reflected in starkly contrasting positions on many public policy questions, including marriage, divorce, religious conversion, military conscription, gender, segregation and public transport. Overwhelmingly, Haredi and Dati Jews (both generally considered Orthodox) hold the view that Israel’s government should promote religious beliefs and values, while secular Jews strongly favour the separation of religion from government policy. Some Jews see their Jewish identity as religious and others as cultural

or ethnic. The large differences among the various Jewish groups in the kind of Jewish state they envision may be tied to fundamentally different understandings of Jewish identity.

Seven-in-ten Haredim (70%) and roughly half of Datiim (52%) say being Jewish is mainly a matter of religion, while three per cent of Haredim and 16% of Datiim say being Jewish is mainly a matter of ancestry and/or culture. Among Hilonim, by contrast, only four per cent see being Jewish as primarily a matter of religion, while 83% say Jewish identity is mainly a matter of ancestry and/or culture. However, at least some of the members of all these groups see their Jewish identity as being bound up with both religion and ancestry/culture.

Israeli Jews across the religious spectrum strongly support the idea of Israel as a Jewish state and a homeland for the Jewish people who are scattered around the world. Overall, most Jews say Israel was given to the Jewish people by God and that a Jewish state is necessary for the long-term survival of the Jewish people. Nearly unanimously, the Jews in Israel support their diaspora population's



right to move to Israel and receive citizenship, and most agree that Jews deserve preferential treatment in the country.

4. Is Israel also the land of Arabs?

Israeli Jews are divided when it comes to the status of the country's Arab minority; roughly half of them say Arabs should be expelled from Israel but the other half disagree with that. In addition, many Jews in Israel think the Jewish state faces other important, long-term challenges. When asked to explain in their own words the nature of Israel's most important problem, about equal proportions of Israeli Jews mentioned security-related problems and economic problems. (American Jews hold a very different view on Israel's long-term challenges. Most American Jews mention security-related issues as Israel's biggest problem and very few mention economic issues.)

5. The state of Israel and the Jewish diaspora

While Israeli Jews value the land of Israel as a Jewish state, they also see the Jewish diaspora as important for the country. Nearly seven-in-ten say a thriving Jewish diaspora is necessary for the long-term survival of the Jewish people. And even though American Jews take a different view on Israel's long-term challenges and diverge from Israeli Jews in their religious observance and political views, Israeli Jews value their connections with American Jews. For example, Israeli Jews generally agree that the Jews in Israel and those in the USA share a common destiny, to some extent at least. And roughly six-in-ten say the Jews in the USA have great influence on how things are going in Israel.

6. Jewish radicalism

In the opinion of Professor Dr Micha Brumlik, Jewish fundamentalism or radicalisation is a reaction of founding the Reform Judaism in the 19th century and was transformed into an Orthodox Judaism. In the 20th century, radicalism is in confrontation of the Shoah and founding of the State of Israel.

The Union for Progressive Jews in Germany and its umbrella, the World Union for Progressive Judaism, which has headquarters in Jerusalem and New York, are very much involved in an interreligious and intercultural dialogue which involves many religious groups all over the world. We are of the opinion that only talks and discussions between different groups can help us avoid

misunderstandings and hate. We all have the task of building bridges between people! Therefore, in July 2019 the Union for Progressive Jews in Germany established the new society 'counter' where Jews, Christians and Muslims together organise meetings. The historical sites like the concentration camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau are used to remind the common history. During those meetings, lectures as well as seminars are organised. It is more than necessary that we all start building new, and peaceful societies around the world.

RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION IN AFRICA TODAY AS A CHALLENGE TO FAITH-BASED ACTORS IN DIFFERENT SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXTS

Thomas Joseph Ndaluka

1. Introduction¹

Religious radicalisation happens in almost every African country. It affects and threatens people's coexistence, their lives and livelihood. The most affected African countries are Nigeria, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Libya, Mali, South Sudan, Kenya, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon. The United Nations Development Programme estimated that, between 2006 and 2015, more than 3,085 attacks in Africa were carried out by different, religious, radicalised groups.² The attacks claimed the lives of 21,245 people and injured more than 7,031 people.³ Moreover, thousands of people were either internally displaced or forced to flee their countries and seek refuge in neighbouring countries. The groups that claimed to have carried out the attacks were the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Al Shabaab, the Anti-Balaka, Boko Haram, Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), Ansarul Islam and the Islamic State. Others were the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) which, in 2011, changed its name to Libyan Islamic Movement; the Muslim Brotherhood; Wilayat Sinai, formerly known as Ansar Bayat Al Maqdis (ABM); and Hasm.

2. Some religious radical groups

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) operates in northern Uganda and has killed more than 100,000 people, mutilated and injured many, abducted more than 20,000 children and displaced over 1.5 million people (UNDP, 2015).

1 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Framing the Development Solutions to Radicalization in Africa*. Regional Expert Consultation, Nairobi, Kenya, July, 2015.

2 UNDP, *Ibid*.

3 UNDP, *Ibid*.

Al Shabaab is principally based in Somalia, but also carries out attacks in the entire East African region (i.e. Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi). The first Al Shabaab attacks in East Africa were carried out in 1998 and involved the bombing of the American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. The attacks claimed the lives of more than 200 people. Since then, there have been several attacks in the region. According to the Global Terrorism Database, a total of 819 terrorist events happened in East Africa (i.e. from 2008 to 2017). For instance, there were 574 terrorist events in Kenya, 139 in Mozambique, 43 in Tanzania and 63 in Uganda.

Recent attacks by Al Shabaab include the July 2019 event in Somalia that claimed the lives of 26 people, including three Tanzanians. The attacks at Garissa University College in Kenya which were carried out on 15 January 2019 killed about 147 people and injured many others. One Tanzanian was killed in the Garissa attacks.

Although Tanzania is not Al Shabaab's direct target,⁴ the attacks carried out in the neighbouring countries pose risks of radicalisation and recruitment of the youth, women and children by the Al Shabaab militant group. For instance, in October 2013, police rescued 54 children and 32 women from an Al Shabab indoctrination camp which was located in Lwandai Tanga near the Tanzania/Kenya border (Sabahi, 2013). In May 2016, two people posted a video on social media, claiming that they were representatives of ISIS in East Africa and urged Tanzanian youth to join ISIS. In 2016, three Tanzanians were arrested in Kenya as they attempted to join ISIS (*The Citizen*, 2016). In 2016, 22 people were arrested at Kibatini – Amboni – in Tanga Region, in connection with the terrorist attacks which had occurred in the region (*Mtanzania*, 27 August 2016). Attacks on police officers and Christian leaders were reported in 2015 and were linked to Al Shabaab's activities in Tanzania. These attacks resulted in the death of several police officers, local leaders and ordinary citizens (*The Citizen*, February 2015) in Tanga, Coast Region, Morogoro, Geita, Dar es Salaam, Unguja and Mwanza.

Boko Haram's activities are done in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and parts of Niger. Boko Haram's attacks have led to the death of over 10,000 people and to the mutilation of several thousand people. Some 1.2 million people have been internally displaced and over 200,000 people have fled their countries to seek refuge in neighbouring countries (i.e. in Cameroon, Chad and Niger). Moreover, several children, including the Chibok girls, have been abducted by Boko Haram.

4 Tanzania does not share a border with Somalia and it has not sent troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), unlike countries like Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, which have done so.

Radical groups in Mali: Mali has been plagued by radicalised attacks for many years. In recent years, three radical groups have been accused of killing people in the country. The groups are: Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) and Ansarul Islam. These groups are affiliated to, and get support from, al Qaeda and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara. These two groups have carried out several attacks in central and northern Mali, attacks which have claimed the lives of several thousand civilians. Recent attacks include the March 2019 attacks in the villages of Ogossagou and Welingara in central Mali, where more than 160 people belonging to the Fulan ethnic group were killed (Blake, 2019). Another attack happened in Koulogon village on 1 January 2019 and killed more than 30 people (Blake, *ibid*). Nevertheless, a series of these attacks have been targeted at the army, for example the attack on the army camp of January 2018 which killed 14 soldiers (Blake, *ibid*). Scholars have attributed the persistence of religious radical groups in Mali to the existence of tribal differences between the Fulani, Dogoni and Bambara. Radical groups take advantage of these differences and the grievances which have not been addressed by the Malian government to push their interest and activities.

The anti-Balaka (or anti-machete) group has been very active in Central African Republic, where thousands of Muslims were attacked and killed.

3. Factors for religious radicalisation

Scholars of religion point out that most of the causes of radicalisation are not religious, but rather they are economic, political, social, environmental and psychological. Radicalisation basically stems from political empowerment and inclusion (or feelings of limited democracy), economic/transport marginalisation (or limited communication and feelings of marginalisation), power distribution (e.g. gender inequality and economic and political inequalities), lack of governance (i.e. the state being unable to monitor, curb or control the trafficking of weapons, drugs and people, and corruption), failure to have a national identity, political instability, poor social service delivery, low level of development (endemic poverty), unaddressed local grievances, conflicts over land (especially triggered by climate change), psychological trauma caused by troubled social relations, and exposure to radical networks.

In the field of the sociology of religion, the argument that religion can be a source of unity and/or conflict is not new. Classical debates on this issue are put into two strands. Some scholars, influenced by the work of Emile Durkheim, argue that religion is a unifying institution. Durkheim saw religion as a

functional and symbolic representation of society. Religion binds members of society together.

On the other hand, religion is seen as a source of conflict. Karl Marx, for instance, saw religion as a reflection of material conditions, a product of a class society (religion as a compensating and comforting illusion) and a tool for exploitation. Religion was seen by Marx as perpetuating divergence and the exploitation of marginalised groups in society. Unlike Marx, Weber viewed it as an independent, causal variable – a variable that makes social changes in society (Weber, 1930, Wijssen, 2013). Marx’s and Weber’s thinking formed the basis for secularisation and conflict theories. Secularisation theory believes that religion will be individualised or will disappear. This, however, has not been the case as religion has not disappeared (see Pew Forum, Gallup Poll and World Values Survey). Statistics show that there is a global resurgence of religion in the public domain.



Scholars of religion who support conflict theory argue that the increase in religious radicalisation in the recent decades has been a consequence of constant struggles between different groups in society. They assume that behaviour is best understood in terms of conflict or tension between competing religious groups. Different (religious) groups constantly struggle to acquire the meagre resources available in society. Ndaluka (2012) has argued that “most of the (sic) religious claims are not specifically religious but socio-economic and political which demand for (sic) equal footing and opportunities in terms of access to community resources such as education and public job placement (sic)” (Ndaluka, 2012, 2014). Thus, Girard (1986) proposes that violence can be resolved by communicating a message that reaches people as individuals. This is perhaps because individuals are active actors (Giddens, 1984, 1991), capable of manipulating events to their own advantage (Giddens, 1984). People do not engage in conflicts blindly. A serious weighing of benefits and loss is done. Only when conflict is attributed to gaining benefits then individuals take part in those conflicts.

4. Effects of religious radicalisation

Religious radicalisation has far-reaching effects on the people, the communities and the nations concerned. In summary, the effects of religious radicalisation include hampering development. For example, in Kenya tourism has dropped to 25%, thus affecting the country’s revenue collection. In Nigeria, direct investments have dropped to 21%.⁵ It has increased income insecurity to individual including increase of unemployment. It affects also education system, whereby abducted children are denied their right for education. Another effect is the loss of property: Boko Haram steals people’s livestock and other properties. The increase of food insecurity is due to the insecurity and the burning of farms causing hunger to the victims. . All these problems lead to psychological trauma to the affected people.

5. Challenges for faith-based actors

Faith-based actors have a duty and obligation to understand the underlying causes of religious radicalisation in Africa and worldwide. They should also remember that the causes of religious radicalisation are not universal, but rather they are contextual in nature. Moreover, while acting for the purpose of addressing radicalisation, they must adopt a multi-sectoral and multi-religious

5 UNDP, 2016.

approach. Therefore, they should do the following: Give communities the capacity to handle religious radicalisation; carry out research or collaborate with higher education institutions to conduct research so as to obtain solutions to religious radicalisation; engage different religious organisations; create an enabling environment for community welfare, creation of employment and food security; and support responsive governments in their efforts to reduce radicalisation by communicating messages that reach vulnerable groups (i.e. the youth and children).

RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION IN SRI LANKA

Laffir Madani Mohamed Sally

1. Introduction¹

The peace-making efforts of the Muslim leader Laffir Madani, is connected to the peace ministry of the Buddhist leader Ven M. Assaji Nayaka Thero² and to mediation initiative of Bishop Asiri Perera³, all religious leaders in Sri Lanka. Although each of them has his own experience in his particular religious organization, however they refer sometimes to the same event and may share the same approaches.

In this presentation, Laffir Madani summarizes the understanding of radicalisation, clarify the tools utilised in religious radicalisation. He then mentions the particularity of the Sri Lanka context and the challenge faced by faith actors to build peace in religious conflict context.

2. Understanding of radicalisation

Radicalism have not always be seen in negative perspective. There is a positive radicalism which is a non-violent attitude for building peace. Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, etc. can be mentioned as examples. These worldwide peace-maker figures were considered radicals in their time.

The negative radicalism is that attitude which leads to violence and terrorism. Some research define negative radicalism as the adoption of an ideology that becomes a way of life and a framework for meaningful action for the individual. Others consider the belief in the use of violent means to promote a cause. But also the merging of ideology with violent action.

1 Edited by Kambale J.-B. Kahongya Bwiruka

2 Ven M. Assaji Nayaka Thero, Peace-making efforts of the Buddhist Organisation Darmshakthi in Sri Lanka after Wuppertal 2017.

3 Asiri Perera, Sri Lanka positively moving towards religious harmony after the Easter Sunday terror attacks on 21 April 2019.

3. Different kinds and tools of radicalisation

Religious radicalisation is just one form of radicalisation. Political and social radicalisation can be also mentioned. However, in religious radicalisation, it is observed the promotion of the use of force/violence over the persuasion; the promotion of uniformity over diversity; the promotion of collective goals over individual freedom; and the promotion of giving orders over dialogue. These are different tools utilised in religious radicalisation.

4. The Sri Lankan experience

In the very recent history of Sri Lanka, a big number of attacks involving religious people have been observed. The first wave is the Easter Sunday attacks in April 2019 perpetrated by Muslims targeting Christian churches. This attack was then followed by others and boycotting by Muslims. The second wave were the attacks on churches by Buddhist mobs. This situation raised hate speeches



on the media which end up, at some extend, into intra-religious conflicts. The big frustration people experienced was the inaction of the state. It was a kind of political backing.

5. Challenges for faith-based actors

Religious leaders had in this so complex context many challenges (1) in identifying and analysing the roots, causes, indicators, tools, players and manifestations of radicalism. They had to make a clear line to differentiate between piety and radicalism. (2) The challenge was also in defining and devising practical ways of de-radicalising people and setting preventive measures. (3) Creating awareness among faith-based actors and other stakeholders was not an easy task. Religious leaders had also the task (4) of coordinating and influencing the state [Rule of Law and Order], the media, politics, business and KOL [key opinion leaders] to prevent and to adverse effects of radicalisation. It was also challenging for them when it comes to (5) ensuring sustainability and having a long-term action plan.

6. Suggestions

In the Muslim perspective, the religious radicalisation in Sri Lanka have raised a number of issues which need to be properly addressed. Therefore some suggestion may be formulated. (1) There is a need of creating a friendly and cohesive environment for interaction among religious leaders. (2) Muslim leaders should promote Ijtihad [reconstruction of religious thought in Islam – Dr Iqbal]; and (3) Establishing an inter-religious university/seminary.

HARMONY AMONG BELIEVERS IN INDONESIA: EXPERIENCES FROM SERDANG BEDAGAI REGENCY

Soekirman

1. Introduction and mission¹

Serdang Bedagai is a regency in the eastern shores of North Sumatra in Indonesia. It's has a 95-km long coastline, covers 1,913.33 square kilometres and

¹ Edited by Kambale J.-B. Kahongya Bwiruka



it's divided into 17 districts. Legally, it was created under Law No 36 of 2003 on 7 January 2004. The number of people in Serdang Bedagai grew from 595,000 people in 2010 to 614,000 people in 2018.² This growth is driven by the mission of the regency, which seeks to:

- improve the quality of human resources both in general and apparatus, especially through the planting of religious values, the quality of education, health, power and love of region;
- increase investment and regional competitiveness through the empowerment of the local people and the creation of renewable energy;
- create an entrepreneurial community that enhances the economic independence of the community and develops a variety of industry-oriented regional products so as to accelerate poverty reduction;
- establish facilities and infrastructure so that the potential sector can become the flagship sector in the region; and
- encourage empowerment and independence and community participation in sustainable regional development.

With such diversified mission, the growth of the regency is visible in different sectors of life.

2. Development and the economic sector

Economically, the regency is engaged in farming (it produces palm oil), fishing and tourism. The agriculture sector is dominated by the production of rice, corn, cassava, cacao, coconut, rubber and palm oil. In addition, the regency has a big variety of livestock: 45.030 beef cattle, 82.982 goats, 49.936 sheep, 32.424 pigs, 2.028.283 chicken buras, 283.723 ducks and 2.449.781 chicken ras.³ On the fisheries side, the regency has 6.239 Ha of fishwater, which annually produces 27.771 tonnes of fish, and 3.066,4 Ha of brackish water, which annually produces 10.082 tonnes of fish.

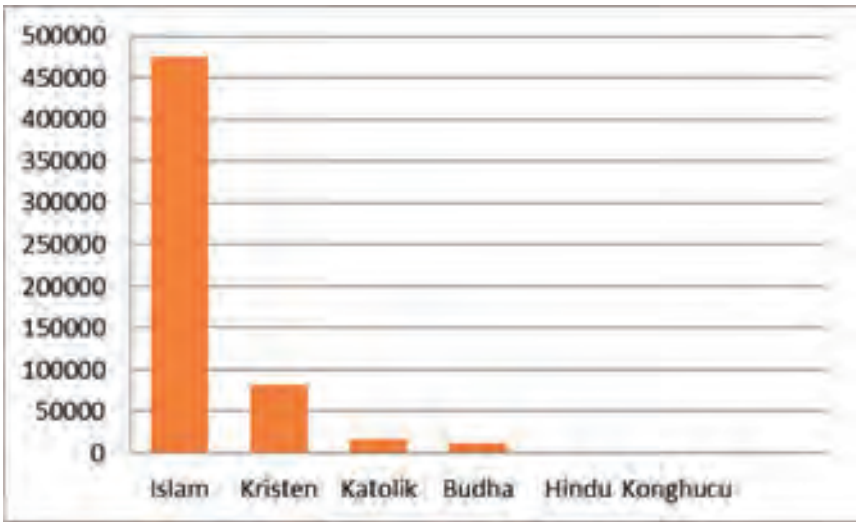
The industrial sector is as multisectorial. It is constituted of wood processing, wood-furniture making, food processing, fish drying, agricultural equipment production, etc. The tourism industry is based on beaches and islands, waterfalls, rivers, etc.

2 Source: Statistical Centre of Serdang Bedagai Regency

3 Source: Serdang Bedagai Food Security Office, 2019.

3. The religious sector in Sedang Bedagai

As part of the Republic of Indonesia, Serdang Bedagai is inhabited by people who practise different religions. The 2018 statistics show that the regency had 474.605 Muslims, 100.527 Christians, 11.277 Buddhists, 767 Hindus and 116 Confucians,⁴ as represented on the following picture and graphic.



⁴ Source: Ministry of Religious Affairs Serdang Bedagai, 2018

The Christians are divided into protestants (Kristen) who are in the majority and Catholics (Katolik), who are in the minority. The number of Hindus and Confucians (Kongucu) is decreasing. However, each religious group has a legal right to benefit from the same legal and administrative protection from the regency. The houses of worship⁵ are also recognised by the regency.

In Sedang Bedagai, each religion organisation have the right of building the house of worship, as sign of freedom of religion in Indonesia. But the number of house of worship differ from a religious organisation to another, according to the number of the members.

| No. | House of Worship | Amount |
|-----|-------------------|--------|
| 1 | Mosque | 586 |
| 2 | Musholla | 487 |
| 3 | Protestant Church | 368 |
| 4 | Catholic Church | 49 |
| 5 | Pure | 3 |
| 6 | Temple | 21 |
| 7 | Shrine | 12 |

4. Government's role in commemorating a great religious day

The Government of Serdang Bedagai always financially supports and facilitates the celebration of each Religious Great Day every year. A special budget is allocated for the Great Religious Memorial Day for each religious organisation: Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, etc. As an example, in 2018, the regency granted 813,340,000 Rupia (50,599.51 Euros) to the Muslim community.⁶

⁵ Source: Office of District Kemenag. Serdang Bedagai 2018.

⁶ Source: The Kesra Setdakab Serdang Bedagai, 2018.

**REGIONAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET ALLOCATION
FOR RELIGIOUS GREAT DAY MEMORIAL**

ISLAM



Source: The Kesra Setdakab Serdang Bedagai, 2018

**Budget allocation of
Rp. 813,340,000,-**

Among others:

- Birthday of the Great prophet Maulid Muhammad SAW
- Eid Prayer
- Echo Takbir Idul Fitri
- Eid al-Adha prayer
- Echoes of Eid al-Adha
- Isra The Great Prophet M'raj Muhammad SAW
- Hijri New Year

In the same year 2018, Christians have received 354,580,000 Rupia, equivalent of 22,059.13 Euros, for their religious ceremonies.

**REGIONAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET ALLOCATION
FOR RELIGIOUS GREAT DAY MEMORIAL**

CHRISTIAN



Source: The Kesra Setdakab Serdang Bedagai, 2018

Budget allocation of Rp. 354,580,000,-

Among others:

- Natal Regency of Serdang Bedagai;
- Passover district of Serdang Bedagai.

The Bouddhist community⁷ have received, in the same periode of 2018, for their religious ceremonies an amount of 114,600,000 Rupia, which is the equivalent of 7,129.50 euros.

⁷ Source : The Kesra Setdakab Serdang Bedagai, 2018

**REGIONAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET ALLOCATION
FOR RELIGIOUS GREAT DAY MEMORIAL**

BUDDHA

**Budget
allocation of
Rp. 114.600.000,-**



**Among others:
Waisak of Serdang Bedagai**

Source: The Kesra Setdakab Serdang Bedagai, 2018

The Confucianism⁸, in the same periode of 2018, have received for their religious ceremonies an amount of 99,240,000 Rupia, which is the equivalent of 6,173.92 euros.

**REGIONAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET ALLOCATION
FOR RELIGIOUS GREAT DAY MEMORIAL**

KONGHUCU

**Budget
allocation of
Rp. 99.240.000,-**



**Among others:
- Imlek Kabupaten Serdang Bedagai**

Source: The Kesra Setdakab Serdang Bedagai, 2018

5. Guideline for relationships and solving religious problems

The issues related to religions are under the joint regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Interior, according to the references no. 9

⁸ Source : The Kesra Setdakab Serdang Bedagai, 2018.

year 2006/number 8 year 2006. In a very recent history, we had a religious conflict case to solve. In the village of Pekan Dolok Masihul, a pastor was using his private house as house of worship. This act was considered as religious sacrilege and led to a public demonstrations.

To solve the problem, the sub-district government brought together all the pastors in the community, police officers, and members of the religious harmony forum. Together with the mediation team, the district government helped to find a piece of land on which the house of worship would be established. That way, the problem was finally properly solved.

RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION: A GERMAN PERSPECTIVE FROM NORTHRHINE-WESTPHALIA

Annette Muhr-Nelson

1. Understanding radicalisation in the German context

If we use the phrase ‘religious radicalisation’ in the German context, we mean first of all Salafism. This evokes pictures of young Muslims who leave Germany to go and fight for the Islamic State in Syria or elsewhere. Recently there was a public debate about the obligation to take care of them, to bring their children



back to their grandparents in Germany and to bring them to justice in a German court, for example. This discussion has drawn great attention in the society.

In the media there are discussions about the role of the mosques in the radicalisation of their young members. However, it's very easy to suspect them of being responsible for radicalising their young members. There are many reasons the third generation of well-integrated immigrants in Germany is frustrated and susceptible to radicalisation. (And this is not only a question of immigrants. There are also people of German descent amongst the radicalised Salafists.)

Besides we speak about very small numbers on the side of Salafism. Experts say that there are single tricky cases in which imams are responsible for radicalising some people, but it is not possible to say, in general, that, in Germany, Islam plays a role in the growth of the members of Salafism. The fact is that most of the radicalised Salafists don't have a connection to any mosque and that most of them are not religious. Statistics show that there are 10.800 Salafists in Germany. They represent only 10% of the radical and violent people in the country.

However, these facts are contested by those who are interested in heating up reservations in the German population about Muslims and immigrants more generally. And this is the real challenge for faith-based actors in the German context and the European context more generally. The churches, mosques and synagogues in Germany have to deal with a growing antipathy towards religion. There is also decreasing knowledge of traditions and roots in Germany culture. This leads to prejudices and fear of 'strangers'.

2. Experience of dialogue

In our churches in Germany the dialogue with Muslims has a long tradition. The first Muslims came to Westphalia, in western Germany, especially in the Ruhr area, in the 1960s as workers for the coal mines. Children went to school together and many congregations have been living in good neighbourhood with the mosque in their district, etc. However, after the 9/11 (9 September 2001) attacks, many Muslims felt they were under a general suspicion and the good relations were disrupted. The atrocities of the Islamic State reinforce the bad image of Islam in German society.

Moreover, there are many different immigrants from various ethnic and religious groups as refugees or workers in Germany. We have learnt that there is no 'the Islam', just as there is no 'the Jewish faith' or 'the Christian faith'. Only 40% of the Muslims in Germany are organised. And it's not easy to get the different Islamic associations together. They don't speak with one voice. The Turkish community,

for instance, is split over political issues. Supporters of Erdogan brought Turkish conflicts into German society and this generated many dialogue-related problems in several places.

In general, the influence of the Christian faith is decreasing and secularisation is facing the Islamic faith as well. Many young Germans with Turkish or Iranian roots are growing up without any religion affiliation. Nevertheless, the churches in Germany are playing a big role in addressing these challenges.

3. Challenges in German society

In our region in Northrhine-Westfalia, which is located in the western part of the country, more than 50% of the population is made up of members of the Protestant or Catholic churches. There are many Christian migrant churches from Africa, Sri Lanka or Korea in the area. There are also free churches, orthodox churches and Pentecostal churches in the area, but the mainstream churches are the big Protestant and Catholic churches. And that means power on behalf of money, structure (buildings and persons) and influence.

We take this power seriously and are engaged in processes concerning the whole society. Fighting against extremism and radicalisation is a challenge for the whole society. Religious freedom is a highly scored value in our constitution. After the Second World War and the Shoah, we consider all of us to be equal and every person to have religious freedom. This is the basis for the resettlement in Germany of the Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s.

4. Practical action

1. The school system and the prevention of religious radicalisation

Some 40% of the Muslims in Germany are under the age of 25, that is, 1.6 to 1.8 million people. So, the schools, the universities and the whole educational system play a very important role in preventing radicalisation and in people learning to live together in a multicultural and multireligious society. The churches are engaged in the public school system in different ways. The subject 'religious instruction', which was formerly a privilege of the Christians in the country, was opened for Muslims and other religious minorities as well. It's important for children to learn, from the beginning, how to handle with religious Holy Scriptures (Qur'an, Bible, etc.), commandments and rituals in a critical way. To teach religion in a public school system means that the contents are controlled

by the democratic system. This is important in preventing radicalisation, since it strengthens the young people to develop a critical view on religion.

2. *Youth work*

We've good experience with programmes such as 'against violence', 'against racism' and conflict solution. The programmes are developed by different youth associations which work together and which are often financially supported by the government.

3. *Debate about the 'Church and migration'*

In 2018, the Evangelical church of Westphalia started a discussion about the church and migration. The title of the keynote paper was: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Everybody is invited to join the discussion. At www.erlebtvielfalt.de there are many impulses to talk and to work in the congregations about the experiences we make in a society, which is becoming more and more intercultural.

Präses Annette Kurschus (our 'Bishop') writes in her foreword:

In autumn 2015 large numbers of people came into a country in a very short time. They were looking for protection from war and persecution, and for new future prospects. The church, too, inquired what needed to be done in a practical way. Congregations and church districts, offices and agencies, and above all many volunteers offered practical assistance, and they still do. This assistance ranged from housing to clothing, from accompaniment in visits to the authorities and even to sanctuary in our churches. In time, however, deeper questions and new challenges have surfaced in society and the church. Fundamental concerns were expressed. Neglected problems have cropped up. Conflicts have escalated, even into open violence.

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me." The biblical phrase stimulates us to see strangers as more than merely needy people needing help. People from other cultures, with other religions and languages, coming from another political context – that is sometimes scary and alienating to people, which we must not be play down or explain away.... We need to be very willing to change in order for such a welcome to be possible. It calls for a lot of openness to enable genuine arrival and real togetherness. With those who come and with those who are there.

The fact that the strangeness of Christ himself meets us in the challenges is a gentle presentiment, powerful provocation and profound promise at the same time.



Hanim Ezder and Sister Flevy Da'Souza

V.

**HOW TO ENHANCE
THE POTENTIAL OF
RELIGIOUS ACTORS
TO PROMOTE PEACE**

ENHANCING THE POTENTIAL OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN EUROPE FROM A GERMAN PERSPECTIVE

Hanim Ezder

1. Introduction

This contribution shows Muslims' situation in Germany and suggests the religious actors who should promote peace and how they should be strengthened in such particular context.

2. Muslims' situation in Germany

There are about 5 million Muslims living in Germany. This is about 4.5–5% of the German population. Most of them belong to the migrant communities 'who' are now in their fourth generation. However, in the last five years, other Muslims have come to Germany as refugees from conflict-ridden countries like Syria or Iraq. The first important group which immigrated into Germany arrived in the country in the 1960s and 1970s. They're young, healthy and strong people but with a low level of education. They're supposed to do manual work, and not build an academic career. They also brought with them very little religious knowledge. After a few years, they felt a strong need to practise their religion as they did in their home countries. Thus, they sought opportunities to build their places of worship where they could pray together. Their goal was to organise prayer and everyday Islamic life, and not to start dialogue with the majority members of the society. When they brought their families from their home countries, they joined together as Turkish-, Arabic- or Bosnian-speaking Muslims and founded NGOs. These NGOs are still not recognised as corporations of public law and continue to act in structures of associations. There is a voluntary board of management and usually the scholar is the only one who can be paid.

3. Organisation of Muslim communities

The Muslim communities are organised, but only as voluntary active board members, who are ordinarily employed and who serve as contact people for the

communities. In the last 60 years, in the large cities association work has been professionalised and umbrella associations have been founded where educated people who are specialised, for example, in interreligious dialogue are employed. However, this professional work cannot be found in the small, local mosques. In the associations, everything is still done voluntarily without payment. Usually, the associations are only able to finance the scholar who brings theological knowledge to them. The theologians are often from their countries of origin and can only speak rudimentary German, which sometimes may lead to difficulties and misunderstanding.

The fact that they hardly speak good German can be interpreted by the majority members of the society as disinterest in integration. This may be the reason why they are not referred to as focal point during the campaigns, although both the scholars and the board members have high authority and reliability in their communities. Religious actors are normally considered as selfless and fair.



Because they are trusted, they have an impact on their mosques. They should, therefore, be won and enabled to do different activities; translators might be needed for better communication with them.

It is also important to point out that, owing to the fact that they work voluntarily, they're not always available. They may not always respond to a request or attend a meeting, unless it is held during their free time. Meanwhile, there are many young people and active women belonging to the mosques who are not considered as contact people, although they're also able to mobilise in their mosques.

Apart from the mosques, there are now many independent actors who are increasingly playing an important role in German society, for example our organisation that does professional and society-orientated activities. We do social, educational and dialogue work. Because our work is intercultural and interreligious and, therefore, aimed at peace-building, we use public money in our activities.

4. Religious actors and the public sphere

It is unfortunate that very often politicians don't look at religious actors as people who could support their peace efforts. Conversations should not be conducted only when there are conflicts. Trust should be built before conflicts occur. In this regard, much has been done in Germany during the last years. The state started conversations with religious actors (for example the Islam conference) and supported various projects in mosques; the financial support given to mosques should, of course, be increased. If projects are initiated by politicians, the board of management should be encouraged and supported to take the projects nearer to the members of their mosques. However, this can easily be interpreted as interference in the mosque life or even as indoctrination from the German government. To counteract it, the local, national or international Muslims' initiatives or institutions should be linked with affected actors as positive examples.

In my opinion, it would be peace-making if the state had the same distance and closeness to all religious groups so that all feel accepted in the same way and see themselves as part of the system which forms the basis for their acting together. That way, they can strengthen each other. The distance to the politic should be preserved and it should be watched out that they are not being instrumentalized.

5. Muslims and religious education

Very often, there has been one-sided knowledge about the theological understanding of peace in the Muslim communities. Although important personalities from Islamic history are known for their justice and commitment to peace through their actions and preaching, the traditions of other religions are still unknown.

The knowledge of one's own sources of religious practices, traditions and role models is good. This can encourage and give orientation to the person, while at the same time the knowledge about other scriptures and examples from other religions would help to ensure that strong parallels are recognised. For example, it can help to discover that charity, non-violence and justice can be found in every religion. To reach this goal, the actors would have to extend their mutual knowledge in joint discussions and literature recommendations.

6. Religious actors' network

Religious actors should be integrated and strengthened in the local networks. If there is a problem, there should be a strong exchange between the peace actors. The actors can be from different religious groups or even non-religious organisations, science and politics. This diverse alliance can offer different solutions because different experiences and knowledge can complement each other. Such meagre alliance requires resources, because professionals who meet again and again cannot always do this honorary. Funding must be provided for paying subject experts and for carrying out planned activities.

The participation of religious actors in peace work has to be conscious, in the sense that the actors must have the courage to intervene in conflict situations. They should also intervene politically to make sure that they don't leave the field open for potentially violent people. Therefore, they need positive support of the media.

The media should not focus on religious violence rather on religious activities for preventing violence, advancing democracy and protecting human rights. Thus, a distorted image of Islam can be avoided, which otherwise stirs up resentment and fear, and makes it difficult for people to live together peacefully.

7. Islam as a religion of peace

Islam means 'peace' according to Islamic understanding of this religion. In this regard, a Muslim is someone who lives in peace with himself, his fellow human

beings, his environment and all creation. The word 'salam' also means safety, health and contentment.

Muslims and, thus, religious actors greet other people: "*Salam alaikum*" "Peace be with you." Even the ritual prayer is completed with moving the head to the right and left and with the peace salutation to humanity. If these everyday rituals were consciously performed by Muslims, this intrinsic motivation alone would be enough to mobilise for an active commitment to peace.

- Raise awareness about one's own values regarding peace and religious education should protect religious communities from violence. Such communities would be more resistant to violence;
- Taking the limited opportunities such as time and financial resources of the volunteer actors into consideration, they contribute much with their skills.
- Support the independent MSOs of Muslim actors, both financially and with advice, so that they can independently contribute to social peace;
- Give legal recognition to the Muslim communities. The state should accept and financially support them; and
- Strengthen networking between national and international religious groups, and share positive stories and good practices such as the Zanzibar conference on peace.

ENHANCING CHRISTIAN ACTORS' POTENTIAL IN GERMANY

Claudia Brinkmann-Weiß

1. Introduction

In the autumn of 2014 the synod of the Evangelische Kirche Kurhessen-Waldeck (EKKW) decided to become a 'church of just peace', following the call of the World Council of Churches for a 'Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace'. Since then, the activities in our church are run accordingly.

In this short contribution, I want to give the meaning of the pilgrimage for justice and peace in our Protestant church of Kurhessen-Waldeck.

2. Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace in the Protestant church of Kurhessen-Waldeck

This pilgrimage has three dimensions, which are running at the same time and are connected.

- a) The phrase '*via positiva*' means the positive way. It is a 'celebration of our gifts'. We walk together and we have many gifts and talents and insights which we can share. We are strengthened and empowered by the love and grace of our God. We join God's movement towards love, peace and justice.
- b) The phrase '*via negativa*' means the negative way. It refers to the act of going to places of injustice and pain, seeing the suffering of creation and listening to the call of change.
- c) The phrase '*via transformativa*' means the transforming way. With God's help, we can change the world. Our hope and trust can grow and lead us to a life in real communion as brothers and sisters.

Pilgrimage is a movement and a process. Everybody can join in and give his or her contribution. It is not a fixed programme. One can follow the process from the first to the last step or start anywhere, anytime. It is an open process. This is both an opportunity and a challenge. It is an opportunity because every idea and activity is welcomed and possible, if it serves peace and justice. No step, no activity is too small. It is a challenge because a pilgrimage is kind of abstract and non-concrete, and thus not easy to be translated into a real activity.

In Kurhessen-Waldeck, we try to translate this abstract idea into our context and we feel inspired and encouraged to rethink our church life and our being Christians in German society and in the world.

3. Some examples of the pilgrimage for Justice and Peace

- a) We have a long lasting tradition of visits of delegations from our partner churches (we have 6 – one to an orthodox church in Syria). We continue doing this following the idea of pilgrimage to get deeper insights into the life and faith of our partners, and to be inspired and motivated by their faith, and vice versa.
- b) We have a church fund called the Christian education fund, through which we support the education of the young students in need in our partner



churches. Strengthening reflection and education is an important issue and we are happy to deal with this challenge with our fund. Since it is a fund, it is very well known at our church. People give their contributions by collecting money, for example, during private birthday parties or weddings or during confirmations. By doing that they feel connected to the idea of pilgrimage for justice and peace.

- c) We try to install the tradition of the travelling peace candle in our congregations. This idea started after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA. Christians wanted to remember the victims of war and terror and seek a way to overcome violence. The message of the peace candle, which is now travelling from parish to parish, is the Christian watchword for this year: Seek peace and pursue it.

4. Conclusion

In short, the important elements in seeking peace are communication and community, working together as witnesses for peace and justice, getting inspiration and power by faith and spirituality, daring to communicate in a sense of trust and understanding and sharing experiences of hope and success.

SRI LANKA POSITIVELY MOVING TOWARDS RELIGIOUS HARMONY AFTER THE EASTER SUNDAY TERROR ATTACKS ON 21 APRIL 2019

Asiri Perera

1. Introduction

I want to thank the United Evangelical Mission for the prayers and for the words of encouragement given when we were going through a big religious crisis. Indeed, on the Easter Sunday of 21 April 2019, an extremist Muslim group carried out bombing attacks on Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, and killed 268 Christians and tourists. The attacks were not unexpected, because before it, on the Palm Sunday, I was in the middle of another severe attack that carried out at one of our Methodist church centers in the heart of a Buddhist city called Anuradhapura. In this paper, I want to highlight the response of our church to the attacks.¹

2. Blame as abrogation of responsibility

After the terror attacks, there was a very conflict; people were blaming each other. The government was blaming some of the government officers; the prime minister was blaming the president; the president was blaming the security officers, and there was real chaos. Now, in the middle of that, we religious leaders, myself and the cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, met in the cardinal's house. We made two statements asking people to remain calm and quiet. Especially, the Christians were clearly told not to harm the Muslims. Because an extremist Muslim group, a minority group, had carried out the massive attacks everybody was blaming the entire Muslim community. We didn't want the lives of innocent Muslims to be touched by the Christians or the Buddhists.

1 The mediation initiative of Bishop Asiri Perera is to be understood in the context of the peace-making efforts of the Muslim leader Laffir Madani (Religious radicalisation in Sri Lanka), and the peace ministry of the Buddhist leader Ven M Assaji Nayaka Thero (Peacemaking efforts of the Buddhist Organisation Darmshakthi in Sri Lanka after Wuppertal), all religious leaders in Sri Lanka.

3. United in action for mediation

We started meeting us religious leaders who were trusted to be in a position to address the nation and ask people to use this opportunity to look inwards. Instead of blaming other religions or the government authorities, the people were advised to look into their own faiths, to look at the way they practice their religions and identify the areas which needed some kind of reformation, rethinking. As a result of that, we went close to the Roman Catholic Church that was attacked, where the majority of the congregation were killed, near one of the Methodist churches. And certainly, my parishioners were badly affected, since they'd lost their beloved ones, relatives and friends. I heard that, although they remained calm, there was much anger boiling within them.

4. "Open the top" approach for healing the wounds

We started a programme called 'Open the top'. As symbol of properly control of the opening and closing a bottle of water. The meaning is that if you let the



water tank burst, there will be a disaster. Water can flood in your place and in someone else's place, too. The top has to be properly opened and controlled. Our discussions are very informal. Having opened their tops, people started to express their feelings about the Easter Sunday attacks. The question that arose was: "Do you think you should forgive Muslims even now?" There was calm. And we're proud to say that Christians are witness community. None of the Christians reacted, but, deep inside, there was anger building up, pain and thoughts of revenging on the attackers. And during the first two weeks, I received many calls from the region where many deaths had occurred. There were people who tried to persuade Christians to go to the streets and create chaos. Through the gatherings, we were able to talk about their pain.

In the gatherings, a gentleman said to me: "Don't talk to me like that. Don't you understand the grief and pain I have? Don't talk to me about Christian consolation, Christian peace. Let me first get out of my system." Then I let him open his top.

We gathered for a couple of days. And one fine day, I took a small dug, I dropped it on the ground and looked at what would happen. There were about 60 people and some of them were saying: "I really feel like I've this dug in my hands before a Muslim." Now, who are these people? Peaceful, loving and very forgiving Christians, but deep inside, they're hurting. Through the seminars, we succeeded in taking away their anger.

We went to another village in Gombo; about 80% of the families were grieving because they had lost more than hundred people. Together with the Roman Catholic Church priest and nurses, we began to search for the peace of God. After the Easter attacks, the work we had to do was enormous. Although Christians are known as peace-loving people. At the same time there was so much that the peace-loving people wanted to be attended to.

5. Forgiveness, the secret of reconciliation and peace

I went to another village with other religious leaders. We had a meeting before journalists. At the meeting, the Muslim moulory, very important people for the Muslim community in Colombo, said sorry to the Christians. That was very wonderful. At that point, the Catholic leader and I stood up and embraced him, saying: "We forgive you on behalf of the Christian community." This was broadcast by the media: television, the radio and social media. And the message went around that the Christians had forgiven when the Muslims asked for forgiveness. Although the Muslim leader was not from the extremist group, he

was humble enough to say, “Look, we’re also responsible for this. Because this extremist group was identified by the previous government about ten years ago.” At that time, Muslim leaders had gone to the government and said: “There is an extremist group developing, do something.” Unfortunately, the government did nothing. Even before the Easter Sunday attacks, the government received intelligence report that churches would be attacked. And earlier it was said the Roman Catholic Church would be attacked. But on Easter Sunday, the security council said that it was the Methodist church that would be attacked. However, none of the government officers called me to say “Be careful..” Some tourists who were in the Catholic Church were attacked.

6. Protecting others from our own violent groups

We worked together with another Roman Catholic priest who was appealing to the messes on the street. You know, after the attacks several people tried to take to the streets and get people out. But he kept saying to them: “Don’t go there.” They joined hand and took to the streets. Then we went to those Muslims and said, “We’re with you; we’re protecting you.” The Buddhist monk, the Muslim leader and the Christian leaders worked together to prevent clashes.

Then, of course, we met with psychotherapists, Buddhists working together with the interreligious group leaders. We moved together to heal the wounds of these people.

We also worked with lawyers. One of them, the Methodist church legal advisor, had filed a complaint in court against the government for not informing the people and the religious leaders about the attacks which were to come and for hiding the information on the attacks. The case is going on. For example, the prime minister said that, for four months, he had not been invited to the security council’s meetings and that he, therefore, had nothing to do with the attacks. So, the question is: Why did the president prevent the prime minister from attending the security council’s meetings? These are some of the things we’re challenging in court.

7. Religious radicalisation and scripture misinterpretation

By asking religious people to looking into their own problems, we’re now addressing the problem of radicalisation, which relates to scripture misinterpretation. I have been with Muslim Leader in their hierarchy, Dr. Madhani and Dr. Ven Thero are all in this same process with me. We continue talking with the

Muslim leaders, telling them that the Qur'an has been misinterpreted much. It has come to light that Zahra, the Muslim leader who bombed one of the churches, had been telling the youth that if they killed hundred ten thousand of Christians, they would get big rewards in paradise. Something was seriously wrong in terms of scripture interpretation. Buddhist extremists were attacking Muslims and making them look like a laughing stock. Anybody can misinterpret the scripture of any religion. The Qur'an is now available in the local language. We're explaining the misinterpreted verses to the Christians as well as the Buddhists.

ENHANCING RELIGIOUS ACTORS' POTENTIAL IN AFRICA

Margarate Salli Effungani

1. Introduction

The world in general and Africa in particular has had conflicts of diverse nature. Africa seems to have experienced civil wars, various forms of internal, violent conflicts and border and inter-state conflicts. The emergence of radicalisation and violent extremism over the past two decades, which has implicated religion, is a repugnant reality challenging peace and development on the continent. Africa is vulnerable to the groups that espouse negative religious constructs, which are contingent upon a number of fluid variables such as poor security, weak governance, corruption, poverty, unemployment and political grievances. The ramifications of these are excruciating, since they deprive Africans of the right to peace and dignity, although the continent is rich in religious heritage and practices in which peace is a priority.

The 2012 Pew Research report¹ on the 2010 global religious landscape notes that 84% of the world's population subscribe to religion and that 8 in 10 people identify with a religious group. Africa is a religious continent and it is an ontological truth that Africans are religious. More profoundly, I will say that Africa can be described as a religious orphanage which hosts many religions even if some of the religions do not have many followers. This explains the incredible tolerant nature of African spirituality, which is inherent in the African indigenous religion/religions. This is a significant point to underscore so as to strengthen the role of religion and religious actors in peace-building in Africa, where religious values influence and shape the engagements of the majority of Africans.

2. Religious actors in peace-building

The words religion and peace have been defined by scholars and practitioners in various ways. Religion is defined in two dimensions; the substantive definition of religion pays attention to beliefs and doctrines and the functional definition

¹ Pew Research on the 2010 global religious landscape. Consulted on <https://www.pewforum.org>, 2012.

of religion stresses what the beliefs and practices do to individuals and communities (Harrison, 2016).² This paper is anchored on the conceptual framework of the functional definition of religion, looking specifically at how religion operates and interacts with other aspects of human experiences at individual, global and institutional levels. Peace is sometimes relative and the concept even the definition are contested. This paper is oriented by the understanding and the employment of a holistic approach to peace or positive peace. In this approach, encompasses the absence of war, but involves also the presence of justice and development, mutual respect and tolerance among people.

Religious actors and religion itself are considered in dual terms as source of violence and at the same time source of peace. However, religious leaders, the laity and faith-based agencies have been increasingly recognised as indispensable allies in international peacebuilding in recent decades. Religious actors are involved in a wide range of peace-building activities, including advocacy and awareness

2 Harrison. V, (2016). The Pragmatics of Defining Religion in a Multi-cultural World; In The International Journal for Philosophy of Religion 59, pp. 133–152.



raising, education, intra- and inter-faith relations and dialogue, mediation and reconciliation, psychosocial support, humanitarian assistance and others.

Different religious agencies are involved in various initiatives, but I'd like to talk a little more about the Programme for Christian-Muslim relations in Africa (PROCMURA). Founded in 1959, PROCMURA has consistently worked to promote Christian-Muslim relations as a proactive approach to preventing violent conflicts by building a culture of mutual religious tolerance, community cohesion and resilience against factors of violence. PROCMURA is well established in 20 countries and visible in 10 other countries where it implements programmes. PROCMURA has effectively carried out awareness raising campaigns and advocacy, capacity building, mediation and reconciliatory activities in a bid to prevent violent conflicts and build as well as sustain peace on the continent. The strategic mechanism of promoting Christian-Muslim relations provides an authentic space for mediation or dialogue and reconciliation because of the already established relationships. The role of education in building religious actors' potential to build peace is given prominence by PROCMURA. For example, in partnership with St Paul's University in Nairobi Kenya, PROCMURA offers a Master's of Art in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations so as to build skills and provide knowledge of one's own religion and of the religions of others.

I think I need to highlight the comparative advantage of religious actors in promoting peace as well as their challenges in identifying ways of strengthening their potential.

3. The comparative advantage of religious actors

The religious values of forgiveness, peace and mercy in the three Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and the sacredness of life in the African traditional religions and other religions are indispensable qualities in searching for peace and resolving long-term conflicts. These belief systems and values, when misappropriated, misinterpreted and poorly contextualised, can produce the opposite of peace.

Religion and religious actors occupy a strategic position in the lives of individuals and communities in a manner that can influence perceptions and behaviour. Religious actors play an important role as community members and are considered to be driven by people's interests, and not self-interests. Trust and respect for religion and religious actors give them a comparative advantage in resolving conflicts and promoting peace. In spite of the strategic position religious actors occupy in communities, they face certain challenges in their efforts to build peace.

Integrating secular peace-building actors in the process

Most often, religious actors design and implement projects without involving secular peace-building actors, arguing that merging religious approaches with a secular approach will not produce the desired results. This argument finds credence in Thomas analysis termed the “reductionist approach”³ in which religious actors pay absolute attention to religion as a logic of problem solving, thereby ignoring other factors and actors. This orientation is not feasible in every conflict situation.

Active involvement of women and youth in peace-building

Patriarchy takes a heavy toll on peace-building, since more often than not religious peace-building initiatives and agencies are led by clerics; women and youth are not involved in such initiatives. This poses an effectiveness challenge to service delivery in some conflict situations and contexts. It is an irrefutable fact that women and youth contribute to shaping religious narratives as well as identities. To this extent, their active participation at all levels of religious peace-building is not only very important, but also mandatory.

Intra-faith struggles

The continuing threat of religious proliferation with diverse hermeneutic positions, especially among missionary religions, has created splits which has affected intra-faith relations not only in Christianity, but also in Islam. This has affected religious peace-building, in the sense that sometimes religious actors consider their theological stands at the expense of peace and fail to agree on a unified mechanism for addressing conflicts. These challenges and strengths need to be considered and given due attention so that religious actors can be more effective in building peace.

4. Strategies for enhancing religious actors’ potential

Identifying and managing religion-based violence

Religious actors must first identify and manage the fluid drivers of structural and direct violence initiated by religion. Inherited negative religious missionary/da’wa agents’ approaches, which PROCMURA calls “negative religious expansionist policies”, the outward negative manifestation of which is coerciveness, condemnation of the religious other and their belief systems among others, fuel

3 Thomas, S. (2005) *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

direct hatred and intolerance that can lead to outright violent confrontations. It is true that such unrectified systemic discrepancies in the Christian mission and the Muslim da'wah, discrimination and exclusions shape peoples' perceptions, which are key to the construction of identities and which may lead to structural violence.

Education for religious actors

Religious actors need training so that they can have comprehensive knowledge of what constitutes a conflict cycle. In addition, religious education on one's own religion and on other people's religions which is provided in an objective manner should be encouraged. This knowledge is important to creating understanding, since it reduces prejudices and stereotypes. The importance of education is stressed by Mbillah (2004),⁴ who intimates that religious plurality should be taken seriously in theological institutions in Africa.

Religious actors as role models

Religious actors must maintain the trust and respect accorded them by other people, by living the values of their religions, and not compromising these values to individuals, government or political stands. This will water down their peace-building initiatives.

5. Conclusion

Religious peace-building is not a new practice despite the fact that it is increasingly gaining prominence as an important element in conflict prevention and peace-building studies and practices at present. Although religious actors occupy a strategic position in their communities, which gives them a comparative advantage, there are certain challenges that should be addressed so that they can be more effective in conflict prevention and peace-building in Africa than they are at present. These challenges are contextual in nature and all peace-loving people need to look at their contexts to identify areas that militate against peace and attend to them.

4 Mbillah J. (2004) Christian theological education in the context of the religiously pluralistic continent of Africa. In. J. Gagalo & G. Lemarguent (Eds.), *Theological education in contemporary Africa* (pp. 167-179). Eldoret: Zapf



Zanzibar Old Fort



*Exposure in Stone Town, Catholic Church (picture above)
Exposure in Stone Town, Mosque*



*Exposure in Stone Town: ZANZIC Upendo Center (picture above)
Exposure in Stone Town, Forodhani*

VI.

COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND THROUGH CHILDREN, THE YOUTH, WOMEN AND MEN

1. COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND THROUGH THE YOUTH

COMBATING RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND WITH THE YOUTH IN AFRICA

Willybard Lagho

Globally, initiatives to combat radicalisation received a major boost through the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (on Youth, Peace and Security of December 2015, n° 13 “Calls on all relevant actors to consider instituting mechanisms to promote a culture of peace, tolerance, intercultural and interreligious dialogue that involve youth and discourage their participation in acts of violence, terrorism, xenophobia, and all forms of discrimination.”¹

Combating radicalisation is an outcome of shrinking space for false religious teaching and stereotyping, and broadening the narrow and extreme interpretation of religious teaching.

The following are interfaith initiatives aimed at teaching school children and the youth the values of love, peace, honesty, as well as cultural and religious tolerance in daily life.

1. An interfaith dialogue course for primary and secondary school religious teachers and principals in selected schools which are considered the hot spots for religious extremism. It is provided in Mombasa jointly by the Interreligious Dialogue Commission for Catholic Archdiocese of Mombasa, the Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics (CICC) and the Global Ministry University (USA);
2. A mentorship programme for young interfaith clerics. One of the successful online programmes is shrinking the cyber space for violent extremists by training clerics to reach out to the youth with attractive and positive messages aimed at neutralising radical messages by violent extremists;
3. Together in dialogue (IRD) trains young Catholics adults (YCA) about the catholic teaching regarding other religions, especially Islam including topics on Islam religion and interfaith dialogue
4. Establishment of grass-roots ecumenical partners to address social and moral issues which affect communities, including early signs of religious radicalisation

1 UNSCR 2250, n°13 on <https://reliefweb.int/report/chad/role-young-people-preventing-violent-extremism-lake-chad-basin>.

of children and the youth in schools and communities by the Interreligious Dialogue Commission for Catholic Archdiocese of Mombasa;

5. Religious counselling in schools and prisons by trained teachers and chaplains in Kenya. The National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) funds the initiatives aimed at addressing the psychosocial needs of individuals who have been radicalised and even joined violent extremist groups. The focus here is on rehabilitation, re-integration of reformed extremists, provision of support to their families and social networks. See the strategy published in September 2016 by the National Counter Terrorism Centre;

6. Establishing peer groups among the youth across the religious divide and using such forums to foster friendships between Muslim and Christian youth. This initiative uses succour, films, songs and vocational training of both Christian and Muslim youth by the Upendo project under the Zanzibar Interfaith Council (ZANZIC);

7. Radio shows by Christian and Muslim clerics on the misinterpretation of scriptures for the purpose of creating radicalisation narratives and shows how to counteract the same (CICC).



COMBATING RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND WITH THE YOUTH IN GERMANY

Rafael Nikodemus

1. Different forms of radicalisation in Germany

In Europe and Germany there are two different forms of radicalisation, especially among young people. On the one hand, we're increasingly confronted with right-wing extremist, racist groups that are increasingly prepared to use violence. There is violence against Jewish and attacks on synagogues, mosques and shelters of refugee. Apart from these smaller, violent groups, xenophobia is becoming increasingly widespread among greater sections of the population. In social media and at concerts, young people are addressed. Nationalist parties also abuse people's fears in a populist manner and reinforce prejudices against Jews, Muslims, refugees and all foreigners. There is often resistance from sections of the population when a new mosque is built. However, this right-wing extremist form of radicalisation is not religiously motivated, even if it sometimes shows itself religiously for example, in the propaganda formula: "Against the Islamization of Germany and the downfall of the Occident."

On the other hand, we experience strong radicalisation among Muslim youth (also the youth who have converted to Islam) who follow the simple answers of radical groups. This is also mostly done through social media and only in a few cases through mosque associations as well. Since 2013, more than 1000 (mostly) young people have travelled as jihadists to Syria to support the Islamic State.

It is important to emphasise that, whenever violence occurs in Germany, there have never been attacks by the state, but attacks by fanatical, extremist groups and young people who are particularly prone to extremist ideas.

2. Violence and the judiciary

It is the responsibility of the state to uncover criminal acts and it is the responsibility of the courts to punish those criminal acts. In the same vein, it is the responsibility of the police and the state to prosecute criminals. For example, there are 'drop-out programmes' for right-wing radicals and Islamists who are

oriented towards violence, i.e. young people who want to return to a normal life. Here state institutions work together with religious communities.

3. Transformation of radicalisation into a peaceful future

As religious communities, we're challenged together with all the forces of civil society and the state to find ways of transforming conflicts and radicalisation into a peaceful future. With regard to young people, education is particularly important here. Therefore, there are more and more forms of cooperation between the religious communities and the desire to make this cooperation more binding. Focusing on young people, some examples need to be mentioned on different levels of society:

1) *Round-table in socially disadvantaged areas*

In socially disadvantaged districts and municipalities (mostly with highly multicultural and multi-religious populations), there are often "round-tables" in which representatives of all organisations (churches, mosques, sport clubs, schools, kindergartens, educational societies, the police, etc.) and the authorities meet and discuss problems, find solutions in cooperation with the authorities, regulate problems and organise "the living together" in the districts or the cities in a more peaceful way. I was chairman of such a round-table in a social flash-point community for almost 10 years. The round-table had four working groups: one for women, one for children, one for the youth and one for religions. For example, after the exclusion of non-Muslim youth by a mosque association, we conducted several workshops with all participants (youth leaders in churches and mosques, mosque boards, a presbytery, imams, pastors and others) so as to agree on common standards for judging work by the youth.

In addition to the encounter close to the everyday life of different people in church congregations, mosques, synagogues and associations are important elements of good coexistence in which good prevention against radicalization of young people can also be achieved. In view of this everyday dialogue, we also speak of the 'dialogue of life.' It is important to create spaces of encounter where prejudices can be addressed. Religious communities are particularly important here, but especially at the local level.

2) *Kindergartens and schools*

Kindergartens and schools are also important places where peaceful coexistence can be practised and where radicalisation can be prevented. Here religious

education (Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, Jewish, etc.) is of great importance, especially where there is interreligious cooperation in the lessons.

3) *Round-table of the religions*

In the big cities and at the federal level, there are, for example, ‘round-tables of the religions’ or what is called ‘German Islam conference’, which was founded in 2005 by the then interior minister in order to promote the institutional arrival of Islam in Germany. There is also work which is done to protect young Muslims from being radicalised. In Germany, this work is done under the label ‘Anti-Salafism Prevention.’¹

There is also the state-sponsored ‘Young Islam Conference’, which focuses on the concerns of young Muslims who live in Germany. It organises multi-religious encounters and trips to Jerusalem, for example.

1 In Germany, the concept of “Salafism” has a different meaning from what people in large parts of the worldwide Islamic community understand. The concept in Germany means extremist, violent people, – often young people-, who refer to the Qur’an and articulate the motivation of their violent action with the help of this religious tradition.



In the federal states and regions of Germany, churches, mosque associations and state organisations work together to prevent extremism. Here there are joint projects for young people which are aimed at fighting right-wing radicalism and certain extremist, Islamic orientations in schools, counselling centres and religious communities. The focus is on working with returnees from Syria or Iraq who went to support the Islamic State as fighters.

4) *Binding cooperation*

We not only try to strengthen everyday encounters, but also the binding cooperation of our communities. We call the resulting cooperation's 'path communities' to reconstruct our society. Below are some examples:

- For more than 10 years our regional church has been organising the training and further education of young leaders in the work done by the youth. It has been doing this together with a large Muslim association (Association of Islamic Cultural Centres, VIKZ). It is important that we relate our training to one another.
- In cooperation with Jewish, Christian and Muslim organisations, the association *begegnen e.V.* was founded. It organises encounter trips to Auschwitz and other places, especially for young people.
- At the youth centres of the Evangelical Church, multiculturally oriented work is often done in order to bring young people together.
- In the prisons and the military, more and more necessary action is being taken to counteract radicalisation.
- We've noted a development to a Muslim pastoral care in the hospitals, prisons and the military. There are Muslim cemeteries, kindergartens, youth or women's education centres, Islamic faculties in universities, Islamic religious instruction in schools, etc. Everywhere there is a close exchange between Muslims and the churches.
- Just one example: there is the emergence of pastoral care. Its task is to support the police in the delivery of a message of death in the event of a car accident and to provide pastoral care to the relatives of the victims. Together with the Christian-Islamic Society, the Rhenisch church has been organising training for Muslims for 10 years in order to involve them in the field of pastoral care. We now have Muslim contacts and agreements between the Protestant church and Muslims in several regions, which describe the cooperation in the work of emergency pastoral care. What is important is that everyone is there for everyone. In addition, a Muslim co-worker/colleague can provide pastoral care with Christians or others, and vice versa.

- All the efforts for encounters and mutual understanding require that people who live in the same neighbourhood work together, as well as value and respect each other. Although religion plays an important role in the society, it is not the only factor of unity. Others like encounter are also relevant. Therefore, it is necessary to create spaces for encounter, for example when this is practised in Protestant kindergartens, where many Muslim children study. One celebrates Christian and Muslim feasts, mothers and parents come together and talk about their lives, exchange ideas about education, health and education and let each other participate in the feasts.

These are few examples that go beyond the youth's field. However, they generally prepare the ground for the creation of a society in which, we, together, search for ways of peace and good coexistence.

COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND WITH THE YOUTH IN ASIA

Pimpinan Brades Sijabat

1. Introduction

Religious radicalism is now common in various places in Indonesia. Many times intolerance and discrimination have been practised in the name of religion, mainly against the minority groups. We, the younger generation, should address this issue seriously and urgently, because it is like a virus that thrives and influences many spheres of life. We should be aware of how religious and political



propaganda can warp an entire generation. For instance, in many countries we're very concerned about terrorism. For me, it is important to fight against the roots of terrorism, that is, radicalism. In my opinion, terrorism is the consequence of letting radicalism grow in our society. We need to note that some of the recent terrorist attacks were carried out by young people who are in their twenties and that violent acts against other religious groups were committed by some radical, religious groups, mostly the youth. Violent extremism among the youth appears to be based on social bonding rather than ideological grounds. Sometimes they do not know what they're fighting for; they go to 'war' and turn into violent, extremist groups simply to find a sense of recognition, fellowship and identity from their society.

2. Strategies

The important thing for us to do is to educate the younger generation about radicalism through peace education, interfaith dialogue and reconciliation. People need to be educated at this age, since it is an important period in one's life, a period for searching for identity.

1) *Pemuda Pancasila*

In Indonesia, especially in Sampit, we've a group called 'Pemuda Pancasila', where the youth and young adults are building a community to strengthen our sense of patriotism and tolerance among different religions in the country. The community also has members who are pastors, priests and Ustadz and we always share good news among us and we do our best to respect each other.

2) *Living in with peace society*

We also have a programme called 'Live in with peace society'. This is coordinated by the UEM-Evangelist Contact Person. We promote togetherness in various areas and villages, where people belonging to different religions live side by side and fully respect each other. We've implemented this programme in Salatiga. We spend a couple of weeks in a multi-religious community where Christians and Muslims live together in harmony. We learn and appreciate how to live beyond the religious differences.

We're planning to have a unique, interfaith programme / group which focuses on interreligious peace-making, especially between Muslims and Christians. We train the youth in being religious peacemakers in their various schools or universities. They spread peace in their communities.

3. Training of youth peacemakers

The goal in training the youth in interreligious peace-making capacities is to transform them into '*seeds of peace*' for this world. Once they understand that God created them so that they could be peacemakers, they'll not be involved in any extremism and violence. They'll, rather, develop these capacities in their young age through interfaith dialogue, and they will lead others in this peaceful process when they grow older.

There are many advantages to investing in the younger generation. First, the youth present the advantages of (1) freshness: they grow up very quickly as a *fresh seed*, (2) capacity of change (*agent of change*): they can adopt a new and positive attitude, (3) spreading ability (*spreader of truth*) they will live long to transform the society.

- *Be a fresh seed* is referring to their generation who knows where they stand for their ideology on religion, social, or politics but they are aware of the importance of being tolerant with people who has different thoughts and knowledge. Though they are different, they will always stand together and respect each other.
- The younger generation has to be the *agent of change* for this world. The youth can start a religious war if they're radicalised. The world would know no peace if they started it. However, if the youth change in a positive way, then peace will reign on earth.
- We encourage the younger generation to *spread the truth* among their friends. We've to educate them well and let them spread peace in their own creative ways. Our job is to guide them, believe in them and count on them to bring about change in the future.

Secondly, targeting the youth gives us an opportunity to connect with a *virtual strategy*. In the modern era, society is controlled by technology and social media. Young people are particularly well equipped for this facilities, but at the same time they're vulnerable, since they're much attracted and permanently connected to them. Nevertheless, this phenomenon can be positively used to raise awareness against religious radicalisation. For this reason, it might be important that the government have control over social media so that things like hate speech do not spread. Love and peace should spread, instead.

Last but not least, the youth have a *creative strategy*. The youth want to learn new things. They always come up with new thoughts that we've never had before. This creativity is important to the transformation of society. In this regard, elements like movies, talk-shows, music and images should be used. For example, in his popular song called "Heal the World," Michael Jackson says, "We could

really get there if you cared enough for the living, make a little space to make a better place.” Giving others just a little space, although we’ve different ideas and ideologies, might be enough to have some respect and tolerate between us and to make this world a better place, not only for us but also for the next generation. The younger generation is our future. We need to take serious action against radicalism and terrorism.

2. COMBATING RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND THROUGH CHILDREN

AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE: THE ZANZIC APPROACH

Peter M. Sensenig and Philip Elish Mvungi

Reflecting on this topic, some concepts need to be clarified such as the understanding of radicalisation, its causes and the reason why it attracts people, particularly young people. This section looks at the experience of Omar Mattar Tajir¹ from the Centre for Community Empowerment, a friend and guest lecturer at the Zanzibar Interfaith Centre (ZANZIC). It then looks at the response that might be appropriate to the problem of radicalisation and provides suggestions with respect to how the work of the ZANZIC addresses these concerns.

1. Radicalisation, extremism, understanding the causes

Radicalisation is a process by which an individual or a group adopts increasingly extreme political, social or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice. According to Ufiem Maurice Ogbonnaya, a Nigerian political scientist, extremism “refers to measures, acts or actions beyond what is considered as the norm or what is generally accepted as being normal.”² Globalisation has accelerated this process. The Internet greatly simplifies the recruitment of innocent young people, and facilitates the communication of the masterminds of extremist groups not only with the new members but also with the different extremist groups.

There are various factors involved in radicalisation of a person. However, three factors for (especially) young people getting radicalised can be mentioned. First, the macro factors (big picture of the realities), second, the meso factors (this is a mid-level issue like family dynamics), and the micro factors (on the most intimate level, including psychological issues within an individual). Therefore, the solution to radicalisation must include all these factors.

On the macro level, socio-economic and political factors are the main cause of radicalisation. They may be poverty, lack of employment, lack of political

1 Omar Tajir Mattar, guest lecturer at the Zanzibar Interfaith Centre, 29 May 2019.

2 Ufiem Maurice Ogbonnaya, “Globalization, Religious Extremism, and Security Challenges in the Twenty-First Century,” *Journal of Sustainable Society*, vol. 2 no. 2 (2013): 60.

space, corruption, economic inequalities, lack of quality education and government crackdown on the youth. On the meso level, the family context might be the reason for radicalisation. This appears in situations characterised by lack of family safety nets, disappearance of communal child-rearing systems, one parent families, the impact of HIV/AIDS, urbanisation that disconnects people from their communities of origin, etc. On the micro level, an individual may be responsible for radicalisation. This kind of radicalisation may stem from, for example, lack of self-esteem, feeling helpless under globalisation, desire for revenge and psychological problems.

2. ZANZIC and resilience against radicalisation

The Zanzibar Interfaith Centre has developed an approach to addressing the radicalisation of young people. This approach consists of a madrassa teaching programme, an interfaith football club, a youth drama / film club and a diploma programme.

This diploma programme is a way of dealing with the challenge of radicalisation. The centre offers a two-year diploma programme on intercultural relations. Students get a chance not only to understand these issues, but also to think about



their role in improving their communities and building peace. The programme includes the following subjects: Ethics, Culture and Worldview, Development Studies, Entrepreneurship, History of Intercultural Relations, Religion, Conflict and Peace, among others.

The forms of teaching are different. However, the debates are very interesting. In a course on globalisation, students discuss the question “Do cultures mostly remain different from one another when the forces of globalization bring them together, or do they form new cultural hybrids?” In another course, students critically analyse the impact of Zanzibar’s growing tourism industry on the local culture. In another course, students discuss the relationship between religion and extremism. This is of great interest to us at the ZANZIC, where we regard religion as part of both the problem and the solution.

This programme, the first of its kind in Tanzania, brings together Zanzibaris and Mainlanders, Muslim and Christian instructors, students and expatriate volunteers so that they can help to develop the skills of the participants in an emerging multicultural and multi-religious society. It is impossible to run such a programme if we are assigning blame, defending one side or one religion against the other, or maintaining rigid distance between members of different religions. If radicalisation and extremism mean a rejection of the other, then what is happening at the ZANZIC is the opposite of that. We form links with one another as we wrestle with the bigger questions and the challenges of an academic programme that pushes students beyond what they have experienced previously.

COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND WITH CHILDREN IN EUROPE

Volker Martin Dally

1. A biographical approach

In spring 2010 our family returned to Wuppertal after working and living a couple of years in Indonesia. Our youngest daughter was 9 years old when we returned to the country where she was born. The immediate neighbourhood



in Indonesia consisted of Javanese Christians, the part of the town in which we lived was predominantly Muslim, her language in school for 3 ½ years was English, but she spoke Indonesian with the kids outside school.

Being back in Germany we enrolled her on a primary school located in the neighbourhood we lived in. Then we had a meeting with the teacher, a young lady, who would be her main teacher. When she saw us and took our personal data for her files, she suddenly said: “Great, I’ll get a German child for my class.” Being briefly confused by what she had said, we asked her what she meant by that. It turned out that, out of 23 children in her class, only seven came from families where both parents were considered Germans by birth. We told the teacher that she would be quite disappointed if she thought our daughter would be a ‘real’ German and explained to her our situation in the past years that had shaped our daughter’s cultural life. (A small example of the deep influence of culture in her years: When I was travelling to Indonesia in the same year, our daughter asked me to record the prayer call from the mosques because she was missing it very much.)

This short story shows three facts I want to point out:

1. Reality in Germany/European countries
2. The problem of a hidden or open mindset
3. The necessity of multicultural/multireligious learning in early childhood

2. The reality in Germany/European countries

For a long time, European countries have been multicultural. There are certain, main, past movements we can detect, for example WWII and the invitation of foreign workers to come to the north, especially to Germany, in the early 1960s, a time of heavy industrial growth. After the collapse of the Berlin Wall, a symbol of the cold war, a third immigration movement from Eastern Europe to Western and Southern Europe began. Another migration movement took place in the past decade as a result of poor living conditions and war-related problems.

There is also temporary migration going on at present, as mentioned in the British Education Research Journal.

They involve shuttle migration (repeated stays of a few months each, usually for informal work), suitcase migration (repeated trips of a few days or weeks each, mainly for trade and small business activities), and other petty trade and business activities related to the flourishing of ‘bazaar economies’ in Central and Eastern Europe and the wider Mediterranean basin. Migration is thus no longer simply the permanent movement from one country to another: it can be circular,

it can mean travelling through a sequence of countries, it can even mean living in several countries at the same time. Especially because of improved physical transport, low-cost air travel and enhanced electronic communications, the concept of migration is being increasingly challenged.¹

This shows the necessity of taking up the reality of being a multi-cultural society.

3. The problem of a hidden or open mindset

The story about my daughter shows that even the so-called ‘open for multicultural living’ people have an attitude of pigeon-holing that is, putting people in certain groups because of their cultural and religious backgrounds. In November 2015 Harvard University² published the results of an intensive investigation which was done in France. The study came to the conclusion that, Muslim integration in Christian-Heritage countries will always fail. The rationale behind that is that, the integration is not really wanted (what is liked best is assimilation, not integration).

Besides, there is a very strong prejudgement about ‘the other’ which people do not want to overcome through real encounters. This applies to most of the different groups. This mindset develops a self-sustaining vicious and dangerous circle. In short, ignorance is the cause of stupidity. Stupidity first leads to violence and then to unintelligent, unethical exploitation of that stupidity to achieve political interests. The rising of the right-wing movement in Europe is a clear signal of that reality.

If we want to overcome this mindset, we must have concepts that provide real encounters which share the value of different cultures and faiths. Integration requires a development of long-term concept starting from the early childhood on.

4. The necessity of multicultural/multireligious learning in early childhood

Demographic development made it clear that there is no alternative to heterogenic, multicultural and multireligious societies. If we want to live in peace and harmony, we need to learn from early childhood not about the differences, but

1 Intercultural education in Europe: Policies, practices and trends, Article in *British Educational Research Journal*, April 2014, p.304.

2 Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies; By Claire L. Adida, David D. Laitin and Marie-Anne Valfort; Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2016.

about the values of being different. Children are still taught about ‘the others,’ most of the time in explaining what is different. However, this well-meant intention leads to the noticing of the differences children had not seen as an obstacle to their playing together and enjoying themselves. For example, our daughter never wanted to become a Muslim, but she enjoyed the sound of the prayer call.

Our brains are shaped in terms of social and emotional development from birth until the age of 12, according to today’s knowledge. Therefore, there is the necessity of providing a multicultural education in early childhood. For that, we need a different curriculum in our kindergartens and primary schools and a different education for teachers at the university level. This new educational system will help children to learn to value differences as an enrichment in diversity.

COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND WITH CHILDREN IN ASIA

Rosmalia Barus

1. Introduction

Talking about religious radicalisation among and through children in Asia, I'll focus on the situation obtaining in Indonesia. Indonesia, a country with the largest number of Muslim citizens in the world, is experiencing several issues relating to religious radicalisation, including issues relating to children's lives.



2. Religious radicalisation among children

I'd like to mention first child violence in Indonesia. According to the KPAI (the independent body for children protection in Indonesia), child violence includes violence based on radicalisation. From 2011 to 2018, the number of cases constantly increased. In 2011, the number of cases was 2178, in 2012: 3512; in 2013: 4311 and in 2014: 5066. This was the highest number, because in 2015 the number of cases dropped to 4309, almost the level of the year 2013, before starting a new cycle of growth to 4622 cases in 2016, then 4579 in 2017 and lastly 4885 cases in 2018.

In Indonesia, radicalism has entered the life of children. According to the information published on Indopos.co.id in June 2019, the police arrested 34 people in central Borneo/Kalimantan, suspecting them of being terrorists. Most of them were children. Thirty-two people are attending a de-radicalisation programme, which is facilitated by the government. The children were being trained to be terrorists. First, they were indoctrinated with radical doctrines and then they had to live apart from the rest of other society members.

Radicalism has also entered educational centres. The information published on REPUBLICA.co.id on 16 May 2018 shows that, according to the research done by the Equals Institute (Institute Setara) in Jakarta and Bandung in 2018, 2.4% of the students were classified as actively intolerant and radical and only 0.3% were classified as tolerant. The research done by Islam Research and Peace Institution (LAKIP) in 59 private schools and 41 state-run schools shows that 48.9% of the students were willing to be involved in violence for religious or moral reasons and that 63.8 % of the students were willing to be involved in acts of sealing other religious temples.

In 2018, the terror attacks on the two churches in Surabaya involved four children from one family. The children were aged between 9 and 18 (Dita & Puji Kuswati: Fadila Sari 12, Vamela Riskika 9, Yusuf Fadil 18 and Firman Halim 16). The bombs were twisted around their chests and bellies.

Radicalism is present among both small groups of Muslims and Christians, especially those belonging to the evangelical movements. For example, in 2011 one of the churches organised a spiritual revival workshop with the theme 'Jakarta for Jesus' Surabaya for Jesus' and 'Raising up a New Revival Generation'. The goal was to change Indonesia into a Christian nation although 85% of the Indonesian people are Muslim. So, this church was radical in its discourse. Of course, this was provocation and an insult to the Muslims. Such exclusivist Christians continue to teach their children this radical message in their families; then children become exclusivists, too.

3. Reasons for radicalisation

There are several reasons for the development of intolerance and radicalism. On the religious perspective, for some Muslim, there is a will of following the principal of sharia. But for some Christians, there is a desire of being exclusivist in considering that, only Christian are on the right side. Therefore, believers of other religions should convert to Christianity. On the socio-political and economical perspective, radicalism may also raise from a system of injustice and lack of the sense of humanity values. This includes the context of familial or domestic intolerance or violence.

In addition, some local wisdom, such as “children must obey their parents”, may become a trap. If the parent is radicalised, then, children have no choice. They will inexorably have to follow the same way. This can also be applied to the lack of positive educational models in the society, whom the children could follow. On the contrary, the fake models as well as the radical ideologies disseminated through the socio media contribute a lot in radicalisation of the children.

4. Consequences of children radicalisation

Once children are radicalised, the entire society and the existence of the humanity are really threaten. Not only radicalised children become a real danger to the society, but also they are a threat to their own life. In this context, exclusive communities will surely proliferate and the number of criminal or terrorist children will constantly increase, if nothing is done to stop children religious radicalisation.

5. Suggestions for overcoming child radicalisation

Various measures need to be taken in order to protect children from radicalisation.

- Respecting children’s right to protection is one of the steps that should be taken. In Indonesia, every child who is under the age of 18 has a right to protection. This protection should be extended to radical ideologies. Thus, the government is responsible for this protection of children.
- Child psychology should be taught to everybody so that vulnerable children are not manipulated in any way.
- Children need to get good educational, religious and moral perspectives in their families, religious organisations and the society.

- An early, religious education should be given to children. Every religion should teach children how to love one another.
- Children's interfaith activities should be organised and children's rights should be developed in school and religious education system.
- Values like caring for every child should be promoted, since "your child is my child."
- The inclusive values need to be agreed together through the de-radicalisation programme run by the government.
- Interfaith activities on socio-economic issues, education and development should be run by religious organisations.
- Scriptures from the Holy Books and doctrines which 'discriminate' children should be reconstructed and reinterpreted.
- Children should be seen as human beings, not things.
- Interfaith campaigns for protecting children from religious radicalisation should be organised.

3. COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND WITH WOMEN

COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND WITH WOMEN IN AFRICA

Jane Ewoule Edeme

1. Introduction¹

Violent extremist ideologies are gaining an exceptional level of adhesion across the globe, taking root in local communities and controlling areas in a number of countries, especially in Africa. This presentation describes how to combat negative religious radicalisation through children, the youth, men and women. But the focus will be put on women in Africa.

2. Understanding the radicalisation of women

Radicalisation is a phenomenon characterised by aggressive and exclusive imposition of one's identity on others, consequently constraining or denying space for the expression of other identities. Radicalisation can manifest itself in the form of physical violence, in systems (including laws, regulations, etc.) and in the broader denial of rights. It also leads to violence.

Radicalisation has no limit of gender, men, women and others are involved. However, women's engagement in radicalisation is mostly linked to their status as wives, mothers and sisters. They are victims of terror attacks, rape and all kind of violence. Hence, some of them have participated in conflicts in reaction to a threatened masculinity. Therefore, it could be argued that the women who commit acts of violence are defying the stereotype of female vulnerability, and that they have surpassed the stereotype of being passive and submissive creatures.

In fact, women in patriarchal societies like most African's, have many times been associated with the values of motherhood, rather than with having the authority to make big decisions in the political sphere, even in developing a

1 Following references have been used: Patrick Devine, Radicalization and Extremism in Eastern Africa: Dynamics and Drivers. *Journal of Mediation and Applied Conflict Analysis*, 2017, Vol. 4, No. 2. Women's Presence in the Radical Religious Extremist Groups, Boko Haram and ISIS: Key Findings. UNDP, Framing the Development Solution to Radicalization in Africa, Summary Report, July 20-22, 2015, Nairobi, Kenya.

structural ideology. They are always portrayed as being unable to kill or as knowing nothing about political affairs. Therefore, the idea that a woman could be harmful and violent like men has often been rejected. So, whenever women take an active part in terror attacks, the most frequently posed question is: '*How could this happen?*' Their violence is directly attributed to men's 'dupery.' Women are considered as victims of men's manipulation. However, the reality is that, of the numerous suicide attacks carried out between 1985 and 2010, more than 250 were perpetrated by women.

The use of women in suicide attacks is highly effective because their potential is almost always denied, ignored and diminished. As a result, terrorist leaders take advantage of that and use female terrorists. This strategy has been very successful, in the sense that it facilitates more unexpected attacks in avoiding all kinds of suspicion. In fact, when women carry out suicide bombing attacks, they are seen as violating a kind of conventional notion of gender and power. The act contradicts the established 'gender roles' of women in terrorism, which define them as victims and individuals to be humiliated for political and religious reasons. In spite of the culture which insists on relegating women into



the private sphere, women continue to reappear on the scene of violence. We have witnessed violent females who have joined terrorist groups voluntarily. For example, Boko Haram consists of women who joined the group voluntarily and maintained their loyalty to the group after being 'liberated' from it. It is important to examine the ideology of terrorist groups in order to understand how they accommodate women in their cause.

3. Women in Boko Haram

The violence of Boko Haram was brought on the international screen when the group kidnapped 276 girls from a boarding school in Chibok in the northern part of Nigeria in April 2014. Since then, abductions have been Boko Haram's typical attack method. In the media, public discourse and comments, it was mentioned that the girls were raped and forced to marry Boko Haram fighters or be brain washed. However, the reality can be seen from different perspectives. Boko Haram offers young women a unique opportunity to change the traditional 'role of victim' to that of 'actress'. Girls no longer feel vulnerable and weak; instead, they feel they are 'powerful'. Thus, some women are eager to join the group. For instance, some of their women teach other women how to be good wives and how to help their husbands in fighting 'jihad'.

One of the goals of Boko Haram is to establish a 'pure' Islamic state. Thus, women are required to help the fighters by cooking for them, cleaning and bringing up children. While the dominant narrative shows that women were forced, coerced and abducted to become suicide bombers, there are many females who support and join Boko Haram voluntarily.

Of course, the contribution of women fighters to Boko Haram's suicide missions is very high. The first female suicide bomber committed in 2014 drastically changed the image of women in West African society. Until January 2015, there had been a total of 15 female suicide bombings. The number of women who have been used in suicide attacks since 2014 is at least 151. Some might have been part of the first group of girls who were abducted in the Chibok boarding school. The increase in asymmetric attacks by the group using children and women as suicide bombers is a reality in radicalisation nowadays. It is, however, important to note that suicide bombings are not an Islamic innovation. These attacks were the preferred tactic of the Tamil Tigers in the 1980s; the Tamil Tigers invented the explosive belt.

In short, the use of female suicide bombers for tactical reasons gives the group much more leverage than male suicide bombers do: (1) female attacks

generate disproportional media converge, (2) since women are not expected to be violent, it is easier for them to gain access to places and reach the target, (3) the hijab enables women to hide the explosive belt in it and (4) women gain power by being active rather than staying in the traditional perception of vulnerability.

4. Combating negative radicalisation

The following steps could be relevant and helpful in the de-radicalisation process of women:

- There is a need to invest in women and young girls so as to prevent radicalisation.
- The factors affecting the development of women should be properly addressed in using rights-based approach.
- Since young people are the main target of the recruitment and mobilisation efforts by violent extremist organisations, opportunities for their empowerment and self-reliance such as employment and vocational education should be provided to them.
- Violent and extremist messages in the family even in the society should be always challenged.
- Awareness should be raised among parents so that they can teach their children, both, boys and girls and talk to them about everything regarding their life.
- Interreligious dialogue should be initiated in order to counter the negative effects of destructive narratives and violent attacks by extremist groups.

COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND WITH WOMEN IN ASIA

Dyah Ayu Krismawati

1. Introduction

This paper shows the role of women and their potential to get involved in combating religious radicalisation in Indonesia.

I would like to start with the story about the suicide bomb attack of May 2018 in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia. Here is the story:

On Sunday morning a couple and their four children carried out three attacks on churches in the city of Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia. After dropping off his wife and two daughters (12 and 9 years old) at the Indonesia Christian church, the father drove a car into the central Pentecostal church



and exploded the bomb there. At the same time, their two sons (18 and 16 years old), laden with explosives, rode a motorbike into the Catholic Church. The attacks, carried out over half an hour, killed 18 people, including the bombers. On Sunday evening, another bomb appears to have exploded prematurely in the apartments in Sidoarjo, nearby Surabaya. In this case both parents and their 17-year-old daughter died. Three other children survived. On the next day, a family of five: father, mother and their three children rode two motorbikes into the Surabaya police headquarters where they detonated explosives. Everyone died except their daughter (8 years old), who was seated between her father and mother but wasn't wearing a bomb herself in the attack on Monday. The involvement of the woman in the suicide bomb shocked many people. After the attack on May 2018 in Surabaya, one of the neighbor of the suicide bomber said: "I knew them every day for years. The wife was a nurse but she quit her job at the hospital because she felt nauseous at the sight of blood, and didn't like seeing people in pain. So how can it be that she did this to her children?"¹

2. The role of women in religious radicalisation

The terrorist attacks which happened in Surabaya are the worst attacks Indonesia has seen in more than a decade. This church bombing marks a new jihadist phenomenon which involved a whole family, including the woman and the children, and was done by a pious, well-educated middle-class family in East Java.

The direct involvement of women in the intolerant movement, radicalism and terrorism in Indonesia began in 2016, when at least six women were arrested after it was discovered that one woman was planning to blow up herself at the presidential palace. This new phenomenon is in line with the new trend developed by the Islamic State (IS) in 2013 where women got more space to be an active actor in IS activities. Many women spread information through the Internet for recruitment, plan terror attacks, set up the bomb and to execute a suicide bomb attack.

Women also produce and bring up young terrorists, protect terrorists by giving them a safe space in hiding them as partners or companions, and become combatants. They also raise funds, they are transaction facilitators and they are suicide bombers. Women are given more space in terrorist activities because they have more advantages than men because a woman is usually seen as less dangerous than a man.

1 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/19/indonesia-blasts-surabaya-family-from-good-neighbours-suicide-bombers> – 19 May 2019 – accessed on 20 August 2019.

3. Factors for female radicalisation

Regarding the roles and potentials of Muslim woman in intolerance and radicalism, the Wahid Institute Foundation and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies reported the results of their interesting research which was done in 5 regions (West Java: Bogor, Depok, Middle Java: Solo Raya; East Java: Malang, Sumenep) in Indonesia from September to November 2017. The research found several factors which increase women's involvement in intolerance and radicalism, including the following:

- (1) The existence of regulations which stimulate intolerance, violate religious freedom and support terrorism, for example Law No. 1/PNPS/1965 on Prevention of Blasphemy and Abuse of Religions and a Joint Decree on the establishment of houses of worship. Both regulations were/are used by radical groups to destroy minority religions;
- (2) Lack of discussion about prevention of the involvement of women and children in terrorism in the draft terrorism bill;
- (3) The existence of discrimination against women;
- (4) The presence of many women who are affiliated with radical groups; and
- (5) The giving of wrong direction by some religious scholars to women who are trying to learn more about religious doctrines.

The research also reported many factors that make women get involved in radicalisation activities. For example:

- (1) Social relations. They use Facebook and WhatsApp to develop and strengthen their networks. They discuss and give support, including financial support, to their networks;
- (2) Personal relations. This is a very important factor because many women who are married believe that a wife must obey her husband, since the husband is the leader of the family;
- (3) Ideological factors. Many women want to learn more about their own religions. This is used by radical groups to attract them. They create narratives which can be understood easily. Radical groups always try to give answers to day-to-day problems and describe 'their Islam' rigidly and clearly. They can be reached easily both online and offline. They keep on trying to convince women about the new system based on their Islamic doctrine to fix the economic problems in Indonesia and in the whole world.²

² <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1o12yYuYq372LRYELOd1htMQYfEQOWYUub/view> – accessed on 25 August 2019

4. Women's potential to combat religious radicalisation

In spite of women's potential to get involved in religious radicalisation and terrorism, women have great potential to combat religious radicalisation. The research report by the Wahid Institute Foundation and the Indonesian Survey Institute (Lembaga Survey Indonesia) proves this fact. This report is the result of a survey which involved 1.500 respondents (50% women, 50% men) from 34 provinces in Indonesia. The report shows that 80.7% of women involved in the survey support religious freedom, while only 77.4% of men support it. On the issue of the willingness of sweeping and committing violence against people of other faiths, 76,7% of men are ready to be involved, while a big number of women, (80,8%) are not ready to be involved. On the side of intolerance, women are less than men, because, only 55% of women are intolerant, while 59,2% of men are reported to be intolerant. In comparing both genders, the number of women willing to hate people of other religion groups is less (53,3%) than the number of men (60,3%).³

In addition, the report suggests that women have a great chance to promote peace and to become peacemakers. It has been observed in Indonesia, that most of the time, whenever a conflict occur, women, on the ground, find a way to put an end on it, by creating communities to start a reconciliation process and build peace.⁴

Given that women can get involved in radicalisation and that they can also combat religious radicalisation, several things are needed:

- *Capacity building*: Women should be encouraged, supported and trained so that they are aware of and able to handle developments in many areas (such as religious, economic, political, socio-cultural and technological spheres). Therefore, they can guide their children and families in developing tolerance and living peaceful lives. The training will enable women to combat religious radicalisation through many mediums.
- *Building networks*: Cooperation and encounters with other women and many different kinds of religious people are vital to the successful combatting of religious radicalisation by women. Women should build networks in promoting peace.

3 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/19/indonesia-blasts-surabaya-family-from-good-neighbours-suicide-bombers> – 19 May 2019 – accessed on 20 August 2019.

4 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/19/indonesia-blasts-surabaya-family-from-good-neighbours-suicide-bombers> – 19 May 2019 – accessed on 20 August 2019.

COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND WITH WOMEN IN EUROPE

Helga Rau

1. Introduction¹

Salafism and right-wing extremism are above all one thing in the public consciousness: Male. However, in recent research, a particular attention have been given to the role of women and young girl in Salafism movement as well as in the right-wing extremism groups. In this paper, I would like to talk about the situation in Germany, why women join this extremist scene and the possibility of preventing extremism.

At present, both men and young women get radicalised. And the questions that are raised in German society are: *What are the reasons for this development? What are the factors that are attractive to women?*

2. Factors of women radicalisation

Very often young women from socially weak and uneducated areas go to war zones. They feel marginalised in the society or in the immediate family environment, where there is lack of love, respect and acceptance. Contacts at school and at work or the presentation in the media, films and literature can also contribute to this.

For people who have had traumatic experiences or on to whom such experiences have been passed by the first or second generation, the feeling of shame

1 Following sources have been consulted: 1. Jung und Radikal, das Bulletin des Deutschen Jugendinstituts 1/2015; 2. PRIF-Report 8/2018, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (HSFK), Report-Reihe Gesellschaft Extrem; 3. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Dossier Rechtsextremismus 2015; Extremistisch, militant, radikalisiert von Michaela Glaser, Deutsches Jugendinstitut e.V., Impulse 1-2015; 4. Was Frauen in den Dschihad zieht, Spiegel online 24.7.2019; 5. Lämmer unter Wölfen, Mädchen und Frauen in aktuellem Rechtsextremismus und Salafismus, Fachstelle für Prävention, Hrsg. Aktion Kinder- und Jugendschutz e.V. Regionale Beratungsteams gegen Rechtsextremismus Schleswig-Holstein; 6. Hassan Abu Hanieh, Mohammed Abu Rumman: Dschihadistinnen. Faszination Märtyrertod, 2018, Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachf; Hass-im-Netz.Info; 7. Frauen im Salafismus, Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Inneres und Sport. Abtlg. Verfassungsschutz, 2018, 1. Auflage.

and humiliation can turn personal anger into revenge. They personally suffer humiliation, exclusion and conflicts related to foreign policy, and develop empathy for the humiliated. This empathy and anger lead to the decision to help friends and brothers who are injured abroad. For such fragile individuals, the rage arising from disappointments and insults can be well intercepted and channelled through soul catchers, ideologies and skilful propaganda.

In the so-called chat rooms 'sister-rooms,' girls and young women are given the opportunity to communicate and exchange ideas. Young women are shown a romantic picture of the wedding of a jihadist, presented as a hero. From such exposure, young women dream of a romantic family-life with net moral separation between good and evil. It is an idealistic traditional family life that they want to live. They see the Western idea of equality between men and women as a dangerous fantasy. For them, feminism and gender-mainstreaming are concepts of the enemy.

In addition, the propaganda uses emotional themes. It is about belonging, self-esteem, acceptance and taking the questions of young women seriously. Often it is a rebellion against parents' attitude. Sometimes the young women come from families in which religion is hardly practised or the parents call themselves atheists. They prefer an environment in which they can live according to certain religious beliefs.

Some women travel to Syria because they want to help the people there as Mother Teresa² from India did. They are quickly disillusioned because the jihadists do not protect the Syrians from the regime; they also kill innocent people. Then, returning from Syria becomes very difficult for women because they must have a male guardian with whom they can travel through the areas controlled by the Islamic State. Otherwise, escape is almost impossible.

3. Statistics and acts of radicalised women

The number of women associated with jihadists is not well known, since the statistics for that are very rare. The German government talks about 1.050 people

2 Mother Mary Teresa Bojaxhiu (1910-1997) was an Albanian-Indian, Roman Catholic nun and missionary, honoured in the Catholic Church as Saint Teresa of Calcutta. Founder of the Missionaries of Charity with over 4,500 nuns and was active in 133 countries in 2012. The congregation manages homes for people who are dying of HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis. It also runs soup kitchens, dispensaries, mobile clinics, children's and family counselling programmes, as well as orphanages and schools. Members take vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, and also profess a fourth vow – to give "wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor." On 6 September 2017, Teresa and St. Francis Xavier were named co-patrons of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Calcutta. See on https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_Teresa, consulted on 24. June 2020.

who went to Syria, 200 of whom died. However, the German Federal Office of Criminal Investigation assumes that less than 5% people in the radical scene are women. Nowadays women act more offensively in public than it have been perceived before. This is a new development. In fact, generally, women are rarely directly involved in crime. They tend to act in the background. Of course, some of them act in public, for example Beate Zschäpe, who was at the centre of the right-wing terrorist group National Socialist Underground (NSU). Therefore, some think that the number of women terrorists is bigger than that. The focus of the research has very much been on men.

4. Combating radicalisation of women

Radicalisation in German society is not always due to religious motivations. For example, right-wing radicalisation, which is a dangerous phenomenon, attract



many people who feel disappointed by their families, friends and the society. However, some active members want to end their membership in the radical movement when they find out that the reasons of their adhesion were not fulfilled. This situation of permanent disappointment causes them to have depression, for they don't see any further meaning in life. Since the year 2000, professional and semi-professional offers opportunities to promote an exit from radical groups. The Hessian Foundation for Peace and Conflict Research, Hessische Stiftung für Friedens – und Konfliktforschung (HSFK) makes the following suggestions on how to fight radicalisation:

- Strengthening social resilience through political and cultural educational work, and through transcultural and antiracist educational work. Young people should learn to regard migration and its background as normal. They should also be encouraged to endure differences and to deal with differences without postulating stigmatising and discriminatory positions;
- Striving for the depolarisation of public debate. Preventing use of political polarising slogans;
- The aim of political work is to set a clear demarcation and distance from populist parties, and
- Promoting the undertaking of comparative studies.

Young women, and young people more generally, must be strengthened in their search for orientation and identity, in recognition of their right to self-determination. This includes making the diversity of lifestyles visible. The pedagogical prevention of radicalisation should aim at showing young people that learning to understand diversity is valuable.

Apart from governments, churches should also empower the youth. Young people, who experience esteem and recognition, and at the same time understand and experience the values of democracy, shouldn't join radical and extremist groups.



Old Slave Market in Mkunazini

4. COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND THROUGH MEN

COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND THROUGH MEN IN THE GERMAN CONTEXT

Martin Domke

1. Introduction

My first question at this conference is: Is there a *positive* religious radicalisation? Religious leaders and some theologians tend to say that ‘radical’ means going back to the roots. It is this kind of sophistication of the debate which obviously has great public meaning. Some years ago, I would have agreed with such an ‘internal’ approach. But today I want to leave this interpretation in the internal circles. I see an urgent need to be clearer in our public statements and to argue in congruence with the actual field of discussion. In fact, I cannot see any religion that wins believers by whatever radicalisation it may go through. Christian history is full of radical movements; all of them have produced violence, in psychological aspects at least.¹

2. From radicalism to exclusivism

Everywhere the radicalisation of religion will lead to exclusiveness. Exclusiveness leads to the creation of ‘otherness’ which doesn’t help to build community, not personally, neither locally nor even regionally. Religions or religious movements might profit in the short term from radicalism. However, as radicalised groups, aims to stay apart from or even above all others, it ends up in destroying rather than building communities, by locking itself from the rest of the world in a circles. Whether the motivation of exclusivism could be inspired by “divine power” or simply by human hubris, the result on the community remain the same. For the Christian side, I would firmly insist that, we should never again fall in this kind of a behaviour or rather idolatry of isolating ourselves from the rest of the society.

1 One would have to go into details as far as religious movements within the middle age or moreover from the 17th to the 19th century with the separation of many “radical” movements who insisted in a “pure” way of preaching the gospel like Methodists, Baptists, 7th Day Adventists, Presbyterian churches and many others. But this is definitely not meant by “radicalization” in the context of this discussion.

3. Combating radicalism

Combating radicalism means (1) creating social security; (2) providing the best education and (3) raising awareness and developing decisiveness of communities (political systems on injustice and reducing poverty).

1) Social security and education

Solid social structures and a strong educational framework are the key factors for stabilising society, especially young people. In this context, education includes education for religious tolerance. In order to achieve a change for the better in this field, three things are important: solid information, creation of empathy for an alien religious surrounding and a clear and non-negotiable position against all forms of violence. Young men especially must encounter firm reactions against all kinds of phantasy concerning religion.

2) Looking for new ways in life

Radicalised young people, mostly young men, are very often victims of seducers who persuade them to turn away from their old life and to follow a new movement instead. Many find relief in joining a 'serious' form of religion. They find people who care for them. Such people give them at least an impression on how they can play an important role in their communities. This is very attractive to young people, especially young men. Once they get involved in an extremist group, they earn in importance, they are respected in the group, and even known internationally. Quickly they are on their "new way". At this step, they may not even realise that they have become instruments for producing an atmosphere of ignorance and discrimination and violence. Therefore, they become, as young people, but also their religion, an instrument of splitting up communities, on local level, regional and even global world.

Whenever we talk about radicalisation, we should be aware that every young man (and every young woman) who turns away from our community is a loss to us. It means that we have not paid attention to the things that radicalised him (or her). It means that we have taken for granted our values and (democratic) system, but have not seen the conflicts and even sufferings, especially of young men who sometimes have been marginalised. It means that we have failed to encourage all young people to follow the ideas of a liberal and open society. It also means that we have given too much power to our materialistic and exclusive values, as the whole economic system we are dependent on. Then this materialistic system is producing violence by excluding young people from a self-reliant and responsible life in our context.

4. Strategies for combating radicalisation

After this more or less general background, I mention 7 strategies which might be discussed. Although in Christian tradition “7” represents completion and fulfilled action, in this context, I cannot pretend to be complete. It is just all I can humbly present at this moment.

1) *Information and Exchange*

When we realise that there is a lack of communication that leads to misunderstanding and ultimately to hatred, we have to reverse this lack of understanding by mechanisms such as the following:

a. Informing and teaching

What seems simple and self-evident has not been carefully analysed yet. It is important that the *whole* curriculum throughout the educational system in our country is revised in such a way that there is a study flow of information on religion and common values from kindergarten to university. The basic level of humanity which can be derived from nearly all religious systems and their respective teachings must be integrated into all aspects of education. This means, for example, that Muslim and Christian approaches to peace are presented without prejudice and highlighted again and again without discrimination against anyone. Without starting a new discussion, I would suggest that we think carefully about an intelligent sanctioning system on discrimination which makes it clear to everyone that we don't accept discrimination. Full stop.

b. Opening safe space

Developing room for expression of feelings and understanding. We have to encourage our professionals working with young men to get to know them better than they do. Intercultural competence has not been an issue for a long time. This time is over. We have to know more about other cultures and young men and their specific needs.

c. Story-telling and listening

During the massive influx of refugees into our country, a significant number of people were touched by very moving experiences. The refugees, foreign people, children, women, men, young people and old people had and still have to tell stories about their experiences. The encounters between German and non-German people during the three past years have helped enormously to understand various things, including conflicts. When people from outside the country were asked to tell their stories, the autochthones profited greatly from following their

stories and got easy access to their specific situations. In our context, it means that we have to follow the impact of the Christian approach to people and give them room to express *themselves*. Young men must find ways to express themselves, not only in their peer groups, but also in the public domain.

2. Considering Islam in Europe as a positive reality

Taking Islam seriously in our society as a religion that belongs to at least 5% of the German population. At this point, I have to admit that it is very difficult to be honest. However, we at least have to notice that right up to know there are only a few mosques that are ready to have real dialogue; the same goes for the Christian side. Both sides badly need that kind of dialogue. Church parishes and mosques do not meet. We have to establish opportunities of encounters between our different religious places, leaders and members. We need an open discussion and severe measures for getting young men out of their self-sufficient circles, in mosques or in groups where they produce all kinds of fantasy on their role as male members. That imagination is disconnected from real life. Young men are needed and our society must show them the necessity of participating in daily life including religious sphere, rather than developing attitudes of exclusivism of moral or even religious values from the mainstream society.

3) Fighting prejudices

Prejudices are produced in public and on social media. There are a number of Christians even in our Westphalian church who are not ashamed of spreading wrong messages about Islam, the mosques and the Islamic communities in the area. We shouldn't tarnish the image of other religions and their institutions; instead, we must engage in dialogue with them.

As far as young men are concerned, it is essential that they find an open space in their respective communities for carrying out their activities. Many churches run youth centres where young Muslims turn up with a "special behaviour". For instance, it happens in a special kind of macho appearance and at least verbal violence which frightens other youngsters who will apply all this directly to the religion of foreign contemporaries. As reaction of it, young Christians sometimes like to provoke their surrounding by blackening other "religions". However, there are good examples of common approaches to a better understanding of each other, although it is may be hard to get a large number of mosques involved in the process.

4) Mitigating the negative impact of the social backgrounds

We have to emphasise, however, that in terms of violence and the fear caused by

violent expressions, violent young men mostly come from a social background where they never learnt to handle conflicts in their close environment. This is not a matter of religion; instead, it signifies that the social background of an individual and/or the relevant traditions might play an enormous role in shaping one's behaviour. Therefore, we can say that society has largely failed to promote facilities that allow people (especially young men) to express their needs and feelings while at the same time respecting others who do not share their backgrounds and traditions.

However, this applies to other communities as well, and is rather a social and cultural problem than a religious one. Again, it is often very difficult to separate or to distinguish sociocultural and religious impact in the human behaviour that may represent always a fertile ground for radical groups and leaders. In short, fighting poverty is one major pillar in combating radicalisation and has to be done firmly by the politically responsible individuals and institutions at all levels.



I am well aware that this is an anachronistic demand in our capitalistic world and neoliberal error that we follow even in church. Poverty should never be acceptable to us as religious leaders and people who care about the shape of our common future in life.

5) *Fighting hate speech*

It has become necessary to manage expressions that vilify others. As I pointed out earlier, this is predominantly the task of Christians, since Christianity is the religion of the majority in Germany. There are places and parishes in Germany where even the clergy make polemic speeches against other religions.

At the same time, in the recent years, the German Security Services have discovered that a large number of mosques have been radicalising Muslims. The Federal Investigation Bureau / Secret Service has identified those who mislead their parishioners / mosque members by radicalising the message of the Qur'an. So, if in some places preachers encourage young people to go to Syria and fight with IS troops, then it is essential for all people of good will to demand that the state authorities fight hard and effectively against this misuse of religion. It has to be stated clearly and publicly that these criminal acts won't be tolerated anywhere in the world. I am personally not happy with some of the judgements given, since they are very light. Hate speech might be an issue of peer groups and thus a part of adolescence. However, in public and in social media hate speech should not be tolerated.

The juridical fight, however, can in and of itself never be a solution to it. It must be covered and be based on a common understanding of the values and rules that are respected and followed by all groups, associations, the civil society and religious communities.

6) *Finding out the role of man in our context*

There are thousands of publications in the so-called Western tradition on the role of men in the society. The challenge is that in most of our religious communities, traditional values tend to be very conservative on this issue. Yet, on the ground we face other trends. Meanwhile, in our church there are more female students of theology than male ones. In our church, and partly in the society as well, we are facing the consequences of having promoted women's and girls' rights throughout all the wings of social and educational life. In changing our minds and habits towards a well-balanced relationship between men and women on all levels, remarkable progress has been made.

However, we have just started to realise that, for a long period, boys have been left alone. For instance, in most of the kindergartens in Germany, almost the half of the kids are boys. At the same time, it is rare to see men working in those educational structures. This means, those young boys will rarely find men in their childhood who could serve as a model, a pattern for an integer “male” behaviour to them. Especially when they have problematic family backgrounds, where the traditional role of men are transferred to the next generations without reflection, they will not find positive models for being “men” in their school career until the age of 12, when it is already too late to form them by imitating what they could have seen from elderly men in their natural surroundings. In short, we urgently need more men in education system.

7) Defining common public goals

Finally, young people, especially young men, want to be active in their areas and prove that they can do something. In traditional societies, there are rites of initiation that mark the border between youth and adolescence. In most cases, they include very difficult practices. However, we must not stick to ancient rites, but we have to give room to young people – male and female – so that they can carry out their activities. We have to give them the opportunity to express their fears, dreams and hopes.

We have just left the Climate Action Day, September 20, behind us. It would be an important step for young people belonging to any religion to stand up for something which, at first glance, has nothing to do with their religions, but rather with the concerns of all young people all over the world. Young people are easy to influence and are also easy to be involved in whatever activity! When they have a common task to do, many of them are usually committed to it. This can lead to a better, mutual understanding with others. Of course, this demands the churches and other religious organisations to open up for the sake of giving young people independence. The church should at least (1) encourage young people to fight for their rights and (2) build their capacities so that they can define their own goals in life. In this process, it is not the young people who have to change first, but rather the ‘old’ authorities (especially the church). There is much to be done. But what if young men are waiting for action to be done by us? We should not make them wait too long!

COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND THROUGH MEN IN AFRICA

Canon Richard Joseph Kamenya

A variety of theories attempt to explain why some individuals radicalise along religious lines and why radicalisation is strongly associated with individual-level psychological trauma, including historically troubled social relations and process-oriented factors, particularly religious identification and exposure to radical networks. The factors for the radicalisation of men can be put into four categories: political, religious, socio-economic, personal and identity-related factors. However, it is shown that men get radicalised mainly for political and religious reasons.

Political, radicalising drives are:

- Perceived wrongs committed against other groups;
- State oppression;
- Strong feelings of solidarity with other kinds of struggle;
- A group's desire for recognition;
- Perceived humiliation or oppression by an outside country or forces;
- Perceptions of inequality, either within or between countries; and
- Lack of opportunities and hopelessness for the future.

Religious, radicalising drives are:

- A desire to spread one's religion, to establish a supranational community or to bring about an apocalyptic event;
- Animosity towards other religious groups because of the holier than thou mindset;
- Anger at a government that does not respect peoples' religions;
- The search for a sense of personal purpose and fulfillment of feeling belonging to superior Religious Group.
- Thus, negative radicalisation in Africa can be combated in the following ways:
- Religious leaders and preachers (for example those teaching in Sunday schools and madrasa) can play a significant role in encouraging or preventing radicalisation because of their influence on community members, especially at the grass-roots level.

- Extremists and polemic groups should be discouraged in religions, since they cause radicalisation.
- Religious elementary teaching should be encouraged so as to promote morality, peace, unity, acceptance of others and respect for differences that will help to abolish negative stereotypes and prejudices.
- Civic education on human rights and freedom of worship should be promoted. Beliefs should be taught at every level of education so as to build a spirit of nationalism and patriotism.
- African governments should consult religious leaders from different religions and establish an authoritative, mutual and acceptable council that will facilitate dialogue among religions groups in resolving the conflicts caused by wrong interpretations of religious scriptures.
- Constitutions should not include articles/sections that declare any religion as an official state religion so as to reduce a sense of superiority versa the inferiority complexities.
- Leaders of all ranks (political or religious) should continue to encourage all citizens to maintain unity in spite of their religious and other differences.
- Politicians should desist from using religion for political gain and religious establishments should not be used for that purpose.
- The mass media should have programmes that promote religious teachings against radicalisation.



COMBATING NEGATIVE RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION AMONG AND THROUGH MEN IN ASIA

Reuel Norman O. Marigza

1. Some preliminary thoughts

I like the way the theme of this session has been phrased: ‘Negative radicalisation in the name of religion.’ Being a radical person is not bad. The Latin root word ‘radix’ simply means roots or going to the roots. It is a perspective that says it is not enough to see problems and issues and propose solutions from a surface level alone; we need to go deeper than that and strike at their very roots.

Coming from the Philippines where many times palliative solutions are applied to age-old/historical problems, I can say those solutions don’t work. In oth-



er words, 'Band-Aid solutions' will not work for somebody who is suffering from cancer. However, many of those who say they want to go to the roots or seek to solve a problem by examining the root causes, do so by going to the extreme and seeking to influence through a continuous and incessant negative radicalisation.

2. Understanding radicalisation according to the definition

Wikipedia defines radicalisation as a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or contemporary ideas and expressions of a nation. Here, the emphasis is on the word process. The result of the process is radicalism. With respect to religion, it is observed that:

In popular view, religious radicalism refers to extremely violent acts in the name of religion. Extremists are willing to undertake violent acts in the service of God and have little sympathy for their victims that they consider as enemies of God. Just as importantly, religious radicalism inculcates the will to readily sacrifice one's own life for the returns of 'martyrdom' that comes through the perceived service of God.¹

Zaben notes that religious radicalism or religious extremism is not defined by violent acts alone.

1. The intense drive to expand the religious law of a particular sect. Since fundamentalists are critical of existing institutions, they want to impose their programmes on society.
2. The attitude of radical elements towards people who do not accept the laws and views of extremists. Efforts to convert isolation and violence are their characteristics.
3. The rejection (by extremists) of values that are not native to a religion and the rigorous inculcation of values that are a part of the religion. Thus, extremists protect their followers by keeping them busy so that they do not have the time for leisure or mass media.

In the Philippines, an ISIS-aligned group took over a city called Marawi, popularly known as the Islamic city in the country, on 23 May 2017, and an ensuing fight with the Philippine military lasted until October 2017. It displaced around 360,000 people in Marawi and the surrounding areas. This Marawi Siege shows what people can do in the name of religious radicalism. The group wanted to build a caliphate in the Philippines first and then spread it to the rest of Southeast Asia.

1 Aymen Zaben, <http://www.digitaljournal.com/blog/17344>.

In 1950, Frank Laubach, a missionary, did not make a name by converting people to Christianity. His passion was teaching. He was known for his adult literacy programme whose slogan was “each one teach one.” Through his inspiration, our church, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), established the Dansalan College in Marawi, not as a means to proselytise, but to prove that living together for people who belong to different religions is possible. For almost 7 decades, it has been a Christian institution, serving a predominantly Muslim population. The recent attack in Marawi has once more awakened the deep-seated prejudices and bias we have against each other. The tendency was to use the attack as a religious war. People who hold these positions wanted to dominate and drown us in a kind of religious war with their voices.

Young Muslims, professionals, some Muslim scholars and a small number of Christians were invited to a gathering hosted by the UK Ambassador to the Philippines. In my speech, I said:

Is it not high time for us to heighten and intensify the voices of those who speak for peace and gain a space in the arena of those that shape and inform public opinion? And if that space is not there, we must create it. If the voice is not heard or is feeble, we must make that voice heard. Is it not high time for us to make the voice heard, that religion is not a weapon for violence but a tool for peace?

Tis statement was supported by the Bishop of the UCCP, who also said: “There is a need in the long-term to address the issue of extremism and fundamentalism by intensifying and strengthening interfaith relations among peace-loving peoples of faith.” That time is now.

3. A Dialogue of Life

Zaben says:

The key to defeating terrorism is to reduce the motivation for radicalisation. Public awareness and a culture built on tolerance and acceptance is an essential tool in this battle. A better alternative would be to encourage an ethos of discussion, religious equality, more inter-religious understanding, the end of religious politics and elimination of prejudices through education and equal opportunities to different societies of the world.

The 1984 document of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue embodies the following four forms of interreligious dialogue:

a) The dialogue of life, where people strive to live in an open and neighbourly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations;

- b) The dialogue of action, in which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people;
- c) The dialogue of theological exchange, where specialists seek to deepen the understanding of their respective religious heritages, and to appreciate each other's spiritual values; and
- d) The dialogue of religious experience, where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for God or the Absolute.

At the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, we had a programme called 'Learning from the People,' which involved the youth and adults. This is an exposure and immersion programme. One aspect of this programme is about Christians living together with their Muslim brothers and sisters in such a way that they get to know each other and work together. The programme has been a paradigm-shifting and life-changing experience to many of those who participated in it. They have begun to realise that they have the same needs and concerns, and the same aspirations and hopes as the others, irrespective of the differences in their religions. They have also realised that they can work together, and not against each other, in addressing problems.

The Marawi we see now should not be the norm for the future. We must work for a different future. We can imagine what can possibly be:

No more shall bombs rain on her
 No more shall sniper shots abound
 No more shall cannons be at each corner
 No more shall tanks crawl around

No more shall smoke engulf the city
 No more cries of deep despair
 No more whining from planes without pity
 No more death's stench in the air

The people of the Book and others in unity:
 Muslims, Christians and lumads²
 Live once again in peace and harmony
 One people again!

May this happen in our land as well as in other lands.

² Lumads are the indigenous communities of Mindanao. Many of them are neither Christian nor Muslim.





VII.

**JOINT ACTION OF FAITH
ACTORS IN COMBATING
RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION
LOCALLY, REGIONALLY AND
GLOBALLY**

JOINT ACTION OF FAITH ACTORS IN COMBATING RADICALISATION GLOBALLY

Gaudence Peter Mushi

Faith actors are integral members of civil society and key contributors to public and political discourse. They have a unique understanding of the role of religion in violent extremism and radicalisation, and therefore they have a critical role to play in finding an effective solution to combat the recruitment of new followers and the inspiration to violent radicalisation.

Quite often, religion is either targeted or exploited by extremists. Various violent groups claim that their actions have a basis in Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. Even white supremacist and far-right groups have all, in various ways, invoked religion—either directly or indirectly—to explain, justify and inspire violence and radicalisation.

Faith actors may not have enough resources with which to impose peace on people, but they have a superior intellect as well as moral and spiritual authority to influence their communities in a way that even governments with all their resources may not. They have this powerful, positive influence because they can inspire the heart, the intellect and the emotions.

Since radicalisation and religious extremism stem from ignorance and a shallow understanding of religious teachings or, quite often, a misinterpretation of such teachings, either deliberately or as a result of a genuine lack of understanding, this makes faith actors a critical component in the efforts to address both radicalisation and extremism. Because of their unique position in their communities, they can play a very significant role in formulating and implementing policies for countering violent extremism.

In doing good things faith actors are very much motivated by their faiths. Mother Theresa of Calcutta, India, did what she did because of her faith. Mahatma Gandhi did what he did because of his faith. The moral authority that faith actors have can be a catalyst for peace and a tool for countering radicalisation.

Understanding the role of religion as a potential driver of violent extremism and radicalisation is important. Faith actors are equally important in countering both. Interest and space for including faith actors in making policies for countering radicalisation has grown over the past few years in some of the countries

that are facing violence or potential violence. However, since religion usually interacts with a wide range of other factors, clear guidance is needed so as to have a better understanding of the degree to which ideological and religious factors contribute to violent extremism. Such guidance will be of great help to policymakers and the practitioners in this field.

Across the world there has been increasing recognition of the important role faith actors play in peace and conflict. Since the vast majority of people in the world consider themselves to be religious, the role that the people of faith can play either as preventers or instigators of violent radicalisation need to be recognised. It is imperative that the international community and national governments support religious leaders in their efforts to spread their messages of peace, harmony and hope. Governments and major institutions around the world need to involve permanently and consistently with faith actors in formulating foreign policies, including peace building, development and protection of human rights.

JOINT ACTION OF FAITH ACTORS IN COMBATING RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION IN AFRICA

Benson Kalikawa Bagonza

1. Rationale

Three perspectives came to my mind when I was asked to reflect on this joint action. First, the fact that all the major religions in Africa that are responsible for religious radicalisation trace their origins to the same ancestor – Abraham/Abram. This great father of our faiths is responsible for the emergency of the branches of testimonies found all over Africa. Islam, Christianity and Judaism – moderate and radical, liberal and orthodox, classic and contemporary – claim that they draw their vitality and validity from the same father. In a world of faiths that is torn apart by reasoning, other than believing, this is a tragedy that complicates the search for sustainable, global peace.

Secondly, unlike Europe, America and the Middle East, Africa is a recipient of these major religions. Although Africa played a vital part in the making of religious global phenomenon, it is true that Africa received these religions, not in their original state but after some alterations had been made to them through historical movements. As a result, Africa became the battle ground for these religious movements and the laboratory in which to test new religious flavours. Radicalisation is one of the products that are being tested in Africa and marketed at the same time.

Thirdly, radicalisation causes a paradoxical situation in all major religions. It negatively affects the manufacturer, and not the target consumer. For instance, in Christianity the radicalisation that manifests itself in the form of extremism becomes an enemy of Christianity, and not of other religions. This applies to the extremism in other religions as well. Therefore, today, unlike in the past, the number one enemy of the Christian faith is Christian extremism, and not paganism, idolatry or other non-Christian bodies. Non-Christian communities come to hate the Christian faith because of the violent and intolerant behaviour of Christian extremists. So, all forms of extremism in other religions become enemies of their own faiths before they are a danger to other, adversarial religions. After this stage, they become threats and enemies of entire societies, which they

claim to have been called to convert to their faiths. Killing and maiming your target customer is but a non-starter!

2. What should be done?

Complexity is part of the game. A proposed solution easily becomes a problem to the other. You build a good road to help people move fast, but it becomes a hazard to the population and facilitates the exploitation of resources found in the area! That is what the world has become. It is the same when we propose joint action. However, we have to try all the time. Scriptures oblige us not to stop “seeking peace at all costs.”

1) Joint Identification of radical groups and joint engagement against them

The media has identified and listed almost all radical groups on the continent (Christian and non-Christian). However, there is no common and joint agreement as to whether what the media considers radical is what is understood as being radical in the common understanding of the concept of radicalisation. We need to come to terms by jointly identifying them and engaging with them.



2) Forming a continental body for specific engagement

While in the political arena they form joint forces for dealing with specific situations, the faith actors on the continent do not act jointly and decisively. As a result, our contribution towards peace-building and mitigation remain underutilised and not recognised.

3) Transforming a crisis into sustainable development

The absence of war does not necessarily mean the presence of peace. The harmony that is brought about by law enforcement or a joint effort does not necessarily mean peace. Faith actors ought to deal with such situations by transforming crises into sustainable development. Studies show that sustainable development is the backbone of sustainable peace.

4) Establishing and empowering human rights desks among faith actors

Human rights are universal by nature. They are vulnerable and targeted by radical groups. Yet, even in normal situations, human rights are complex and thus experts are needed to educate people and empower them. Faith actors should always see whether human rights desks is established in their particular religious organisations, and whether it is in a form or shape and capacity of defending properly the rights of human beings, and if the desk is operating permanently.

5) Formation of a continental peace studies centre

Continental crises that threaten peace are everywhere. They are political, cultural, religious, ethnic, historical or even cross-cutting by nature. This means that a place where people could go and learn how to deal with them is needed.

JOINT ACTION OF FAITH ACTORS IN COMBATING RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION IN EUROPE

Markus Patenge

1. The current context in Germany

In reflecting on how to combat religious radicalisation in Europe, I would like to contextualise my thoughts within the current situation in Germany, where I come from.

From a socio-political perspective, I can say that, because of the great number of refugees who are arriving in the country, German national or identity movements grew up. Many of these movements found a political home in the party “Alternative für Deutschland” (AfD – An Alternative for Germany). This party was established in 2013 and a brief view its development shows a very fast radicalisation. Starting with the criticism on the European monetary policy caused by the economic challenges of Greece, the party articulated a kind of euro-scepticism which can also be seen in the UK, France, the Netherlands and many states in Eastern Europe. From this position and in the context of the problematic refugee situation, the party turned in a national-identitarian direction. Currently, the AfD is a melting pot for people with nationalistic, anti-Semitic, traditionalistic or Islamophobic attitudes.

2. What makes people radical?

Although we can identify several reasons for radicalisation (we have to be careful not to generalise). I think we often handle this issue with a diffuse feeling of fear. In my view, we Germans, we fear the kind of heteronomy caused especially by the European Union, the spread of Islam, and maybe the influence of the United States. It is a fear that Germany will change through foreign infiltration and immigration. Perhaps this feeling of fear can be best described as a fear of Germany’s colonisation.

This overview is enough to show that the current problem in Germany and Europe is not so much religious radicalisation rather a political one. Of course, it should be noted that aspects of religious radicalisation can be seen in Germany

among both Muslims and Christians. Not even a few Catholics have been very enthusiastic about the ‘Christian-Jewish roots of Europe,’ which often leads to an exclusionary attitude towards other religions. The opening and appreciation of the Second Vatican Council of other religions is questioned again and again. In Germany various bishops raise their voices against progressive radicalisation and support a policy of rationality, openness and mercy. With their statements they are in line with Pope Francis, whose statements are unambiguous. But also, in this question there are differences within the German Bishops’ Conference.

So, what can the churches in Germany and Europe do in this situation? I am convinced that the German Commission for Justice and Peace has taken a good path in this regard. I am convinced that the various forms of radicalisation can best be overcome through mutual encounters and dialogue. In various events – in cooperation with the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation – we bring people together so that they can discuss individual and social experiences of violence in their contexts from different perspectives. These discussions reveal moments of mutual understanding, shared experiences and, as a rule, the desire for peaceful coexistence.

These moments are a treasure in mutual understanding; they should not be underestimated and should pave the way for social and religious peace.



COMBATING RELIGIOUS RADICALISATION IN A GLOBAL AND ECUMENICAL LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

Angelika Veddelar

1. Interconnectedness for overcoming violence

“Growing interconnectedness, but rising intolerance and violence.” According to UNESCO, this is one of the general tensions and contradictions which characterise our times and which need to be responded to through programmes of learning and education. It summarises the background of our conference:

- The conference was held in Zanzibar, a place of peaceful interreligious coexistence and a place of tension and violence.
- It brought together people from different countries and continents, all with their own experiences of conflict, fear and intolerance.
- The participants were believers of different religions – Buddhists, Jews, Muslims, Christians and Hindus.
- The conference was organised by the UEM as an international faith-based communion.

This short article wants to reflect on how learning took place at the conference and on the way learning experiences are relevant to the ongoing conceptual deliberations on “Global Learning from an Ecumenical Perspective” at the UEM. At the conference, learning processes could be identified on five levels:

2. Experienced and applied information

On the conference’s programme, there were introductions to the different religions and faith-based communities present, but no general theories about Islam, Christianity and Buddhism as such, or about the idea of peace. Instead, the representatives of the different faith-based communities reported the situations obtaining in their communities, the struggles they live in, the ways they live with and carry out these struggles and their role as peacemakers in their specific communities.

Thus, all the information had personal dimensions. It comprised more than a mere knowledge of facts and set facts and information in relation to the person

who presented them, to that person's struggles, communal and individual endeavours. This pulled the participants into relationships and created reciprocal communication on the 'eye-level'.

1) Sharing praxis

Practical experiences were told: How churches formed local aid committees together with other faith-based communities in Indonesia after a volcano outbreak. How the church had actively sought cooperation with the Buddhist and Muslim communities after the Easter Sunday bombings in Sri Lanka in 2019. Experiences from Zanzibar were shared, experiences relating to attempts to communicate and cooperate across the religions, even after violent attacks had happened there. Joint interreligious radio programmes were described, or academic programmes involving Jewish, Christian and Muslim faculties and participants were initiated.

These examples served as models. The participants discussed the applicability of similar approaches in their own contexts.



2) *Worship, prayer, music*

At the beginning of the conference, there were few devotions or prayers. Contrary to the general easiness of communication, there was some shyness with regard to the shared spirituality. As the days passed, this was more and more perceived as a deficit. Getting to know each other, coming closer and sharing time seemed incomplete without shared prayers and songs. A multi-religious closing-service was a highlight of the conference. What could also be observed was that those living in multi-religious environments were much more spontaneous and less reserved and hesitating in saying prayers or proposing songs for devotions at the multi-religious conference.

3) *Eating, drinking, joking together*

Learning together and getting to know each other is only possible when a part of the normal daily life is shared. Certainly, a conference is a special situation; it is not the usual everyday life. But still, the sitting together for meals, the talking ‘en passant’ on the way to the conference hall, the jokes and laughter over a cup of coffee play an important role in creating an easy-going atmosphere. It is only in such an atmosphere that exchanges on sensitive themes and issues or the sharing of unsolved questions are possible.

4) *Going out: Joint symbolic political action*

The conference ended with the public ‘March for Peace’, in which all conference participants took part. Going out together was not only a public statement, but also part of the learning process. Standing together, walking together and attracting public attention intensified learning and togetherness.

3. New approaches to learning and education at the UEM

In 2017, the international council, the leading body of the UEM, proposed to sharpen the profile of all the educational and training programmes at the organization. A concept for international educational programmes was to be developed which should be free from all separations into an imagined “we” (to indicate those who teach) and an imagined “they” (representing the learners). Learning was to be done consistently, jointly and together. There should be no learning ‘about the other’ anymore, and even no learning ‘from the other’ as the main goal. Learning should be done jointly, on topics identified as relevant by all those who are involved. Different continents or cultures, global and local approaches should not be separated anymore, but rather they should all be

included in one learning process. Therefore, the methods of learning and the organisation of the educational programmes should implement multiperspectivity and perceive entanglements, contradictions and developments, rather than teaching strictly fixed structures of thought.

After the council had declared that this conceptual development should be taken as a task, new approaches were tried out in several pilot programmes. The 2019 International Peace Conference was one of them. Its goal was not to enable the participants to learn 'about' other religions, but to exchange about peace, jointly and together, from the various perspectives of all participants from different religious background. The conference did not transmit knowledge to the participants, but created relationships and embedded new insights and knowledge in a spirit of solidarity. Thus, an attitude of sensitivity towards other traditions developed and discussions were conducted on the basis of this spirit. As days passed, it became obvious that the participants had become more confident, asking each other questions and communicating freely.

Learning – not about the other, but jointly. Acting – not for the other, but jointly. The UEM will continue to develop this approach for all its programmes. The approach can provide an answer to the initially described tension of today: We're globally interconnected, but live in a world of intolerance and violence. Learning and acting consistently together can help us to overcome separation and discrimination.

VIII.

CONCLUSION / SUMMARY

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Kambale J.-B. Kahongya Bwiruka

Religious radicalisation has recently spread throughout the world. Geographically, in Europe, where for many centuries most of the people were affiliated to Christianity, the number of believers from other religion is increasing. Although this change might be associated with migration, it is a fact that many people in Europe have left their Christian identity for different reasons. In this new socio-cultural context, extremism and radicalisation may appear as result of frustration, but it is expressed in both religious and socio-political forms.

In Asia, especially in Indonesia, the biggest Muslim country in the world, although the constitution recognises the existence of different religions, some extremist groups threat peaceful cohabitation. Sri Lanka, where the majority of people are Buddhist, also experiences religious violence. On the African continent, several terrorist groups have emerged. In the eastern and western parts of the continent, acts of violence have been committed in the name of religion.

Sociologically, religious radicalisation has touched all ages of people (children, youth and adults), all social categories of people (civilians and soldiers, illiterate and highly educated people, the poor and the rich, the laity and the clergy, etc.) and all genders (men, women and others).

In order to prevent and combat religious radicalisation, various strategies have been suggested by different expert through their presentations in this book. However, it is important to highlight some of these suggestions as to summarise the actions to be taken and contextualised in combating religious radicalisation of children, youth, women and men.

1. Combating radicalisation through educational system

a. Promoting multicultural learning from the childhood

Our brains are shaped in terms of social and emotional development from birth until the age of 12. Therefore, it is necessary to provide multicultural education in early childhood. For that we need a different curriculum in our kindergartens and primary schools and a different kind of teacher and education at the college and university levels.

b. Promoting a multi-religious society

Schools, universities and the whole education system play a very important role

in preventing radicalisation and in people learning to live together in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society. In many countries, religious organisations provide religious teaching in the public school system. Methodologically, all children should be allowed to learn about all existing religions in their region or country. Therefore, children should not be separated in different learning groups according to their respective religious background. And for more effectiveness, this education should be provided by different religious leaders, not in order to convert young children to their own religions, but rather to bring the knowledge of their religions to children of other religions. In addition, it's important for children to learn how to handle critically with religious Holy Scriptures like Qur'an, Bible, Tanak, etc. This could also lead students to discuss common concerns in society such as corruption, injustice, ecological disasters and religious extremism from different faith-based perspectives.

c. Counselling in schools and vocational groups

Promoting religious counselling in schools and prisons by trained teachers, chaplains and other psychologists is a great need. Such initiatives could be aimed at addressing the psychosocial needs of individuals who have been radicalised and even joined violent extremist groups. The focus should be put on the rehabilitation and re-integration of reformed extremists, as well as the provision of support to their families and social networks.

d. Interreligious game groups for children and youth

Promoting peer groups or 'round-tables' among the youth across the religious divide and using such fora to foster friendships between youth of different faiths is relevant. This initiative could use different kinds of competition of succour, songs, dance and others like theatres and films. These interfaith groups could also offer vocational training and facilitate discussion among the group. The role of the leaders will consist of meeting to discuss problems in the area together, then to prepare solutions in cooperation with the authorities. They will also organize the living together more peacefully in their district or their city.

e. Promoting the role of man in the educational system

In societies where men have become rare in the educational system, like in Germany, boys have been left alone. For instance, in most kindergartens in Germany there are virtually hardly any men who are working with children. Therefore, boys rarely find men in their childhood who could serve as a model, a pattern for an integer "male" behaviour to them. Especially when these children have problematic family background. Or in the context where the traditional role of men is transferred to the next generations, boys will not find in their school,

positive models for being “men”. Therefore, men are urgently needed in the education system.

2. Training and empowerment

a. Capacity building among women

Because women can be radicalised and at the same time can be used to combat religious radicalisation, (1) women should be encouraged, supported and empowered through many training sessions/capacity building activities so that they are aware of their capacity and responsibility in peace making, and so that they can manage development in many areas (for example religious, economic, political, socio-cultural and technological). Therefore, they can use their capacity to guide their children and family to lead and create tolerance and peaceful lives. This will develop their courage to be critical and to take the initiative in their families and communities to combat religious radicalisation through various mediums. (2) For women groups and movement to be successful in combating religious radicalisation, building network in cooperation with other women groups and encounters with different kinds of religious people is vital.

b. Involvement of women, youth and secular actors in peace-making processes

Patriarchy takes a heavy toll on religious peace building, since more often than not religious peace initiatives and agencies are led by clerics excluding women and youth. This poses the challenge of effectiveness in service delivery in certain conflict situations and contexts. It is an irrefutable fact that women and youth shape religious narratives as well as identities. To this extent, their active participation in peace-building at all levels is not only very necessary and important, but also mandatory. In addition, religious actors should design and implement projects together with secular peace-building actors. Although the approaches of both groups might be different, the result will be more effective.

3. Sharing experiences

a. Inclusive religious teachings and exposure to the lives of others

Sharing the sermons of religious leaders and their religious teachings is very important in cultivating the possibility for people relating and respecting their neighbours from different cultures and faiths. In addition, organising exposure programmes for religious leaders, particularly the youth, including visits to places of worship and religious institutions may be very productive. Such exchange visit could include experience of “live-in program” whereby participants

are hosted in family houses, they share the daily life of their host from different religion background. This life experience could facilitate a deeper engagement and could improve mutual understanding and tolerance among people of different faiths.

b. Developing and practising peace-making skills

Religious leaders who are willing to play a role in building harmony and peace among people from different faiths and ethnicities should develop and practice the principles of (1) commitment/sense of sacrifice, (2) willingness power, (3) patience/tolerance and (4) avoiding suspicion.

In addition, following basic attitudes are needed: (1) Strong faith in yourself, (2) respect to other religious and ethnic groups, (3) Developing inner peace, (4) Prioritizing values of your own religion to overcome anger and other bad feelings.

c. Building bridges among people

Although peaceful cohabitation between the Jewish and Arabs in Israel has been very difficult to achieve, the efforts to initiate interreligious and intercultural dialogue on the ground are highly appreciated. Only talks and discussions between different groups can prevent misunderstanding and hatred, and therefore contribute to the building of bridges between people. Initiatives involving Muslim and Jewish visiting together places where a group or both have experienced a traumatic event, like the concentration camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau for the Jewish, can help to heal the trauma of memories and can help both groups Jewish and Muslim to concentrate on the way forwards in their relations.

4. Socio-engagement of the religious communities

a. Religious charity towards strangers

The number of people who are crossing the borders of their countries and cultures is increasing steadily. In this situation, religious communities are playing a crucial role, not only in welcoming strangers – especially those who are in need, victims of injustices and poverty in their communities – but also in advocating for internally displaced persons, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and victims of ecological disasters and human trafficking. This energy is required in the fountain of deep spirituality and in promoting the dignity of the needy together.

The biblical phrase “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” makes us see strangers as more than merely needy people needing help. These are people from other cultures, with other religions and languages, and come from political contexts that are sometimes scary and alienating to people. Such welcome needs real

willingness from the host. It also requires an openness on the side of the guest that allow a real fruitful togetherness between those who are the new comer in the country and those who were already there. From this Christian perspective, the challenge of the strangeness of Jesus-Christ to meet people of different religions and cultures is a powerful provocation to altruism and a profound promise for success at the same time.

b. Promoting the local wisdom

Although cultures differ, every culture is rich in wisdom that promotes tolerance. This can be seen in the practices of greeting each other, sharing food, asking for forgiveness, participation in social events like weddings, funerals, births, coronation ceremonies as well as cultural festivals, and in living as a community, especially during cultural or religious festivals. These practices should be encouraged in order to strengthen solidarity, friendships and cooperation in a community.

c. Developing and promoting a peaceful image of religion

Each religious tradition has certain intrinsic peaceful values which should be promoted. In the Muslim self-understanding, for example, a Muslim is someone who lives in peace with himself, his fellow human beings, his environment and all creation. When Muslims meet, they say, “Salam alaikum” “Peace be with you.” In addition, the ritual prayer is completed with the movement of the head to the right and left, with the peace salutation to humanity. If these everyday rituals were consciously performed by Muslims, this intrinsic motivation alone would be enough to make people actively committed to maintaining peace.

5. Promoting religious dialogue

a. Need of intra-faith initiatives

Controversial hermeneutic positions within the same religious organisation may affect intra-faith relations and therefore reduce the efforts of religious peace building. One of the reasons is that sometimes, religious actors consider their theological stands at the expense of peace and fail to agree on a unified mechanism for addressing conflicts. The aforementioned challenges should be considered and given due attention so that religious actors can be more effective in peace-building than they are.

b. Fighting prejudices

Prejudices are produced in public and on social media networks. There are many Christians who are not ashamed of spreading wrong messages about Islam,

mosques and Islamic communities around them. Such attitude is contra productive. Instead, dialogue with other is fruitful.

c. Religious actors as role models

Religious actors must maintain the trust and respect accorded them by people by living in accordance with the values of their religions and by not compromising these values to individuals, government or political stands.

6. Acting jointly and continentally between religious and non-religious actors

a. Developing a common understanding of radical groups form joint action

The media has identified and listed almost all radical groups on different continent (Christian and non-Christian). However, there is no common and joint agreement whether what the media considers radical is what really radical in the common understanding of the world. There is a need of working together to harmonize the views for better action of combatting radical groups.

b. Forming a continental faith actors body for combating religious ralisation

While in the political arena they form joint forces for dealing with specific situations, the faith actors on Africa continent do not act jointly and decisively. As a result, their contribution towards peace building and mitigation of religious extremism remains underutilised and not recognized. Therefore, forming a continental body of faith actors is required.

c. Establishing and empowering human rights desks among faith actors

Human rights are universal by nature. They are vulnerable and targeted by radical groups. Yet, even in normal situations, human rights are complex and thus experts are needed to educate people about them. However, faith actors should always see whether human rights desks is established permanently in their respective religious organisation, and whether they are in the capacity of defending efficiently the rights of human beings as well as the rights of the entire creation.

d. Establishing a continental peace studies centre

Continental crises that threaten peace are everywhere. They are political, cultural, religious, ethnic, historical or even cross-cutting by nature. This means that a place where people could go and learn how to deal with them is needed on each continent.

SUMMARY HIGHLIGHT

Ulrich Möller

As Vice-Moderator of United Evangelical Mission (UEM) I express UEM's deep gratitude to all who made possible this 2nd International Interreligious Peace Conference. Our interreligious pilgrimage for peace and justice had started 2017 in Wuppertal, Germany. Based on its results, the second stage at Zanzibar 2019 was blessed by encouraging joint experiences and results. With this publication "*Peace among the People*" – *Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive communities the Zanzibar Message of peace for people of all faiths* and the documentation of the conference-contributions from Africa, Asia and Europe are available for interfaith dialogue and action. The Conference in Zanzibar, organized by UEM and its members in Tanzania in collaboration with the *Zanzibar Interfaith Centre*, impressively showed the vivid and strongly rooted interfaith cooperation in Zanzibar and Tanzania at large. This made the Zanzibar-Hospitality very special to all of us. All participants left spiritually and practically strengthened to implement the commitments of the Zanzibar-Message.

And spiritual strength is what people of all faiths need, if together they want to overcome the threats of extremism and violence. Rooted in global injustices, they endanger our societies worldwide. Whether Christian, Muslim, Jewish or Buddhist religious communities, all are facing as well violent religious narratives on local and global level. Therefore, together we must develop local and global alternative multi-religious narratives of overcoming violence embedded in the different contexts. But how can we do this? At Zanzibar, encouraging experiences were shared.

As basis for interreligious dialogue and co-operation often it is emphasized: In spite of their different faiths, religious people share the affirmation of moral values they have in common. Of course, this is important. However, unfortunately it seems, even within religions the moral values, which should lead to common action, cannot be taken for granted, but are highly controversial. Therefore, it is a blessing that – when it comes to the sources of our common call for peace – the *Zanzibar Message of Peace* digs much deeper. This has to do with an impressive liberating experience from Sri Lanka, shared at Zanzibar: Victims of religiously motivated violence were empowered to react to the violence they had suffered with forgiving love, instead of taking revenge on the perpetrators. What made this possible? A joint existential interreligious spiritual experience

had become central. It turned out to be much more fundamental and empowering than common moral values. As the Zanzibar Message puts it with reference to the victims of violence from Sri Lanka:

In a very existential way, they related their inner suffering and pain to their deep religious source of hope in God. This gave them a healing process that included both professional trauma healing and an insistence on the legal accountability of the government. We have learnt that the deepest source of our common call for peace is not only our affirmation of the moral values we have in common, but also our experience in our respective religions of God's power for healing and forgiveness.¹

Indeed! The special empowering message we can take from Zanzibar on our interreligious way forward is this: Let us listen to our sisters and brothers of different faiths. Let us share our stories about God's power for healing and forgiveness. Let us share our experiences of hope in the midst of despair; of love in the midst of hate and violence; of the transformative power of reconciliation and spiritual

¹ See *Message of peace for people of all faiths*, the paragraph 5 "Our common call for peace".



transformation, rooted in existential faith experiences. This may turn out to be the fundamental basis for joint moral values and actions, when God calls upon our religions to walk hand in hand and to work together as beacons of hope and peace.

Rooted this deep in the mutual respect for and trust in the living peace-building power of the different faiths, the Zanzibar Message results in very fundamental and concrete commitments:

Trusting in the reconciling, transformative and encouraging power of God, together we commit ourselves:

- To discover and share these deep experiences of the liberating and reconciling power of God in our religions, and through this to strengthen and deepen our common call for peace and its impact on people's lives.
- To encourage people of different faiths to cross borders through encounters, dialogue and bridge-building, and thus treat the religious convictions of others with respect and talk about each other in a positive and peace-building way.²

On this basis the Zanzibar Message urges us:

God calls upon our religions to walk hand in hand and to work together as beacons of hope and peace, to establish networking structures and to continue our common interreligious journey for peace and inclusive communities.³

The common call for peaceful collaboration includes the commitment to establish interfaith training centres, platforms and activities for young people belonging to different faiths in order to establish networks of cooperation for promoting peace and justice in the world – welcoming people of all faith and goodwill on this common journey.

2 *Message of peace for people of all faiths*, the paragraph 5 “Our common call for peace”.

3 *Message of peace for people of all faiths*, the paragraph 6 “Our common call for peaceful collaboration”.

INTERRELIGIOUS FAITH ACTION AS A LESSON FOR THE CHURCHES IN UEM-AFRICA REGION

John Wesley Kabango

Introduction

The UEM Africa Region composed by churches in Botswana, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, Tanzania, Rwanda and South Africa, was honored to host an international Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive communities, conference held in Zanzibar from 20 to 23 September 2019. The Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, one of the UEM-Africa family, in collaboration with other local religious organizations and structures in Zanzibar, have played a major role in the successful organization of this conference.

The conference slogan was a call for “Peace among the people in the world”

Participants from different countries and socio-religious contexts shared experienced threatening situations posed by extremism and violence to our society. They invited people of faith and goodwill to jointly act in building peaceful and inclusive communities, in joining the journey for peace and in spreading the ‘Zanzibar spirit’ throughout the world.

Participants made also strong commitments inspired by teachings and/or norms of their respective faiths and in the light of the 2018 UEM General Assembly theme: “Being Salt of the World”: Acting Together in Resisting Violence and Extremism towards Peace and Justice and Reconciliation”. Committed to this UEM theme, the conference reminded and urged worldwide faith traditions to take concrete actions. If the humanity is willing to work together, it is strongly believed that peace in the world is possible to be achieved and particularly in Africa.

In addition, participants commended the UEM commitment and efforts towards justice, peace and integrity of the creation for convening and organizing the international interfaith dialogue. It was also acknowledged the contributions

of Government leaders & UEM members in Tanzania and the local community members for their contributions to making the conference a success. It is hoped that the achieved conference results will bring a lasting effect in different parts of the world represented at the conference.

As it was shared by all countries' representatives, majority of world's communities is characterized by a strong commitment to their faiths. Each country's population and especially church members keep strongly to their beliefs and this has a meaningful impact on people's daily lives.

Witness of initiatives to promote hope, courage and determination

The commitment of world's population to meet the daily needs and to reduce poverty, for example, shows that it is possible to positively impact countries for better life. For such success to be achieved in the society, peace is the precondition, a result of everybody's work. Therefore, participants carefully paid attention to one another, heard or saw the testimonies of the victims who suffered violence in the past and in the current times. Through different presentations, painful experiences of people were told and their readiness, not only to forgive,



but also to repent, reconcile and foster peace in their communities, were shared. With this readiness, an urgent need for peaceful coexistence in the world was recognized.

Present and future generations need a better world that is to be prepared now in applying the best of all faith principles to build a more conducive environment. All delegates committed to work for the positive promotion of human lives and the protection of the environment in their areas. They urged world's leaders to strongly work for sustainable peace, to stop violent conflicts through direct interfaith conferences, meetings and dialogue in promoting respect of each other's beliefs. People are compelled not to attack one another but rather teach all faith members about mutual tolerance and respect of other faiths and traditions in building people's peaceful cohabitation in the world. This is to promote religious diversity and positively understanding of one another. It was also underlined the need of taking more responsibility in integrating vulnerable and marginalized people, especially children and youth, in the daily programs which promote and support interfaith coexistence.

Children and youth are considered to be a target of early learning in order to internalize the spirit of tolerance. Formally and informally, they should be given information and positive inputs about other faiths. However, it has to be insured that teaching materials and school books contribute to building tolerance and peaceful cohabitation. Women and men are not excluded in this learning process. They have to be involved in initiatives of peace education and human respect. As effective participants in addressing arising conflicts, women and men need to be well equipped in order to contribute in the promotion of human rights and holistic development. Therefore, leaders at all levels have to be challenged about this important need. They have to possess mediation skills, necessary to make every community member to bring a real contribution to the community welfare on a daily basis.

Model commitments to be applied by each leadership body:

- Promotion of interfaith dialogue, joint social action to pursue peace and development.
- Maintenance of unity and solidarity among people who belong to different religions through good relations, dialogue, seminars, consultations and joint socio-economic action, promoting peace and alleviating poverty.
- Caring for others, sharing resources by all fellow human beings and with all creation with a special responsibility to children and the youth.

- Enlightenment of children and the youth through religious education on peaceful interfaith relations in school systems.
- Use of media to bring to young people the interfaith message against radicalism.
- Establishment of interfaith training centres for youth, clergy and people of all faiths to study each other's religions.
- Strengthening interfaith platforms: Activities for young people from different faiths need to be strengthened for people to work together and cooperate in promoting peace and justice in the world.

It is strongly recommended that not only African but the whole world leaders will learn and benefit from the conference efforts to tackle the existing culture of violence, hatred and prejudices and to embrace the slogan conference "Peace among the people in the world" as a gift of peace to the entire world.

IX.
APPENDIXES

BOTSCHAFT DES FRIEDENS FÜR MENSCHEN ALLER RELIGIONEN

Präambel: Friede unter den Menschen

Botschaft der Interreligiösen Konferenz, die auf Einladung des Zanzibar Interfaith Centre (ZANZIC) und der Vereinten Evangelischen Mission vom 20. bis 23. September 2019 stattfand.

Wir, 70 Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer aus 11 Ländern in Afrika, Asien und Europa, Vertreterinnen und Vertreter der muslimischen, der christlichen, der jüdischen und der buddhistischen Glaubensgemeinschaft, sind vom 20. bis 23. September 2019 auf Sansibar zusammengekommen. Wir haben die Gastfreundschaft der Menschen vor Ort erlebt. Wir haben die Spuren unterschiedlicher religiöser Traditionen erkannt, die über Jahrhunderte praktiziert wurden, und haben auch die interreligiösen Aktivitäten kennengelernt, die von unseren Gastgebern vom Interfaith Centre initiiert werden.

In unserem interreligiösen Eintreten für den Frieden wurden wir vom zweiten Vizepräsidenten, Botschafter Seif Ali Iddi, ermutigt, der bei der Eröffnungssitzung als Vertreter der Regierung von Sansibar anwesend war.

Wir haben uns über die vielfältigen Bedrohungen ausgetauscht, die Extremismus und Gewalt für unsere Gesellschaften in unseren unterschiedlichen Kontexten darstellen, und wir haben diskutiert, wie wir gemeinsam handeln können, um Frieden und inklusive Gemeinschaften in dieser Welt zu schaffen. Bei einem Friedensmarsch haben wir die Botschaft dieser Konferenz auch in die Öffentlichkeit getragen.

1. Der „Geist von Sansibar“: gemeinsames Lernen

Wir haben erfahren, dass Angehörige verschiedener Religionen auf Sansibar seit mindestens 500 Jahren friedlich zusammenleben: Islam, Christentum und Hinduismus, Zoroastrismus und lokale Religionen. Sie unterstützen sich gegenseitig in Zeiten der Freude und in Zeiten des Leids. Die Regierung garantiert den Angehörigen aller Glaubensrichtungen Religionsfreiheit. Gute

Beispiele, die überall umgesetzt werden können, um den Frieden zwischen Angehörigen verschiedener Religionen zu fördern, sind der inner- und der interreligiöse Dialog sowie das Zanzibar Interfaith Centre, das interreligiöse Seminare für ein friedliches Zusammenleben, unternehmerische Schulungen für Frauen und Jugendliche sowie Diplome in interreligiöser Bildung anbietet. Daher verpflichten wir uns, den interreligiösen Dialog und gemeinsames gesellschaftliches Handeln in unserem Bemühen um Frieden und Entwicklung zu fördern.

2. Unser gemeinsamer Glaube an die Einheit

Obwohl wir verschiedenen Religionen angehören, glauben wir, dass Gott (buddhistisch: Dhamma) uns verbindet und stärker ist als alles, was uns voneinander trennen könnte. Er ruft uns dazu auf – und gibt uns die Kraft dazu –, gemeinsam Gewalt zu überwinden, die Friedenspotenziale in unseren jeweiligen Religionen auszuschöpfen und so Gesellschaften zu fördern, in denen es keine Ausgrenzung gibt.

Wir haben beides geteilt: Geschichten von religiösen Gemeinschaften, die Gewalt gegeneinander einsetzen, und Geschichten von religiösen Gemeinschaften, die sich gegenseitig vor gewaltsamen Angriffen religiöser Extremisten schützen. Wir verpflichten uns, dafür zu sorgen, dass unter Menschen unterschiedlichen Glaubens Einheit und Solidarität aufrechterhalten werden – durch gute Beziehungen, Dialog, Seminare, Konsultationen und das gemeinsame sozioökonomische Engagement für den Frieden und die Armutsbekämpfung.

3. Unsere gemeinsame Haltung gegenüber Ungerechtigkeit

Wir erkennen, dass Ungerechtigkeit eine weltweite Erfahrung unserer Zeit ist. Wir sind uns bewusst, dass Angehörige von Religionen oftmals an den Ursachen von Ungerechtigkeit beteiligt sind. Als Menschen unterschiedlichen Glaubens sind wir jedoch der festen Überzeugung, dass der allmächtige Gott ein Gott der Gerechtigkeit ist. Gott schafft Menschen mit Würde. Alle Formen der Ungerechtigkeit und alle Gewaltakte gegen Menschen und die Schöpfung, die Leid in dieser Welt verursachen, sind weder Schicksal noch Gottes Wille. Menschenrechtsverletzungen wie Sklaverei, Menschenhandel, Zwangsarbeit einschließlich Kinderarbeit, fremdenfeindliche Übergriffe auf Migranten und Flüchtlinge sind einige Beispiele für Ungerechtigkeiten, die in unserer Welt

heute noch weit verbreitet sind. Diese Probleme entstehen zumeist infolge von Armut und Ausbeutung. Die eigentliche Ursache dieser Probleme ist systematische Ungerechtigkeit, die aus der Gier von Mächtigen resultiert, die dazu neigen, andere zu manipulieren und die Natur und Menschen zu ihrem eigenen Vorteil auszubeuten. Religion wird häufig dazu benutzt, Unrecht und Gewalttaten zu rechtfertigen. Dadurch werden die Probleme noch komplizierter. In vielen Fällen ist Ungerechtigkeit der Auslöser für Radikalismus.

Als gläubige Menschen verpflichten wir uns, zusammenzuarbeiten und gemeinsam mit allen Menschen guten Willens sämtliche Formen der Ungerechtigkeit zu überwinden, die die Gemeinschaften zerstören und das Leben auf diesem Planeten auslöschen können. Die Lehre, dass jede Person in den Augen des Schöpfers etwas Besonderes ist, ist gemeinsame Überzeugung in den verschiedenen Religionen. Das muss betont werden, damit wir unsere Mitmenschen als unsere Brüder und Schwestern achten, unabhängig von ihrer ethnischen Zugehörigkeit, Kultur und Religion. Darauf muss in Familien, Schulen, Gebetsstätten, bei der Arbeit und im öffentlichen Raum Wert gelegt werden und das muss in der Struktur der Gesellschaft zum Ausdruck kommen. Wir Menschen des Glaubens verpflichten uns, für andere und die gesamte Schöpfung Sorge zu tragen. Wir erkennen, dass wir eine besondere Verantwortung für Kinder und Jugendliche haben.

4. Unsere gemeinsame Stellungnahme zum Konfliktpotenzial

In verschiedenen Teilen der Welt erleben wir Konflikte in unterschiedlichen Formen. Wir glauben daher, dass eine gerechte Teilhabe an der Macht für alle Gemeinschaften erforderlich ist und dass es notwendig ist, unterschiedlichen Formen religiöser Hetze entgegenzutreten, die aus der ungerechten Verteilung von Ressourcen und der wirtschaftlichen, sozialen und politischen Ausgrenzung resultieren. Wir verpflichten uns, Kinder und Jugendliche im Rahmen des Schulsystems und verschiedener Formen der religiösen Erziehung über interreligiöse Beziehungen aufzuklären und Medien zu nutzen, um junge Menschen mit einer interreligiösen Botschaft gegen den Radikalismus zu erreichen.

5. Unser gemeinsamer Aufruf zum Frieden

Wir haben uns über befreiende Erfahrungen in Sri Lanka ausgetauscht, wo

Opfer religiös motivierter Gewalt dazu fähig wurden, mit vergebender Liebe zu reagieren, statt Rache zu nehmen. Das war möglich, weil sie auf sehr existenzielle Weise ihr inneres Leid und Schmerz mit ihrer tiefen religiösen Quelle der Hoffnung in Gott verknüpfen konnten. Dies ermöglichte ihnen einen Heilungsprozess, der sowohl professionelle Traumaheilung als auch ein Beharren auf der rechtlichen Rechenschaftspflicht der Regierung beinhaltet. Wir haben erkannt: Die tiefste Quelle unseres gemeinsamen Aufrufs zum Frieden ist nicht in erster Linie das Bekenntnis zu unseren gemeinsamen moralischen Werten, sondern die Erfahrung von Gottes befreiender Kraft der Heilung und der Vergebung, wie wir sie in unseren Religionen erfahren.

Im Vertrauen auf die versöhnende, verwandelnde und ermutigende Kraft Gottes verpflichten wir uns:

- gemeinsam diese tiefen Erfahrungen der befreienden und versöhnenden Kraft Gottes in unseren Religionen zu entdecken und zu teilen und dadurch unserem gemeinsamen Aufruf zum Frieden mehr Kraft und Nachdruck in seiner Wirkung auf das Leben von Menschen zu verleihen;
- Menschen unterschiedlichen Glaubens zu ermutigen, durch Begegnung, Dialog und Aufbau von Beziehungen Grenzen zu überwinden und damit die religiösen Überzeugungen anderer zu respektieren und so übereinander zu sprechen, dass friedliche Beziehungen untereinander möglich werden.

6. Unser gemeinsamer Aufruf zu friedlicher Zusammenarbeit

Gott ruft unsere Religionen dazu auf, Hand in Hand zu gehen und als Leuchttürme der Hoffnung und des Friedens zusammenzuarbeiten, Vernetzungsstrukturen aufzubauen und unseren gemeinsamen interreligiösen Einsatz für Frieden und inklusive Gemeinschaften fortzusetzen. Wir verpflichten uns, interreligiöse Schulungszentren für junge Menschen, Geistliche und Menschen aller Glaubensrichtungen aufzubauen, damit sie sich gemeinsam eingehend mit der Religion der anderen beschäftigen können. Plattformen und Aktivitäten für junge Menschen unterschiedlichen Glaubens müssen gestärkt werden, damit diese gemeinsam Kooperationsnetzwerke aufbauen können, um einen gerechten Frieden in der Welt zu fördern.

Wir rufen alle Gläubigen und alle Menschen guten Willens auf, sich mit uns für Frieden und inklusive Gemeinschaften einzusetzen. Möge dieser „Geist von Sansibar“ in unseren Gemeinschaften verbreitet werden und uns ermutigen, unseren gemeinsamen Weg fortzusetzen.

UJUMBE WA AMANI KWA WATU WA IMANI ZOTE

Dibaji: Amani baina ya watu

Ujumbe kutoka kwenye Mkutano wa Watu wa Imani Mbalimbali ulioandaliwa na Zanzibar Interfaith Centre (ZANZIC) na Umoja wa Makanisa ya Kiinjili mjini Zanzibar kuanzia tarehe 20 hadi tarehe 23 Septemba 2019.

Sisi washiriki 70 kutoka nchi 11 barani Afrika, Asia na Ulaya, ambao tunawakilisha jumuiya za Kikristo, Kiyaudi na Kibudha, tulikutana Zanzibar kuanzia tarehe 20 hadi tarehe 23 Septemba 2019. Tulifaidi ukarimu wa watu wa Zanzibar. Tuliyakuta mabaki ya desturi za dini mbalimbali ambazo zimekuwapo visiwani Zanzibar kwa karne na karne na tulizona desturi hizi kwenye shughuli za kiimani zinazofanywa na wenyeji wetu wa Zanzibar Interfaith Centre.

Tulihamasishwa katika safari yetu ya watu wa imani mbalimbali ya kutafuta amani na Makamu wa Pili wa Rais Balozi Seif Ali Iddi, ambaye alikuwa mwakilishi wa Serikali ya Zanzibar wakati wa ufunguzi wa mkutano.

Kutoka katika maeneo yetu tofauti, tulitoa uzoefu wetu juu ya vitisho mbalimbali vinavyotokana na itikadi kali za kidini na vurugu katika jamii zetu na tulijadili ni kwa namna gani kwa pamoja tunaweza kujenga jamii jumuishi zenye amani hapa duniani. Tulipeleka kwa umma ujumbe kutoka kwenye mkutano huo katika jitihada ya kutafuta amani.

1. Mwelekeo wa Zanzibar wa kujifunza pamoja

Tulijifunza kuwa watu wa imani tofauti – Waislamu, Wakristu, Wahindu, Wazoro na watu wa dini za asili – wameishi Zanzibar pamoja kwa amani kwa walau miaka miantano. Wanasaidiana wakati wa furaha na majonzi. Serikali inatambua na kutoa uhuru wa kuabudu kwa watu wa dini zote. Mijadala ndani ya dini moja na kati ya dini moja na dini nyingine ni mfano mzuri wa ushirikiano miongoni mwa watu wa dini tofauti ambayo inaweza kutumika

sehemu zingine ili kujenga amani miongoni mwa watu wa dini tofauti. Mfano mwingine mzuri ni Zanzibar Interfaith Centre, ambacho kinatoa stahahada ya elimu ya imani mbalimbali na kinaendesha semina kuhusu umuhimu wa kuishi pamoja kwa amani na ujasiliamali kwa akina mama na vijana. Tunaahidi kuimarisha mijadala kati ya watu wa imani tofauti na kuchukua hatua za pamoja katika kutafuta amani na maendeleo.

2. Imani yetu ya pamoja kuhusu umoja

Ingawa sisi ni watu wa imani tofauti, kwa pamoja tunaamini kuwa Mungu (na *dhamma* kwenye dini ya Kibudha) anatuunganisha na ni zaidi ya vyote ambavyo vinaweza kututenganisha. Nguvu hii ya juu inatutaka tushinde vurugu pamoja.

Kwa upande mmoja, tumetoa simulizi kuhusu jumuiya za kidini kutumia vurugu dhidi ya jumuiya zingine na simulizi kuhusu jumuiya za kidini kulindana dhidi ya mashambulizi kutoka kwa watu wenye itikadi kali za kidini kwa upande mwingine. Tunaahidi kuhakikisha kwamba umoja na ushirikiano miongoni mwa watu wa dini tofauti unaimarishwa kupitia mahusiano mazuri, mijadala, semina, kushauriana na hatua za pamoja za kuimarisha amani na kupunguza umaskini.

3. Msimamo wetu wa pamoja kuhusu udhalimu

Tumegundua kwamba udhalimu ni suala la ulimwengu mzima. Tunafahamu kwamba waumini wa dini mara nyingi wanashiriki katika vitendo visivyo vya haki. Lakini kama watu ambao wanafuata dini mbalimbali tunaamini kwamba Mwenyezi Mungu ni Mungu wa haki. Mungu anawapa binadamu utu. Vitendo mbalimbali vya udhalimu na vurugu vinavyosababisha mateso kwa binadamu na viumbe vingine siyo majaliwa ya binadamu na siyo mpango wa Mungu. Udhalimu uliopo katika dunia yetu ya leo unajumuisha uvunjifu wa haki za binadamu kama utumwa, usafirishaji haramu wa binadamu, ajira za watoto na mashambulio dhidi ya wahamiaji na wakimbizi. Mara nyingi dini inatumika kuhalalisha udhalimu na vitendo vya vurugu, na hivyo kuyafanya matatizo yawe magumu zaidi. Mara nyingi udhalimu unasababisha vitendo vya itikadi kali za kidini.

Kama watu wa imani, tunaahidi kushirikiana na kufanya kazi pamoja na watu wote wenye mapenzi mema ili kushinda vitendo mbalimbali vya udhalimu ambavyo vinaharibu jamii na vinaweza kuangamiza binadamu wote

katika sayari hii ya dunia. Kitu kimoja ambacho dini nyingi zinacho ni kanuni kwamba kila mtu ni maalumu mbele ya Muumba. Kanuni hii inapaswa kusisitizwa ili tuheshimu binadamu wenzetu kama kaka na dada zetu bila kujali makabila yao, utamaduni wao na dini zao. Hili ni lazima lifanyike kwenye familia, shuleni, nyumba za ibada, jamii, mazingira ya kazi na katika maeneo ya umma. Sisi watu wa imani tunaahidi kwamba tutawajali wengine na kutumia raslimali zetu na binadamu wenzetu na viumbe vyote. Tunafahamu wajibu wetu kwa watoto na vijana.

4. Msimamo wetu wa pamoja kuhusu uwezekano wa kutokea migogoro

Tunashuhudia aina mbalimbali za migogoro katika maeneo tofauti ya dunia. Kwa hiyo tunaamini kwamba kuna sababu ya kugawana madaraka kwa usawa miongoni mwa jamii zote na sababu ya kutatua aina mbalimbali za malalamiko ya kidini yanayotokana na kutogawana rasilimali kwa usawa na kutengwa kiuchumi, kijamii na kisiasa. Tunaahidi kwamba tutawaelimisha watoto na vijana kupitia shule na aina mbalimbali ya elimu ya dini juu ya mahusiano ya watu wa dini tofauti. Pia, tutatumia vyombo vya habari kufikisha ujumbe wetu dhidi ya itikadi kali kwa vijana.

5. Wito wetu wa pamoja juu ya amani

Tumetoa uzoefu mzuri wa uokoaji kutoka Sri Lanka ambako wahanga wa vurugu za kidini waliwezesha kukabiliana na vurugu hizo kwa moyo wa kusamehe badala ya kulipiza kisasi kwa watu waliofanya vurugu zenye viashiria za udini ndani yake. Walihusisha mateso yao na maumivu kwenye chanzo chao cha matumaini kwa Mungu. Kitendo hiki kiliwapa uponyaji ambao ulijumuisha uponyaji wa kiwewe na kusisitiza wajibu wa kisheria wa serikali. Tumejifunza kwamba chanzo chetu cha kina cha wito wetu kuhusu amani sio tu uthibitisho wetu wa thamani ya kiroho tuliyonayo bali pia uzoefu katika dini zetu juu ya nguvu ya Mungu ya kuponya na kusamehe.

Kwa kuamini katika nguvu ya Mungu ya kupatanisha, kubadilisha na kuhamasisha, tunaahidi:

- kubaini na kutumia na wengine uzoefu huu wa kina na nguvu ya Mungu ya kuokoa na kupatanisha katika dini zetu, na kwa njia hiyo kuimarisha na kuongeza wito wetu wa pamoja kuhusu amani na athari yake katika maisha ya watu.

- kuwahamasisha watu wa imani tofauti kuvuka mipaka kupitia mikutano, mijadala na ujenzi wa madaraja, na kwa hiyo kuheshimu imani za wengine na kuzungumza kuhusu wengine kwa njia chanya na ya kujenga amani.

6. Wito wetu wa pamoja kuhusu kushirikiana kwa amani

Mungu anataka dini zetu kutembea pamoja na kufanya kazi pamoja kama minara ya matumaini na amani, kunzisha mitandao na kuendelea na safari yetu ya kujenga amani na jamii jumuishi. Tunaahidi kuanzisha vituo vya mafunzo vya pamoja ambapo vijana, viongozi wa dini na watu wa imani zote wanaweza kujifunza juu ya dini za wengine kwa pamoja. Majukwaa na shughuli kwa jaili ya vijana wa imani tofauti zinapaswa kuimarishwa ili vijana waweze kushirikiana katika kuanzisha mitandao ya ushirikiano ili kuimarisha amani na haki duniani.

Tunawaomba watu wote wa imani na wenye mapenzi mema kuungana nasi katika safari yetu ya kutafuta amani na kujenga jamii jumuishi. Tunauomba mwelekeo wa Zanzibar uenee duniani kote na kutuhamasisha tuendeleo na safari yetu pamoja.

PESAN PERDAMAIAN BAGI SEMUA UMAT BERAGAMA

Pembukaan: Perdamaian Diantara Umat Manusia

Pesan dari Konferensi antar iman di Zanzibar tanggal 20-23 September 2019, bertindak sebagai tuan rumah Pusat Antar Iman Zanzibar (ZANZIC) dan United Evangelical Mission (UEM).

Kami, Tujuh puluh peserta dari sebelas negara di Afrika, Asia, dan Eropa, perwakilan umat Islam, Kristen, Yahudi, dan Budha; telah berkumpul di Zanzibar tanggal 20-23 September 2019. Kami merasakan keramahtamahan masyarakat setempat. Kami mengalami perjumpaan dengan berbagai jejak tradisi-tradisi keagamaan dari beberapa negara, dan kami menyaksikan kesamaan rekam-jejak dalam aktifitas lintas iman masa kini yang diprakarsai oleh tuan rumah, Pusat Antar Iman.

Kami didorong oleh Wakil Presiden Kedua Dutabesar Seif Ali Iddi, yang hadir mewakili Pemerintah Zanzibar dalam Sesi Pembukaan, bahwa dalam perjalanan perjumpaan antar iman, agar untuk perdamaian

Dari beragam perbedaan konteks, kami telah saling berbagi pengalaman dalam berbagai tantangan bahwa ekstrimisme dan kekerasan dihadapi oleh masyarakat kita, dan kami telah berdiskusi bagaimana melakukan aksi bersama untuk membangun perdamaian dan masyarakat inklusif di dunia ini. Kami juga telah membagi pesan dari konferensi ini dengan masyarakat luas melalui sebuah aksi arak-arakan di depan umum untuk perdamaian.

1. "Semangat Zanzibar" Belajar Bersama

Kami telah belajar bahwa umat dari berbagai iman yang berbeda – Islam, Kristen, Hindu, Zoroaster, dan agama suku – telah saling hidup berdampingan secara damai di Zanzibar selama lebih dari 500 tahun. Mereka saling mendukung satu dengan lain pada masa suka atau duka. Pemerintah mengakui dan memberikan kebebasan beribadah kepada umat dari semua agama. Dialog intra dan antar iman di sini merupakan contoh baik dalam hal kerjasama

masyarakat majemuk yang dapat dipergunakan untuk mempromosikan perdamaian antar umat beragama di manapun. Contoh bagus dari Pusat Antar Agama Zanzibar, yang menawarkan diploma dalam pendidikan antar agama dan mengadakan seminar antar agama tentang hidup berdampingan secara damai dan tentang kewirausahaan bagi perempuan dan kaum muda. Kami berkomitmen untuk mempromosikan dialog antar agama dan aksi sosial bersama untuk mencapai perdamaian dan pembangunan.

2. Keyakinan Bersama Kita dalam Kesatuan

Meskipun kita adalah orang-orang dari kepercayaan yang berbeda-beda, bersama-sama percaya bahwa Tuhan (dan dhamma, dalam agama Buddha) menyatukan kita dan melampoi semua yang dapat memisahkan kita satu sama lain. Kekuatan yang lebih tinggi ini memanggil kita dan memberdayakan kita untuk mengatasi kekerasan bersama dan untuk menggali potensi untuk perdamaian dalam agama kita masing-masing, memelihara sebuah masyarakat tanpa pengucilan.

Kami telah saling berbagi, pada satu hal, berbagai kisah bahwa banyak komunitas keagamaan menggunakan kekerasan terhadap sesamanya, dan di satu hal yang lain, berbagi kisah bahwa banyak komunitas keagamaan melindungi sesamanya atas kekerasan yang dilakukan oleh ekstrimis agama. Kami bertekad untuk memastikan bahwa kesatuan dan kesetiakawanan diantara berbagai umat yang berbeda agama masih terjaga dengan baik melalui relasi-relasi baik, dialog-dialog, seminar-seminar, berbagai konsultasi, dan aksi sosial-ekonomi bersama untuk mempromosikan perdamaian dan mengurangi angka kemiskinan.

3. Sikap Bersama Kita terhadap Ketidakadilan.

Kami menyadari bahwa ketidakadilan merupakan sebuah pengalaman universal pada masa kita saat ini. Kami sadar bahwa banyak umat suatu agama sering terlibat dalam melakukan ketidakadilan. Akan tetapi, sebagai umat dari berbagai agama, kami sangat percaya bahwa Tuhan Yang Mahakuasa adalah Tuhan Keadilan. Tuhan memberi umat manusia dengan martabat. Berbagai bentuk ketidakadilan dan kekerasan yang menyebabkan penderitaan bagi umat manusia dan ciptaan yang lain bukanlah takdir manusia maupun kehendak Tuhan. Berbagai ketidakadilan masih terjadi di dunia saat ini termasuk berbagai pelanggaran hak azasi manusia seperti perbudakan, perdagangan manusia, kerja paksa, termasuk pekerja anak, dan serangan xenophobia

terhadap para migran dan pengungsi. Masalah-masalah ini sebagian besar disebabkan oleh kemiskinan dan eksploitasi. Akar penyebab masalah ini adalah ketidakadilan sistemik yang dipicu oleh keserakahan orang yang berkuasa, yang cenderung memanipulasi orang lain dan mengeksploitasi alam dan orang lain untuk keuntungan mereka sendiri. Agama sering digunakan untuk membenarkan ketidakadilan dan untuk pembenaran tindakan kekerasan, membuat masalah semakin rumit. Dalam banyak kasus, ketidakadilan itu sendiri memicu tindakan radikalisme.

Sebagai orang beriman, kami bertedak untuk bekerja bersama dan dalam kerjasama dengan semua orang yang berniat baik, untuk mengatasi berbagai ketidakadilan yang merusak berbagai komunitas dan memiliki potensi untuk memadamkan kehidupan di planet in. Satu hal yang sama-sama dimiliki oleh banyak agama adalah ajaran bahwa setiap orang istimewa di mata Sang Pencipta. Ajaran ini perlu untuk digarisbawahi sehingga kita dapat menghormati sesama manusia sebagai saudara dan saudari, apa pun suku, budaya, atau agamanya. Itu harus disemaikan di keluarga, sekolah, tempat ibadah, komunitas, lingkungan profesional, dan ruang publik, dan harus tercermin dalam struktur masyarakat. Kami orang-orang beriman berkomitmen untuk merawat orang lain dan berbagi sumber daya kami dengan sesama manusia dan semua ciptaan. Kami memahami tanggung jawab khusus kami untuk anak-anak dan pemuda.

4. Pengamatan umum kami tentang potensi konflik

Kami telah mengalami berbagai bentuk konflik diberbagai belahan dunia. Kami dengan demikian percaya bahwa ada kebutuhan untuk pembagian kekuasaan yang adil di antara semua masyarakat, dan kebutuhan untuk mengatasi berbagai agitasi agama yang dihasilkan oleh distribusi sumber daya yang tidak merata dan oleh marginalisasi ekonomi, sosial, dan politik. Kami berkomitmen untuk mencerahkan anak-anak dan remaja melalui sistem sekolah dan melalui berbagai bentuk pendidikan agama tentang hubungan antaragama. Kami juga akan menggunakan media untuk menyampaikan pesan antar agama melawan radikalisme kepada kaum muda.

5. Seruan Bersama Kita untuk Perdamaian

Kami telah berbagi berbagai pengalaman pembebasan yang mengesankan dari Sri Lanka, dimana para korban kekerasan yang bermotivasi agama diberdayakan untuk bereaksi dengan kasih yang memaafkan daripada

membalas dendam. Dengan cara yang sangat eksistensial, mereka dapat menghubungkan penderitaan batin dan rasa sakit mereka dengan sumber harapan religius mereka yang mendalam kepada Tuhan. Hal ini memungkinkan mereka mengalami sebuah proses penyembuhan yang mencakup baik penyembuhan trauma secara profesional dan desakan-desakan penegakan hukum yang terpercaya oleh pemerintah. Kami telah belajar bahwa sumber paling dalam bagi seruan bersama kita untuk perdamaian bukan hanya penegasan kita terhadap nilai-nilai moral yang kita miliki bersama, tetapi bahkan lebih banyak pengalaman kita dalam agama kita masing-masing tentang kekuatan pembebasan Allah untuk penyembuhan dan pengampunan.

Percaya pada kuasa Allah dalam rekonsiliasi, transformatif, dan memberi semangat, bersama-sama kita berkomitmen pada diri kita sendiri:

- Untuk menemukan dan berbagi pengalaman mendalam tentang kuasa Allah yang membebaskan dan mendamaikan dalam agama-agama kita, dan melalui ini untuk memperkuat dan memperdalam seruan bersama kita untuk perdamaian dan dampaknya pada kehidupan orang-orang.
- Untuk mendorong umat dari berbagai iman yang berbeda, untuk menerabas batas-batas melalui perjumpaan, dialog, dan membangun jembatan, dan dengan demikian, untuk memperlakukan keyakinan agama orang lain dengan hormat dan berbicara tentang satu sama lain dengan cara yang positif dan membangun perdamaian

6. Panggilan Bersama Kita untuk Kolaborasi Damai

Tuhan memanggil melalui agama-agama kita untuk bergandengan tangan dan bekerja bersama sebagai rambu harapan dan perdamaian, untuk mewujudkan struktur-struktur jejaring dan untuk melanjutkan perjalanan antar agama kita bersama untuk perdamaian dan komunitas inklusif. Kami berkomitmen untuk mendirikan pusat-pusat pelatihan antar iman dimana pemuda, rohaniwan, dan semua umat dari berbagai iman dapat saling belajar agama yang satu dan yang lain. Platform dan beragam kegiatan untuk kaum muda dari berbagai agama perlu diperkuat sehingga mereka dapat saling bekerja sama untuk membangun jaringan kerja sama yang mempromosikan perdamaian dan keadilan di dunia.

Kami menyerukan kepada semua orang yang beriman dan yang berniat baik untuk bergabung dengan kami dalam perjalanan untuk perdamaian dan mewujudkan komunitas inklusif. Semoga „semangat Zanzibar“ ini menyebar ke seluruh komunitas kita dan mendorong kita untuk melanjutkan perjalanan panggilan bersama kita.

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Dr Ven Madampagama Assaji Thero (Sri Lanka), Buddhist Monk and Chief Incumbent of the Buddhist Temple at Sri Lanka Isipathanaramaya (Colombo); Spokesperson for the Sri Lanka Environmental Congress; and prominent figure in peace, reconciliation, coexistence and mine clearance.

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In September 2019, seventy people from eleven countries of Africa, Asia, and Europe, representing Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist religious communities, have attended the second International Interreligious Peace Conference in Zanzibar, Tanzania. In the framework of the thematic “Peace among the People – Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities”, the participants have mostly focused on “Religious Radicalisation”.

This book is a compilation of various experiences of mitigation of religious radicalisation and promotion of interreligious action for peace and inclusive communities in multireligious and intercultural contexts from Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Germany, Indonesia, Israel, Kenya, Namibia, Philippines, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Tanzania/Zanzibar. Theological, historical, practical and educational perspectives are included.

The joint statement shared with the public in Zanzibar expressing the commitment of participants to continue to work together in different contexts for peace and inclusive communities is also documented in different languages.

This second International Interreligious Peace Conference was organised by the United Evangelical Mission in collaboration with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania Eastern and Coastal Diocese, and the North Western Diocese, the Zanzibar Interfaith Center (ZANZIC), the Catholic Diocese of Zanzibar, the Anglican Church of Zanzibar, the Waqf and Trust Commission of Zanzibar, and the Muftis Office of Zanzibar.