

## **Meeting of the Reflection Group on Islam**

### **Lilongwe-Malawi**

**25-29 November 2018**

#### **Day 1: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2018:**

Arrival in Msamba Conference Center in Lilongwe and Settling Down

#### **The General Time Table is Adopted**

6.45 a.m.: Lauds/Mass

7.30 a.m.: Breakfast

8.45: am: First talk

10.30: a.m: Break

11.00: a.m: Second session

12.30: Lunch

3.00 - 16.15: Third session

16.45 – 17.45: Fourth Session

18.00: Mass/Vespers

#### **Day 2: 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

#### **9.00 – 9.30 Organization of the Logistics and Distribution of Responsibilities**

- Introduction of members
- Main Coordinators: Frs. Simon Mbutia and Richard Kyankaaga
- Moderators (Frs. Simon and Abraham)
- Secretaries ( Frs. Fasil Kebede and Isaiah)
- Time-Keeper (Fr. Leopold)
- Social: - (Fr. Isaiah and Crispim)
- Logistic: - (Fr. Edward Kanyike, Fr. Desiré)
- Welcome from Host Provincial (Fr. Edward Kanyike)
- Word from Provincial head of Sector (Fr. Richard Kyankaaga)
- General Secretary from Rome (Fr. Mariano Tibaldo)

#### **11.00 – 12.30: Reports From the Circonscriptions**

- a. Chad (Br. Enrico Gonzalez)

- b. Ethiopia (Fr. Abraham, Fr. Isaiah)
- c. Egypt-Sudan (FR. Simon Mbuthia)
- d. Kenya (Fr. Fasil Kebede)

**15.00- 16.15: Reports continued**

- e. Malawi-Zambia (Fr. Edward Kanyike)
- f. Mozambique (Fr. Crispim)
- g. South Africa (Fr. Jude)

**16.45-17.45: Reports continued**

- h. South Sudan (Fr. Ghislain Amoussou)
- i. Togo-Ghana-Benin (Fr. Leopold)

**18.00: Mass**

**18.45 Supper**

**Day 3: 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2018**

**6.45 a.m.:** Lauds/Mass

**7.30 a.m.:** Breakfast

**8.45- 10.30 am:** First Session: Sharing on “**Muslim Christian Relationship in Malawi and Southern Africa**”. Guest Speakers: A Muslim Sheikh and a Local Priest involved in Inter-Religious Dialogue in Malawi.

**10.30: a.m: Break**

11.00 -12.30: Second session: First Talk on “**The Concept of Marriage and the law of Personal Status in Islam**” (Fr. Simon Mbuthia).

**12.30: Lunch and Rest**

15.00 - 16.15: Third session: Second Talk on “**The Pastoral Implications of Inter-faith Marriages between Muslims and Christians**” (Fr. Simon Mbuthia).

16.45-17.45: Fourth Session: Third Talk on **“The Current State of Islam in the Sub-Saharan Africa: Its expansion and Influence in Politics, Economy and Society”** (Fr. Felix Phiri, *MAfr.*).

18.00: Mass and Vespers

#### **Day 4: 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2018**

7.00 a.m.: Lauds

7.30 a.m.: Breakfast

8.45-10.30 am: Fifth Session: Fourth Talk: **“Strategies used by Muslims in their Expansion in Africa. Organizations, Movements and Institutions involved in its Proselytism and the Expansion in Sub-Saharan Africa, their Source of Finances and their Strategies”** (Fr. Felix Phiri, *MAfr.*).

10.30: a.m: Break

11.00-12.30: Sixth Session: Fifth Talk: **“Areas with Inter-religious Tension, Conflicts, Violence or Terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa. What are the Causes and How can the Problem be Resolved”** (Fr. Richard Kyankaaga).

12.30: Lunch

3.00 - 16.15: Seventh Session: **Choosing the Topics for the next Meeting...frequency of the meetings and venue.**

16.45 – 17.45: Eighth Session: **Evaluation of the Meeting and Final Communique**

18.00: Mass and Vespers

#### **Participants of the Reflection Group on Islam**

1. Fr. Mariano Tibaldo - General Secretary for Evangelization, Rome.
2. Fr. Ghislain Amoussou - South Sudan).
3. Fr. Richard Kyankaaga - Sudan / Egypt, Representative of African Provincials.
4. Sch. Cosmas Musonda – Zambia.
5. Fr. Edward Kanyike – Provincial Superior Malawi-Zambia.
6. Br. Enrico Gonzales – Chad.

7. Fr. Crespín Cabral Baraja – Mozambique.
8. Fr. Jean Marie Muketalingi –Malawi-Zambia.
9. Fr. Isaiáh Nyakundi- Ethiopia.
10. Fr. Fasil Kebede – Kenya.
11. Fr. Desire Bodola – Malawi-Zambia.
12. Fr. Abraham Hailu – Ethiopia.
13. Fr. Jude Burgers - South Africa.
14. Fr. Leopold Adahle - Togo/Ghana/Benin.
15. Fr. Simon Mbuthia – Egypt-Sudan (Dar Comboni).

## MINUTES

### Day One

#### **Welcoming of Participants**

**The welcoming of all the participant was done by Fr Richard Kyankaaga, who represented the provincial superiors of Africa. He expressed his gratitude towards the participants and all the provinces that had sent representatives. He urged the few provinces that did not send a representative to do so next time. He, however, noted that there is lack of continuity as most of the participants were attending the meeting for the first time. He welcomed Fr. Mariano Tibaldo, the general Secretary for evangelization, and thanked the province of Malawi-Zambia for accepting to host this meeting.**

On his part, **Fr. Mariano** Tibaldo, the General Secretary for Evangelization, presented the following:

1. Letter from the Superior General and his Council (see the attachment).
2. The Evaluation on the Questionnaire that had been sent to the provinces after the meeting in Lome, Togo (see the attachment).

The final message of welcome was done by Fr. Edward Kanyike, the superior of Malawi-Zambia. He welcomes all the participants into the host province. He noted that the notification about the meeting had been given on short notice but the province had done everything to make sure the meeting was a success.

## Reports from Different Provinces

### Ethiopia

#### The Spread of Islam to Africa and Ethiopia

##### Introduction- Statistics

According to the *CIA World Factbook*, Ethiopia is 33.9% Muslim—the second largest religious representation in the country, second to Ethiopian Orthodox at 43.5% (according to 2007 figures from national census). It is thought that Islam first came to Africa when Muslim refugees fled persecution in the Arabian Peninsula. Arab oral tradition claims that Islam spread from Alexandria into the Maghreb (Westwards into North Africa), leaving Eastern Africa as predominantly Christian. Later, increased communication and trade along the Eastern coast of Africa lead to Islam spreading there as well.



*chart made from CIA World Factbook data*

The Prophet Muhammad and his followers in the earliest years of Islam faced great persecution in Mecca from the Quraysh tribe around 614 CE. In order to escape persecution, the Muhammad instructed his followers to flee to Abyssinia. These followers heard rumors that many people in Axum (a city in Ethiopia) had accepted Islam, so they settled there. The journey of early Muslims traveling to Abyssinia and settling there is known as the First “*Hijra*” meaning “flight”

or “emigration”. Although Islam came to Christian Ethiopia, it did not catch on quickly. The acceptance of Islam was slow and peaceful, mainly taking place in the lowland coastal areas occupied by pastoral nomads. Islamization was done by means of teaching and trading. However, it still remained second to Orthodox Christianity in Ethiopia. The emperor had always to be a Christian, and was, thus, the Protector of the Church. The crowning ceremony of a new Emperor was officiated by the head of the Church (although there was no official state religion). Emperors Tewodros (r. 1855-1868) and Yohannis IV (r. 1872-1889) attempted a mass conversion to Christianity in order to enhance national unity, but Islam still remained. This essentially demonstrates an issue of tension between Islam and national identity/integration, which can be seen in several countries today. Due to the strong Christian presence and federalized nature of the Ethiopian state, however, it is unlikely that there will be a recognized ‘Islamic identity’.

[Read: Jon Abbink, “An Historical-Anthropological Approach to Islam in Ethiopia: Issues of Identity and Politics”. in *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 11 No. 2 (Dec. 1998) pp. 109-124].

## **Ethiopia and her neighbors**

### **1. The Impact of Sudan**

The last manifestation of this tit-for-tat practice occurred late in the 1990s when Ethiopia provided refuge and support to the Christian and animist Sudan People’s Liberation Army, which opposed the government in Khartoum. For its part, Sudan’s Islamic government supported a number of Ethiopian rebel groups and tried to export Islamic fundamentalism into Ethiopia. Ethiopia’s concern was greatest when the National Islamic Front led by Hassan al-Turabi tried to export Islamic fundamentalism throughout the region.

In the mid-1990s, Ethiopia joined the so-called U.S.-led front line states initiative that included Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda and was designed to put military pressure on the Islamist regime in Khartoum. At the time, Ethiopia’s greatest concern about Sudan was the threat of Islamic fundamentalism. The Ethiopia-Sudan relationship changed dramatically after the outbreak of conflict in May 1998 between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Both Ethiopia and Eritrea decided they

needed Sudan as an ally so they could focus on fighting each other. Ethiopia-Sudan relations have been good ever since.

## **2. The Impact of Somalia**

Relations between Ethiopia and Muslim Somalia have been equally troubled over the years. Some of the historical Muslim attacks on the Ethiopian highlands originated in what is today Somalia or ethnic Somali-inhabited parts of Ethiopia. After Somalia's independence in 1960, it pursued a policy called Greater Somalia aimed at incorporating the Somali-inhabited section of Ethiopia (about one-fifth of Ethiopia's land area) into Somalia. The Greater Somalia effort also tried to incorporate the Somali-inhabited portion of northeastern Kenya and all of Djibouti (about 60 percent Somali and 40 percent Afar) into Somalia.

In the late 1970s, Somalia invaded the Somali-inhabited Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Ethiopia was only able to push back the Somali troops with the help of Cuban forces and Soviet military advisers and equipment. In the mid and late 1990s, an Islamic group in Somalia, al-Ittihad al-Islami, carried out several attacks inside Ethiopia, including an attempted assassination of Ethiopia's minister of telecommunications, an ethnic Somali. Ethiopia cracked down hard on al-Ittihad, even attacking some of its bases across the Ethiopian border inside Somalia. Al-Ittihad disappeared as a viable organization early in the 21st century but was replaced by other Islamist groups that Ethiopia considered a threat.

Fearing a spillover of Islamic fundamentalism from Somalia, Ethiopia sent troops at the end of 2006 into Somalia at the request of the Nairobi-based Somali Transitional Federal government to defeat the militias of the Islamic Courts, which had taken control of much of the country. While Ethiopian troops easily defeated the Islamic Courts, Ethiopia found itself as an occupying force in Mogadishu.

After the collapse of the Islamic Courts in Somalia, a more extreme group known as al-Shabaab (the Youth) increased its support by urging Somalis to join the fight against the Ethiopian occupiers. This rallying cry was effective; the Ethiopians were unable to extend their control beyond Mogadishu and faced constant attacks in the capital by al-Shabaab. Ethiopian forces remained in Mogadishu until January 2009 when an African Union force was finally strong enough to hold part of the city on behalf of the weak Somali government. Ethiopian forces

subsequently, however, have periodically crossed into Somalia to support Somali government forces against the al-Shabaab threat.

### **Internal Muslim-Christian relations**

According to the 2007 census, there were about 25 million Muslims in Ethiopia or almost 35 percent of the population. Many Muslims argue the percentage is higher, and they could be correct, but there are no statistics to support their claim. It is important, however, to put the significance of Ethiopia's Muslim population in perspective. Estimates as of 2010, put the total number of Muslims in Ethiopia at 29 million or more than the number of Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Syria or Yemen and almost as many as in Sudan. Although the Muslim community is a minority in Ethiopia and it is diverse in terms of ethnicity, it is an increasingly important part of society and political life.

While Sufi tradition has historically been high in Ethiopia, there is no agreement today on the percentage of Ethiopian Muslims who follow a Sufi tradition. I have heard estimates ranging from a high of 80 percent Sufi followers to the suggestion that a majority of Ethiopian Muslims now hold non-political Salafist views.

The Muslim population is scattered throughout Ethiopia but concentrated on the southern, eastern, and western periphery. Ethnic groups that are entirely Muslim include the Somali, Afar, Harari and a number of smaller groups along the Sudan border. The largest ethnic group in the country, the Oromo, has a significant Muslim component; Oromos I have spoken with estimate that between 50 and 60 percent are Muslim.

By comparison, according to the 2007 census, Ethiopian Orthodox followers account for almost 44 percent of the population, Protestants almost 19 percent and Catholics less than 1 percent. The significant increase in the percentage of Ethiopia's population that has recently become evangelical Protestant has alarmed some leaders in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church even more than their concern over Islamic fundamentalism. This is often related to the aggressive efforts by some Protestant groups to proselytize Ethiopian Orthodox and Muslim believers.

The government of Ethiopia, whose leadership remains largely Christian, recognizes both Christian and Muslim holidays. The government accorded legal status to the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs in 1992, lifted restrictions on travel to Mecca, and repealed the ban on the



importation of religious literature. The 1994 Constitution implicitly sanctioned the use of sharia and the 1999 Federal Courts of Sharia Consolidation Proclamation explicitly did so. Sharia courts are being used more frequently for civil cases so long as both parties agree to take the matter there. The ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has opened up senior government positions to Muslims.

But otherwise cordial Muslim-Christian relations have been periodically interrupted by negative incidents. In 1995, for example, there was a clash between police and Muslims at the al-Anwar mosque in Addis Ababa. Some Ethiopian Muslims have complained that the government has been interfering in the affairs of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs for the past two decades.

### **The peaceful coexistence questioned**

The Muslim-Christian relationship in Ethiopia has a mixed historical background. Ethiopia is located on a religious fault line, although the relationship between the two religions has been reasonably cordial in recent decades. Christian rule has prevailed in the Ethiopian highlands since the early 4th century. Early in the 7th century a group of Arab followers of Islam in danger of persecution by local authorities in Arabia took refuge in the Axumite Kingdom of the Ethiopian highlands.

As a result of this generosity, the Prophet Mohammed concluded that Ethiopia should not be targeted for jihad. Not all Muslims took this message seriously and subsequent contact was less cordial. In the late 15th century, Islamic raids from the Somali port of Zeila plagued the Ethiopian highlands. In the first half of the 16th century, the Islamic threat became more serious when Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi rallied a diverse group of Muslims in a jihad to end Christian power in the highlands. The Ethiopians finally defeated this threat by the middle of the 16th century.

### **Impact of Wahhabi/Salafi influence**

A growing number of Ethiopian Islamic scholars, fluent in both Amharic and Arabic, have studied in Saudi Arabia and subsequently returned to Ethiopia as part of the Wahhabi movement. Others are studying at al-Azhar in Cairo. They strongly oppose the Sufi-inspired traditional practices and in a few cases encouraged the desecration of traditional Oromo Sufi Muslim tombs.

There were even unconfirmed reports of the destruction of mosques frequented by followers of Sufi Islam.

In 2004, the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs voted to remove all executive members of the Council and replace them with strong anti-Wahhabists. Some Muslims charged that the government was behind the move. Behind the scenes, money from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States flowed into Ethiopia to build more mosques, Islamic schools and orphanages. The orphans receive a fundamentalist education and are expected to encourage others to follow this theology. One Saudi-based Islamic charity, the al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, completed 16 mosques as of 2000 and had plans to fund 259 more. Al-Haramain subsequently was shut down and it is not clear how many mosques were actually constructed. It reached a point where the Ethiopian government reportedly asked Saudi Arabia to press Saudi funding sources to cease and desist.

Reports are conflicting as to the degree of influence the Wahhabis have had in Ethiopia. Some of my interlocutors—Muslim and Christian—downplay the influence. Where the Wahhabis have had influence, it seems to be among the young, poor and unemployed. But that constitutes a big chunk of Ethiopian society. There are also increasing numbers of Muslim women wearing the complete cover, including a veil over the eyes. This was almost unheard of during my time in Ethiopia in the late 1990s. During my visits to Ethiopia in the last ten years, some Ethiopian officials have expressed serious concern about the impact the Wahhabi influence will have 20 or 30 years from now.

### **Where is the Muslim-Christian-EPRDF relationship headed?**

The ruling EPRDF had a reputation for successfully cultivating the Muslim community at least through the 2010 elections. If you overlay on a map of Ethiopia predominantly Muslim parts of the country with voters' support for political parties, the EPRDF has generally done better in Muslim areas than in non-Muslim areas.

In 2012, there was, however, a setback in the EPRDF's relationship with the Muslim community. There were Muslim protests in Addis Ababa charging that the government is interfering in Muslim affairs, trying to pack the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs with persons loyal to government policy, and promoting the views of the small, moderate al-Ahbash Islamic movement, which has a base in Lebanon but links to Harar, Ethiopia. The government denied the

charges and argued that a small Islamic faction is trying to create an Islamic state in Ethiopia. The government arrested about 75 Muslims including the leadership of the group that was criticizing the government. This only worsened the situation.

Although the Muslim-Christian and Muslim-EPRDF situation has been relatively quiet in recent months, the problem has not gone away and it is not clear to me where it is headed. Ethiopia does have the advantage of an effective and tough security apparatus that can probably counter any challenge posed by a Muslim splinter group. Broad disaffection in Ethiopia's large Muslim community is, however, another matter.

The government of Ethiopia, whose leadership remains largely Christian, recognizes both Christian and Muslim holy days. The government accorded legal status to the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs in 1992, lifted restrictions on travel to Mecca, and repealed the ban on the importation of religious literature. The 1994 Constitution implicitly sanctioned the use of sharia and the 1999 Federal Courts of Sharia Consolidation Proclamation explicitly did so. Sharia courts are being used more frequently for civil cases so long as both parties agree to take the matter there. The ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has opened up senior government positions to Muslims.

But otherwise cordial Muslim-Christian relations have been periodically interrupted by negative incidents. In 1995, for example, there was a clash between police and Muslims at the al Anwar mosque in Addis Ababa. Some Ethiopian Muslims have complained that the government has been interfering in the affairs of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs for the past two decades.

Recently, Ethiopia has been rocked in waves of strong anti-government protests. Some of these protests took a religious face when like in the recent days in the Somali region of Ethiopia churches were destroyed, priests killed, non-Muslims peoples were the target. This according to some analysts has left a lot to desire when it comes to peaceful coexistence and interreligious dialogue.

## Kenya

### **Islam in Kenya**

**Islam** is the religion of approximately 11.1 percent of the Kenyan population, or approximately 4.3 million people. The Kenyan coast is mostly populated by Muslims. Nairobi has several mosques and a notable Muslim population. The vast majority of Muslims in Kenya follow the Sunni Islam of Shafi school of jurisprudence. There are also sizeable populations of Shia and Ahmadi adherents. In large part, Shias are Ismailis descended from or influenced by oceanic traders from the Middle East and India. These Shia Muslims include the Dawoodi Bohra, who number some 6,000-8,000 in the country.

### **Islamic arrival on the Swahili Coast**

Pioneer Muslim traders arrived on the Swahili Coast around the eighth century. The tension surrounding the succession of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, and the already established trade links between the Persian Gulf and the Swahili Coast were some of the factors leading to this development.

Archaeological evidence attests to a thriving Muslim town on Manda Island by the Tenth Century AD.<sup>[4]</sup> The Moroccan Muslim traveler, Ibn Battuta, visiting the Swahili Coast in 1331 AD, reported a strong Muslim presence. Ibn Battuta said: The inhabitants are pious, honourable, and upright, and they have well-built wooden mosques.<sup>[5]</sup>

On arrival, the Muslims settled along the coast, engaging in trade. The Shirazi intermarried with the local Bantu people resulting in the Swahili people, most of who converted to Islam. Swahili, structurally a Bantu Language with heavy borrowings from Arabic, was born.<sup>[6]</sup>

Primarily, Islam spread through the interactions of individuals, with the Arab Muslims who had settled in small groups maintaining their culture, and religious practices. Despite encountering local communities, Islam was not 'indigenized' along the patterns of the local Bantu communities. Nevertheless, Islam grew through absorption of individuals into the newly established Afro-Arabic Muslim communities. This resulted in more 'Swahilization' than Islamization.<sup>[7]</sup>

There was strong resistance toward Islam by the majority of communities living in the interior. The resistance was because conversion was an individual act, leading to detribalization and integration into the Muslim community going against the socially acceptable communal life.<sup>[7]</sup>

Islam on the Swahili Coast was different from the rest of Africa. Unlike West Africa where Islam was integrated to the local communities, the local Islam was ‘foreign’; the Arab-Muslims lived as if they were in the Middle East.

The primary concern for the early Muslims was trade with a few interested in propagating Islam. The arrival of the Portuguese in the 15th Century interrupted the small work in progress. On the other hand, the interstate quarrels that ensued meant that much effort was now directed towards restoring normality and not Islamization.<sup>[8]</sup>

### **The spread of Islam into the interior**

Islam remained an urban and coastal phenomenon. The Spread of Islam was low-keyed with no impact amongst the local non-Swahili African Community. There were no intermediary Africans to demonstrate that, adoption of a few Islamic institutions would not disrupt society.<sup>[9]</sup>

The spread of Islam to the interior was hampered by several factors: for instance, the nature of the Bantu society’s varied beliefs, and scattered settlements affected interior advancement. Other factors included, harsh climatic conditions, the fierce tribes like the Maasai, tribal laws restricting passage through their land, health factors, and the lack of easy mode of transportation.<sup>[10]</sup> For Trimmingham, the brand of Islam introduced to the region was equally to blame.

Muslim traders were not welcome in the social structures thereby impeding any meaningful progress until the beginning of European occupation.

Other factors affecting Islamic movement into the interior included; atrocities committed during slave trading, as these unfavourably affected the spread of Islam.<sup>[11]</sup> In addition, the embracing of Islam by large portions of coastal tribes in the Nineteenth Century aided in its spread.

Besides, local Muslim preachers and teachers played major roles in teaching religion (Ar. *dīn*) and the Qur’ān at the Qur’ān Schools (Swa. *vyuo*) and Madrasa attached to the Mosques.<sup>[12]</sup>

The coming of the second wave of Europeans, in the Nineteenth Century, brought mixed fortunes to the coastal Muslims, their strong sense of pride and belonging was greatly diminished, with efforts being redirected to self adjustments.<sup>[13]</sup>

### **A Mosque, in Lamu Island.**

Nonetheless, Muslim agents deployed by Europeans as subordinate labourers to assist in the establishment of Colonial administration centers, were advantageously placed throughout the country, bringing the Islamic influence to the interior. Each place where a European installed himself, military camp, government center, or plantation, was a center for Muslim influence.<sup>[11]</sup>

In the interior, the Muslims neither integrated nor mingled with the local communities, yet, non-Swahili Africans began joining the Swahili trends in trade with some returning as Muslims. Swahili became the trade and religious language. Alongside the interpersonal contacts, intermarriages also yielded some conversions.

Although coastal rulers did not send missionaries to the interior, local Africans embraced Islam freely through attraction to the religious life of the Muslims. Close integration with the local population helped to foster good relations resulting in Islam gaining a few converts, based on individual efforts.<sup>[14]</sup>

Subjectively, most of the surrounding Bantu communities had a close-knit religious heritage, requiring strong force to penetrate. The pacification and consolidation by European powers provided the much-needed force to open up the communities for new structures of power and religious expression (Trimingham:1983:58).

Basically, progress in the spread of Islam in Kenya came between 1880 and 1930. This was when most social structures and the African worldviews were shattered, leaving them requiring a new, wider worldview encompassing or addressing the changes experienced.

Consequently, Islam introduced new religious values through external ceremonial and ritualistic expressions, some of which could be followed with no difficulty.

Socio-culturally, Muslims presented themselves with a sense of pride and a feeling of superiority. Islamic civilization was identified with the Arab way of life (*Ustaarabu*), as opposed to 'barbarianism' (*Ushenzi*) hence the domination of a form of Arabism over the local variety of Islam.<sup>[15]</sup>

The ease, with which Islam could be adopted, meant adding to the indigenous practices, new religious rites and ceremonies to the African ways, with new ways of defining one's identity by

new forms of expression. Mingling with Muslims led to conversion meaning returning home as Muslims and not aliens.<sup>[15]</sup> Lacunza-Balda shows that Islam could be adopted easily.

Although most of the conversions were of individuals, there were communities that embraced Islam en-masse. Some of these included the Digo and Pokomo of the Lower Tana region. From these communities Islam slowly penetrated inland.

### **Organized Missionary activities**

Pioneer Muslim missionaries to the interior were largely Tanganyikans, who coupled their missionary work with trade, along the centers began along the railway line, such as, Kibwezi, Makindu and Nairobi.

Outstanding amongst them was Maalim Mtondo, a Tanganyikan credited with being the first Muslim missionary to Nairobi. Reaching Nairobi at the close of the Nineteenth Century, he led a group of other Muslims, and enthusiastic missionaries from the coast to establish a 'Swahili village' in the present day Pumwani.

A small mosque was built to serve as a starting point and he began preaching Islam in earnest. He soon attracted several Kikuyus and Wakambas, who became his disciples.<sup>[14]</sup>

Local men converted and having learned from their teachers took up the leadership of religious matters. Khamis Ngige was a prominent local convert of the early outreach. Having learned from Maalim Mtondo, he later became the Imam of the Pumwani Mosque. Different preachers scattered in the countryside from 1900 to 1920, introducing Islam to areas around, Mt. Kenya, Murang'a, Embu, Meru, Nyeri and Kitui. This serious missionary move interior was out of personal enthusiasm with the influence being highly localized. Only a few Africans were converted, and the impact was short lived.<sup>[16]</sup>

### **Islam in Western Kenya**

Muslim traders introduced Islam to the western region between 1870 and 1885. The chief Mumia of Nabongo accorded the Swahili traders warm welcome. During an intertribal war, the Muslims assisted Chief Mumia to overcome his enemies. In return, one Idd day, Chief Mumia, his family and officials of his court converted to Islam. Henceforth, Islam spread to the surrounding areas of Kakamega, Kisumu, Kisii and Bungoma.

**The Influence and the new trends in Islamic outreach** although the struggle for independence in Kenya was a very crucial time for all Kenyans, very little is documented on Muslim's participation. Given that there were Muslims involved in the negotiation for the inclusion of the Kadhi courts in the Independent Kenya's constitution, points to key Muslim involvement.

Events in the Muslim world from the nineteen-nineties, the experiences of crises and failures, power and success served as catalysts for the reassertion of Islam in public and private world, through a call for a return to true Islam. John Esposito sees the goal for the revivalisms as transformation of the society through Islamic formation of individuals at the grass roots (1999:20).

The growing religious revivalism in personal and public Islamic life, created awareness on Islamic beliefs, culminating to increased religious observance, building of mosques, prayer and fasting, proliferation of religious programming, publications, and emphasis on Islamic dress and values. Lately, Islamic reassertion in public life, like the quest for the upgrading of the Kadhi Courts in Kenya have not gone unnoticed (Esposito:1999:9).

Contemporary Islamic activism are indebted to the ideology and organizational model of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhoods (*Ikhwan*) led by Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb; and the Islamic Society Jamaat-I-Islami led by Mawlana Abul ala Mawdudi. Their ideas and methods of revivalism are observed in different parts of the world today. They blamed the west for misleading the Muslim leaders and the Muslim leaders for blindly following the European ways.

Whereas the Qur'an and *Hadith* are fundamental, in responding to the demands and challenges of modernity, revival movements are crucial in spreading and restoring true Islam. Prolonged Muslim awareness has led to attraction to Islam, giving the converted a sense of pride.

Methods used in recent trends of Islamization, are twofold, some directed to the Muslims, and others reaching to non-Muslims. There has been increased social action, building of schools, health facilities, and relief food distribution. Moreover, proselytization is carried out through print media, broadcasting, increased formation of Missionary organizations, and organization of public debates (*Mihadhara*).

## **References**



1. [2009 Population & Housing Census Results Archived2013-01-15 at the Wayback Machine](#).
2. *"The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity"* (PDF). Pew Forum on Religious & Public life. August 9, 2012. Retrieved August 14,2012.
3. Helene Charton-Bigot, Deyssi Rodriguez-Torres. *Nairobi Today. the Paradox of a Fragmented City*. African Books Collective, 2010. [ISBN 9987-08-093-6](#), [ISBN 978-9987-08-093-9](#). Pg 239
4. Salim:1973
5. Ibn Batuta:5
6. Quraishy:1987:154
7. Trimingham:1983:53
8. Lodhi:1994:1
9. Trimingham:1983:54
10. Holway:1970:25
11. Trimingham:1983:57
12. Quraishy:1987:174-275
13. Lacunza-Balda:1989:94
14. Quraishy:1987:182
15. Trimingham:1983:59
16. Quraishy:1987:193

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam\\_in\\_Kenya#cite\\_ref-Quraishy:1987:182\\_14-1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_Kenya#cite_ref-Quraishy:1987:182_14-1)

## **2. ISLAM IN EGYPT AND SUDAN: Fr. Simon Mbutia**

### **CURRENT SITUATION IN EGYPT**

#### **1). The Arab Spring**

- Under Mubarak: Some attacks mainly by Muslim Brothers affiliated terrorism.
- Fall of Mubarak (2011). Christian and Muslims collaborated.
- Interim military power.

## **2). Elections and Muslim Brothers leadership (no more terrorism)**

- MB promote international terrorism, gave bases to terrorists in Sinai.
- Fall of Muslim Brothers (violence against Christians) (2013).
- Muslim Brothers' party banned.
- President Sissi Takes over (MB go underground and opt for Terrorism).

## **3). Terrorism**

- Full war in Sinai region
- Terrorist attacks against government agencies
- Russian Airplane bomb
- Attacks against Sufi Mosque
- Attacks against Churches
- Expulsion of Christians from Sinai region
- Attack against Coptic Cathedral 2016.
- 2017 Attack against Churches on Palm Sunday.
- Attack at Church in Helwan.
- Attack on Christian pilgrims.
- 2018, Failed attack on Church.
- 2018 (November) Attack Pilgrims.
- 2018 (November) knife attack in Church on the suburbs of Cairo.

## **4). Christian Reaction**

- The reaction of Christians is divided: Some are very critical towards the government and Islam. Others call for forgiveness and point out that the majority of Muslims are not terrorists.

- There are Coptic groups in the US and Canada lobbying against the Egyptian government up to the US congress.

#### **5). Government Policy: Example (Building of the Cathedral in New City)**

- Repairs churches destroyed by terrorists.
- But Christians feel the government should do more.
- Government officials attend Coptic celebrations of Easter and Christmas.

#### **6). SUDAN**

- In the hands of Islamist government.
- Current events War in Dar Four.
- Departure of Christians from the South after Separation.
- Sudan moving a bit away from fundamentalism and terrorism: Embargo being lifted.
- In Sudan there is less fundamentalism on official level but the position of Christians not any better. (Pastors arrested and accused of proselytism).

7). Both Sudan and Egypt have Islamic Universities (al-Azhar in Egypt and Islamic University of Khartoum) where Islamic students from Sub-Saharan Africa are indoctrinated and sent to Islamize. At the same time al-Azhar is involved in Inter-Religious dialogue with the Vatican. However the local church plays minimal role.

#### **7). What we are doing:**

- In Egypt Dar Comboni plays big role in preparing personnel for the Muslim world and beyond
- Our schools both in Egypt and Sudan are places of dialogue.
- In Khartoum we also have the University college, a place of dialogue both with professors and students.

### **3 CHAD by Br. Enrico Gonzalez**

Islam in Chad and MCCJ engagement into inter-religious dialogue.

I am going to develop this presentation in two sections: in the first, I will give a sketch about Islam in Chad, while in the second I will deal with MCCJ involvement about dialogue with Islam.

### **Section I: At the crossroad of Sub-Saharan Africa Islam, the Chad.**

The geographical position of Chad, at the heart of Central Africa, makes it a cross road of various and often conflictual presences/tendencies, because, as history tells us, the country has always been a quite important place along the route of the Pilgrimage from West Africa, through the Sahara desert, Egypt/Sudan and finally the holy Muslims places in Saudi Arabia.

From a demographic point of view, Chad is a melting pot of different ethnic groups that range from- going north to South- the groups of Arabic origin to the groups of the South. In the major towns, above all in the capital N'djamena, the different ethnic groups come together in an uneasy sharing of living conditions which are quite often difficult to bear.

It is said that between 51-54% of the total population is Muslim and the rest 41-49% are either Christians or followers of ATR. It is interesting to point out that in 1982 Chad has adopted Arabic as second national language, after French, with a plethora of local languages spoken in everyday situations. The Arabisation/Islamisation process has not been well welcomed though a form of local Arabic is spoken, above all in the economic sector.

Islam in Chad has quite an ancient history, being present since the XI century in the regions of the Karem Bornou that included the whole of the lake Chad Basin. It was an Islam of the court that it did not appeal the local populations.

In the Oudday kingdom, the confrerie of the Qadriyya established its presence, while in Bahr-al Ghazal, Kanem, the Tibesti, it was the Sanussiyya that took roots. The latter had to confront the French once they arrived in Chad.

The French supported another confrerie, the Tijanniyya that was to become the most important/influent Islamic confrerie in Chad.

Taking into account the geographical position of the country, Islam has played a major role in the development of closer ties with neighboring countries such as Sudan and Egypt. The

“Jallabs”, Sudanese Muslims merchants, reached the Waday-Eastern Chad- coming from nearby Darfur. The Hausa and the Kanem, coming from West Africa, were present in the Adamawa at the beginning of XIX century. Trade was the key because it played an important role in the Islamisation/Arabisation process of Northeastern Chad in so far as it established links “markaz” between Central Sudan and this zone of Chad.

It is significant to point out that the town of Abèché –regional capital of nowadays of the Ouadday region- has always been an important place in so far trade and the diffusion of Islam are concerned.

It is meaningful to sketch a kind of geopolitical map of Chad Islam because external influences have-still nowadays- shaped its self-understanding. We refer to countries such as Sudan and Egypt, Moroc, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey.

In Chad all of these different/conflictual influences have a bearing on how the Muslim community in general, and the single person professing Islam, lives as Muslims. It is important to point out that there is a national instance that coordinates the life of the Muslim community in Chad, namely the CSAI. The latter puts forward an official discourse that underlines peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims. On the ground the situation is dramatically different. In the North, North-East part of the country the local people have been Islamized long ago, while in the rest of the country, where a strong Muslim population is present: the Islamic/Muslim discourse is source of conflict, prejudices.

In the major towns of Chad, a kind of religious/geopolitical division of the territory is at work, though, because of the demographic movement of the population, the neighborhoods are becoming more and more mixed. But, at least from a cultural point of view, it persists a kind of segregationist mentality.

A conflict about the role and importance of CSAI is between Sufi and Wahhabism tendencies, each other accusing the other of doing things contrary to Islamic practice/theory. The influence of the Wahhabi trend is strong and it is felt as a threat.

Due to the political situation of the Sahel region, Chad plays a very important role in the anti-terrorist war envisaged by the G5Sahel with France and the European Union on the foreground

in sustaining- financially, diplomatically and military-the efforts of the G5Sahel against the terroristic threat. It is a work-in-progress that perhaps will bear some positive results.

In Chad interreligious dialogue has a peculiarity of its own: due the past history of the country, it has been made the choice to privilege the “COHABITATION PACIFIQUE” that is celebrated each year in November 28.

At official level a “Platform of Religious Dialogue” is in place and the Catholic Church has its own representative. However, is sad to say, at ground level almost nothing is done; it is quite negative because it shows a lack of commitment though the official discourse is positive.

Section II: MCCJ and inter religious dialogue.

What do we do, as MCCJ, regarding inter-religious dialogue? According to the “Six Years Plan” of the Delegation, inter-religious dialogue (understood as dialogue with Islam and ATR) is a field of our missionary work.

I have been asked to follow the Islam/Muslim part of it, while another confrere was supposed to follow the ATR, however, so far, nothing has been done, though for 2019, the theme of the on-going formation programme will be ATR.

Two realities are charged into putting it into practice: the “Tent of Abraham” and the “Foyer des Jeunes” of our Abeche parish. With the latter we share some initiatives, above all in so far ad formation/information activities are concerned. In these days, a “Caravan of the Cohabitation” touching four localities of North-Eastern Chad, is running, with the purpose of sensitizing the youth: the two groups will come together in Mongo where the local Bishop, Mons. Coudray SJ, will meet the participants.

### **The “Tent”.of Abraham**

Since my arrival in Chad and my involvement at the “Tent”, I have tried, perhaps thanks to my past experience in the Islamic/Muslim countries, to practice a policy of openness, friendship and collaboration with some of the Muslim/Islamic community and associations of N’djamena.

At the same time, as answer to a need expresses by the confreres of the Delegation, I have run information/formation sessions for catechists and other pastoral agents about Islam and inter-religious dialogue.

The “Tent” is a small reality; it is situated in a Muslim/Arabic speaking area of N’jamena. The efforts done by the confreres that have worked before me have brought about a positive image of the “Tent”.

I try to build on that with the active involvement of a small team of Chadians. The “Tent” aims at bridging the gap between Chadians of different religious faiths. We do it thanks to a variety of activities that seem to encounter a positive answer. Due to the very difficult socio-political situation of the country, the “Tent” tries to be attentive to the youth as well as being actively involved in an everyday dialogue (dialogue of life) with Muslim/Islamic realities.

The “Tent” is a sign that since twelve years has been planted in the middle of Am-Riguebe: I am confident, though it is difficult, that thanks to this involvement of the team and people of good will, the “Tent” is shaping a vision/mentality that will bear fruit in so far as a peaceful living together is concerned.

### **Activities:**

#### First Section : Themes about inter-religious dialogue and Peaceful Co-existence :

- Cultural week
- Co-existence Day
- Presentation of CET Annual Message
- Camp of the dialogue

#### Second section : the educational project

##### Collaboration

The «Tent» has signed a protocol with two associations: “L’association des jeunes pour la culture et la paix au Tchad (AJCPT) » et la troupe théâtrale « Miroir du peuple ».

Further contacts are carried out in order to improve more and more a kind of openness in so far as youth’s cultural center of N’jamena, are concerned.

Brother Enrico Gonzales, *mccj* (In charge “Tent of Abraham”)

#### **4. MALAWI-ZAMBIA by Fr. Edward Kanyike**

##### Islamic Presence in Malawi and the Threat of Extremism

#### **I. The beginning and spread of Islam in Malawi**

In 1530, Arabs from Tete (Mozambique) and Zambezi began to trade with the interior of what is now Malawi. The clans of the Amwenye in Malawi and the Varendu in Zimbabwe have names and practices that show an ancient contact with Islam. They practice circumcision, observe food taboos similar to those in Islam and their names sound Arabic.

From early 19th century, with the flourishing of the Oman dynasty in Zanzibar, Swahili traders penetrated the interior of Eastern Africa looking for slaves and ivory. With trade routes connecting the interior with the coast that had been Islamized, the Islamic influence began among the people of the interior.

The first center of Islam was founded on the lakeshore town of Nkhotakota in the central region by Salim bin Abdullah, a trader in slaves and ivory in 1840. Having established villages under the control of his own headmen, he overthrew Mulenga, the local chief and the paramount chief Kanyenda, and established the sultanate and the dynasty of the Jumbes of Nkhotakota.

The Jumbes, all of whom were Muslims, established an important centre in Nkhotakota with trade links to the coast. While the ordinary Chewa villagers kept their traditional religion, the chiefs used to send their sons to the coast to be educated and many of them were converted to Islam. By the time the fourth Jumbe was deposed by the British in 1895, most of the chiefs and their people had been converted to Islam.

In 1880, another important trading post was established near Karonga by Mlozi bin Kazbadema, a Swahili Muslim at the northern end of Lake Malawi. The British killed him in 1895 but the community he established remains Muslim to this day.

In about 1870, Makanjira III, a Yao chief at the Southern end of Lake Malawi, converted to Islam followed by Jalasi and Mponda, his equally powerful neighbours. They converted to Islam in order to strengthen their trade and power but the influence of the Swahili who worked for them as scribes and advisers also played an important role.



In 1866, David Livingston had visited the land of the Yao and had noticed the presence of both slave trade and Islamic culture. He wanted to establish legitimate trade and a Christian culture. This caused a rivalry between the European missionaries and the Yao chiefs who saw them as invaders.

In 1891, the Yao chiefs resisted the efforts of Sir Harry Johnston to establish a Protectorate over them but despite their defeat in 1895 Islam continued to flourish among the Yao. The role of the chiefs in the traditional initiation ceremonies and the inclusion of some Islamic elements into them helped to keep Islam alive. The Lupanda ceremony that later became *jando*, marked the entrance into Yao adulthood and Islam. This is how being Yao and being Muslim became synonymous.

By 1910 the *jando* included instruction in prayer and other Islamic duties. Nevertheless, the Yao and Chewa, both matrilineal tribes, did not abandon their traditional practices totally; as far as coming of age, marriage and death are concerned, they followed Islamic practices only when they were in harmony with their traditional customs.

Worthy of special mention is the Yao custom of occasionally offering sacrifice to their ancestral spirits accompanied by singing and dancing. The Yao Muslims still carry on this practice under the name *sadaka*; the dead are remembered, a meal is shared between the living and the dead in the presence of the sheikh or *mu'allim*.

Islam in Malawi was strengthened by the coming of the *Shadhiliya* and the *Qadiriya* Muslim brotherhoods via Zanzibar. By the 1930s, most sheikhs were members of one of these two. They brought enthusiasm and energy into Malawian Islam and introduced elements of Sufism in it. The *dhikr*, called *sikiri* in Malawi, the remembrance of God by the repetition of his names and attributes, is accompanied by a rhythmical dance and controlled breathing performed at *siyara* or *ziyara*, weddings, funerals and other Muslim feasts.

Another important factor in the spread of Islam in Malawi was the presence of Asian Muslims who settled as traders in all towns and trading centers throughout the country. They came at the same time as British colonialism. Although they remained socially separated from Malawian Muslims, they provided them with jobs and helped them in their religious endeavours. The Malawian Muslims, by moving together with their trade masters and settling in all parts of the

country helped to spread Islam beyond its regions of origin. By 1930, Islam was well established in Malawi.

#### 1.1. Intensive Islamization and the threat of radicalization in Malawi and Zambia.

The Republic of Malawi was earmarked for intensive Islamization in the program of *Da'wa Islamiyya* (the universal call to Islam). Since the early 90s, with President Bakili Muluzi, a Muslim, hundreds of Pakistanis, Indians and Northern Sudanese have been coming in the country and in the neighbouring Zambia with a clear mission of Islamizing the two countries in which the majority of the people are Christians. Mosques, Islamic Centres and schools, Charity organizations and Islamic propaganda are a common phenomenon.

#### **There are four stages of making a society Islamic:**

1. Creating a Islamic consciousness: wearing Islamic clothes and building mosques
2. Creating Islamic organizations: business associations, charities, Islamic schools, etc
3. Engaging in political and social structures: asking for changes in local and national laws
4. Threatening or using violence.

In Malawi, the third stage has been reached. There are places in Malawi where one cannot sell pork openly without being attacked by Muslims especially in Mangochi, the home of the Yao, a tribe that was Islamized in the last century and whose famous chiefs, Makanjira and Mponda were very active in raiding other people for slaves and selling them to Arabs from the Eastern Coast of Africa.

In the process of Islamization, "Once the community is well organized, its leaders should strive to seek recognition of Muslims as a religious community having its own characteristics by the authorities. Once recognized, the community should continue to request the same rights the other religious communities enjoy in the country. Eventually, the community may seek to gain rights as a constituent community of the nation. Once these rights are obtained, then the community should seek to generalize its characteristics to the entire nation". (Problems of Muslim Minorities, 1980). The subtlety of method is very clear.

There are factors that favour the spreading of Islam in Malawi and Zambia but also elsewhere in Africa:

- Poverty: Of late, Muslims are very much involved in humanitarian aid. They use humanitarian aid to make converts or make governments allow Islam to have greater influence in the country.
- Some African governments prefer to deal with non-Western countries that do not have strict human rights standards and are willing to support them in exchange for land and resources.
- Anti-Western propaganda plays in the hands of Islam helped by the blunders done by the West in Africa and elsewhere.
- For countries scourged by tribalism or regionalism, the idea of *Umma* or of being united under one Islamic nation is very attractive.
- Christian nominalism leads to easy conversion to Islam. In Malawi, people, especially women and girls change religion easily once it becomes a condition for their being married. Poor people and those who have become orphans because of AIDS are looking for identity and purpose in life. The offer of education is also very attractive yet it is the means for radicalizing children and the youth.
- Christians are not aware of the challenges of Islam; they have no strategy of facing the challenge. Very few care that some schools where their children go, Christian education has been replaced by the Islamic one. They are not aware of the Islamic influence on their community and how it undermines Christianity.

Muslims have strategies that have so far been very helpful to their cause. The following list is not exhaustive:

- Education: Most of Africa's population is below the age of 16. Muslims across Africa are using education to make converts and to influence regions. In Many Christian regions Muslims have built schools especially for children from poor families. They offer education, stationery, uniform and food. Sometimes, in order to send their children to these schools, parents have to convert to Islam and to attend Islamic prayers a number of times a week.

- Governments see this as a relief as it reduces their burden. They provide land and relax the curriculum requirements in order to make it easier for Islamic groups to build. Some of these schools are just madrassas in which children are schooled in Arabic and radical Islam at a very tender age.
- Many Islamic schools offer boarding facilities to children who are orphaned by AIDS.
- Top students are sent to universities to study politics and law in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan etc. They come back qualified and very influential but they become radical Muslims as well.
- Health care: Muslims build excellent clinics in rural areas available free of charge for Muslims; they provide free maternity care as long as babies are registered with Muslim names.
- Food aid: During famine, food is handed out at mosques or handed from door to door with this message from a loud speaker: What are Christians doing to help? See how Muslims are meeting the needs of the people!
- Refugees: many refugees become Muslims in order to benefit from hand-outs given especially to Muslims.
- Business support: By controlling business Muslims become very influential. Even in Christian countries or regions most of business is controlled by Muslims.
- Politics: Islam is a very political religion and Muslims are very active in the politics of their countries. They may use their positions to influence the laws of a country to make it easier for Islam to spread. They may even try to introduce a version of Sharia into the constitution of their country.
- Marriage: Muslim many are urged or even ordered to marry as many Christian women as possible. They are offered rewards of money, with larger reward if they can marry a daughter of a pastor or from a prominent Christian family.
- Halaal food: the organization that prints “*halaal*” tugs for food products uses the money from the tugs to promote Islam. Whoever buys these products contributes to the Islamic cause.

- Mosques: Wealthy Muslims fund building of roads and railway lines as long as they are allowed to build mosques around them. They like to build mosques next to churches, Christian schools and business establishments in order to intimidate or influence Christians spiritually and make it easier to do *Da'wa* (worldwide call to Islam).

## **5. MOZAMBIQUE-by Fr. Crespim Baraja**

He informed the group that the province was struggling to send someone but at the end he was able to come. The missionaries feel that the issue of Islam is part of their missionary activities. From the 2012 until now they were not attending. He apologized for preparing only a brief report for this meeting. In the brief report he acknowledged the presence of Islam in Mozambique. He said 20% of the population are Muslims while 24% Catholics, 22% Protestant and 34% African traditional Religion. Muslims used such as trades, building Schools and health centers, employments and giving gift (food and clothing) as a means to spread the religion. They are also involved in politics.

As Comboni: - we are not involved in formal contact with Muslims yet. In the country we were not having problems but now near the borders with Tanzania there are conflict because of religion. In the level of the Bishops there is an ongoing reflection on issues of Islam. There is a feeling in some areas the presence of the fundamentalist groups.

## **6. SOUTH AFRICA- By Fr. Jude Burgers**

The Comboni Missionaries in South Africa encounter Muslims in the daily areas of pastoral work and social life in general. We are not directly involved with a specific, identifiable relationship with the Muslims, but engage with them through the various bodies at work with Islam in South Africa. The major body being the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference.

The Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference Interfaith Committee assists with our relations with Islam. The representative is a Missionary of Africa, Fr. Christophe Boyer, works with various Islamic Bodies to facilitate the overcoming of prejudices between religions.

He works with the Turquoise Harmony Institute and the Nizamiye Mosque. Sixteen of their women visited the Carmelite Convent in Benoni Johannesburg in October 2018. They prayed

Surat 19, about Miryamthe mother of Jesus, after the Sisters sang Marian hymns. Afterwards they enjoyed a meal together and both groups were delighted with this exercise.

The Bryanston Catholic Parish, Johannesburg, exchanged dinner invitations with Turquoise Harmony, with the cooperation with the Parish Priest and a volunteer.

There is some interaction with Shaykh Fadhlalla Foundation, a group of Sufi's in Centurion, Pretoria. They are easy to relate to, especially about spirituality.

There is an interfaith group called Mystic Matters. They are linked with the Sediba project of Hartbeespoort, Johannesburg.

For improved relations and dialogue with the Muslims, the SACBC regularly interacts with Fr. Christopher Clohessy, trained in this area.

Islam in South Africa is a minority religion, practiced, according to 2015 estimates, by roughly 1.5% of the total population. Islam in South Africa has grown in three phases.

(a) The first phase brought the earliest Muslims as part of the involuntary migration of slaves, political prisoners and political exiles from Africa and Asia (mainly from the Indonesian archipelago) that lasted from about 1652 to the mid-1800s.

(b) The second phase was the arrival of indentured laborers from British India to work in the sugar-cane fields in Natal between 1860 and 1868, and again from 1874 to 1911. Of the approximately 176,000 Indians of all faiths who were transported to the Natal province, almost 7-10% of the first shipment were Muslims.

(c) The third phase has been marked – post apartheid – by the wave of African Muslims that have arrived on the shores and borders of South Africa. Recent figures put the number at approximately at between 75,000 and 100,000. In addition to this are a considerable number of Muslims from South Asia that have arrived as economic migrants. Although, the majority of Muslims are Sunni, smaller numbers are Shia and there is also a large Ahmadi following, particularly in Cape Town.

### **New rise in conversions**

According to converts quoted by the Christian Science Monitor, their biggest reason for the dramatic rise in Islam is that the religion is a refuge from early sex, AIDS, alcoholism, and domestic violence that is rampant in many black townships, where the greatest rates of conversions are seen. It is estimated that Islam is the largest religion of conversion in South Africa. Islam grew six-fold in thirteen years, during the time from 1991 to 2004. Even though organizations such as IPCI, the Islamic Dawah Movement of South Africa, and the Africa Muslim Agency have been eager to proselytize in the region, there have been other civic organizations such as the MYMSA and the Call of Islam who considered other approaches to weave Islam into the social fabric of South Africa as a more significant way of making the Muslims' presence conspicuous.

According to Michael Mumisa, a researcher and writer on African Islam, there has been an increase in the number of black South Africans converting to Islam particularly among the women and the youth. He believes that for some of the youth and women who were schooled in the politics of South African resistance and confrontation with the security forces of the former Apartheid state, the acceptance of Islam has become part of a radical rejection of a society based on Christian principles which are seen as having been responsible for establishing and promoting the Apartheid doctrine through the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. Branches of the Nation of Islam are already established in South Africa. Louis Farrakhan paid a visit to South Africa and was received by President Nelson Mandela and African Muslim communities.

Another reason has been the presence of a growing Number of Sufi Orders and Groups. Amongst these is the Murabitun, a group that has a strong following in Spain.

### **After Apartheid**

After South Africa became a democracy in 1994, there has been a growing number of Muslim migrants from South Asia and North Africa; however, their numbers are fairly low. Most of the non-South African Muslims are urban dwellers and thus live in or near Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London, Kimberley, Pretoria or Johannesburg.

### **Activism**

Organizations such as PAGAD have received attention for their fight against gangsterism and drugs. PAGAD consisted of mainly Muslim people, but were joined by people from various

religions. PAGAD, as the name suggests, was ostensibly formed to combat the rising trends of gangsterism and drug use. It became known more prominently, however, as proponents of urban terror. They were implicated in over 300 acts of violence, the majority of which involved explosives. PAGAD's operations largely ceased after the arrest and prosecution of its leaders in 2000.

## **Marriage**

South Africa is one of the few Muslim minority countries in the world which is considering the implementation of Muslim Personal Law or Muslim Family Law. In 2003, a draft Muslim Marriages Bill was submitted to the Department of Justice. This would allow courts to enforce the marital regulations of sharia law, with the assistance of a Muslim judge and assessors familiar with Islamic law, in order to protect the rights of Muslim women.

Proponents of the bill believe it would protect the rights of Muslim women as decisions made by legal scholars are not legally binding regarding financial settlements following a divorce.

Questions have been raised about the need for a separate marriage bill for Muslims, and there is lack of consensus in the Muslim community itself on the need for, and structure of the bill.

In 2009, an unsuccessful application was brought before the Constitutional Court of South Africa by a Muslim women's organization, to compel the government to enact the Muslim Marriages bill. During the hearing, Judge Kate O'Regan stated that, "the question is whether it is acceptable for the state to take over the management of a particular religion". Judge Albie Sachs commented that "it's asking the courts to intrude, in a very profound way, on a very sensitive issue".

## **Theology**

Most South African Muslims are members of the Sunni branch of Islam; there are also a large numbers of Shi'a and other smaller sects, like Ahmedis, throughout South Africa.

## **Community and interfaith relations**

The Muslim community in South Africa lives in harmony with other faith communities. This religious cohesion is most obvious in the Indian and Coloured residential areas where Muslims live amongst, work with and attend school with fellow South Africans of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, atheist and agnostic beliefs. South African Muslims generally do not segregate



themselves from people of other faiths. As per the culture in South Africa, it is not uncommon for South African Muslims, just like their fellow non-Muslims, to shake hands, hug or even kiss (in the case of close friends and distant or close family) as a greeting - even with non-mahrams. The National Interfaith Leadership Council, which advised President Zuma, includes former Western Cape premiere, Ebrahim Rasool.

The Muslim community has been affected by a rise in drug abuse, particularly in Cape Town of the drug Tik (crystal meth). Crime and gangsterism are also visible in the poorer Muslim communities.

Qur'ans are available in libraries including the National Library. During the month of Ramadan, many Muslim retail stores, radio stations (public and private), publications and organisations send messages of goodwill to the local Muslim community. Many Muslim stores are closed on Eid-ul-Fitr.

Financial services providers such as First National Bank, ABSA bank, Standard Bank and Nedbank offer Sharia compliant financial solutions and banking products. South Africa also has several branches of Albaraka Bank (of Saudi Arabia), Habib Overseas Bank Ltd and HBZ Bank Ltd, which offers only Shari'a compliant banking. Oasis Crescent Management Group is also a financial service provider to Muslims in South Africa. Halal food products, butcheries, restaurants are widely available in South Africa although gender segregation is not common within South African society.

### **Prominent Muslims in South Africa**

In addition to Cabinet ministers, there are a number of Members of Parliament as well as councilors in the various provinces. The former Western Cape premier, Ebrahim Rasool, is Muslim (Rasool is currently serving as South Africa's Ambassador to the United States of America). Imam Hassan Solomon (Raham) was a Member of Parliament from 1994 until his death in 2009. Naledi Pandor is the minister of Science and Technology, Pandor is the granddaughter of Z.K. Mathews, an anti-apartheid teacher and a prominent member of the ANC. Naledi converted to Islam after her marriage to Sharif Josef Pandor.

Sheikh Ahmed Badsha Peer was a highly respected Sufi. He arrived in South Africa in 1860 as an indentured labourer and was given an honourable discharge by the colonial British authorities when he was discovered to be mystic. His tomb is at the Badsha Peer Square/Brook Street Cemetery in Durban.

Abu Bakr Effendi was an Osmanli qadi who was sent in 1862 by the Ottoman sultan Abdülmecid I at the request of the British Queen Victoria to the Cape of Good Hope, in order to teach and assist the Muslim community of the Cape Malays. During his stay at the Cape he produced one of the first works in Afrikaans literature with his work in Arabic Afrikaans, Uiteensetting van die godsdiens (English: Exposition of the Religion).

### **Relief Organisations**

There are many Muslim relief organizations in South Africa serving both Muslim and Non-Muslim causes:

- AWQAF SA
- Africa Muslims Agency / Direct Aid International
- Al Imdaad Foundation
- Gift of the Givers led by Imtiaz Sooliman
- Islamic Relief SA
- Muslim Hands SA
- Muslim Refugees Association of South Africa
- Mustadafin Foundation
- South African National Zak'ah Fund

Some of these organizations have their roots in South Africa, while others form part of larger, international organizations.

### **Controversies: Muhammad cartoons**

In May 2010, the local Mail & Guardian published a cartoon depicting Muhammad by Jonathan Shapiro (a.k.a. Zapiro) which sparked some uproar from the Muslim community. Death threats were made to Mr. Shapiro and the editor of the newspaper. An emergency court interdict was sought by The Council of Muslim Theologians (Jamiatul Ulama) to prevent the publishing of the cartoon; however, the petition was denied by the presiding judge - who is herself a Muslim. The judge earlier chose not to rescue herself saying that her religious beliefs would not influence her. Zapiro created the cartoon in response to international outrage over the "Everybody Draw Muhammad Day" campaign of Facebook. Zapiro depicts the prophet Muhammad on a psychologist's couch moaning that, "other prophets have followers with a sense of humour!". The council stated that they feared violence in response and that the drawing may put the security of the 2010 FIFA World Cup at risk from extremists. It said that though it does not advocate violence, it would not be able to ensure that there would not be any. The editor of the paper said that, "My view is no cartoon is as insulting to Islam as the assumption Muslims will react with violence," and said that the cartoon would not have been published if it was intended to be racist or Islamophobic.

The Council of Muslim Theologians (Jamiatul Ulama) succeeded in 2006 in preventing the Sunday Times from publishing a controversial cartoon of Muhammad by a Danish cartoonist.

### **Islamic political parties**

When the first democratic elections took place in April 1994 two Muslim parties emerged, the Africa Muslim Party and the Islamic Party. The AMP contested the National Assembly as well as the provincial legislature and the IP contested only the Western Cape provincial legislature. Neither party was able to secure seats in either legislature.

### **No Islamic party contested the 1999 elections.**

The 2004 elections were contested by the AMP and the Peace and Justice Congress, again without success.

### **Conclusion**

Although South Africa has shown tremendous tolerance under Colonial Rule and also under the Apartheid regime, presently we are experiencing growing levels of intolerance in throughout the

political and religious spectrum. Joint ventures to overthrow the Apartheid regime, which really built up the communion between the various religions, have now dissipated and have been replaced by hostility and suspicion. Yet, as I said in the Introduction, efforts at dialogue and reconciliation are continuing.

## **7. TOGO-GHANA- BENIN by Fr Leopold**

We do acknowledge the presence of Islam in the norther part of the country. We do have people dedicated to the Inter-religious dialogue. In Toko-Toko (one of our mission area) we are involved with the support of the province and bishop. We have meetings every 3 month with the Muslim leaders. We also observe that in some areas the Muslims are in an open competition with us and other religions. The Muslims receive support from other countries and Parts of the country.

As Combonis: - we do received information and meet to share about the difficulty, influence and challenges of Islam every year. Ghana/Togo do not have as such challenging situation so far. We do feel getting prepared is the essential means. We do have two missions in Benin. Because of our good relationship the Muslims have been closer to us and some of our Churches are built in the lands given by Muslim leaders. However, we are aware the risks and challenges so we do have the ownership of all the lands.

### **Goal: - Mobilize and educate the society**

- Awareness about the future challenges though our relationship is so well
- We do see their numbers is growing slowly and needs more attentions from us

Comments from the Assembly: - the relationship looks wonderful but needs some careful investigations. It is also suggested to have all the lands well documented.

## **8. SOUTH SUDAN – By Fr. Ghislain Amoussou**

Muslims do exist though few in number. Their presence is not felt so far and no holidays dedicated for their feast. There are no hardliners. We have good relationship (co-existence). The issue of Islam and their spread is not discussed and not an issue so far. The country is concentrating on civil war cases. The confreres seem clueless about this issues. The south

Sudanese looks hostile to Muslim. Some cultures do not accept the Islam because the culture do not accept circumcision. There is a feeling that in South Sudan the Catholic State could happen and we are working hard on issues of the spreading of Christianity and Christian values.

## **DAY TWO**

**Muslim Christian Relationship in Malawi and Southern Africa. “Experience of Dialogue in Malawi”.** By Fr.Tobias B. Jere +265 993 581 214, +265 888 303 150

Email: demmamercy@yahoo.com,

### **Content**

Opening Note, a quote from Roland Miller: “Dialogue speaks about real factuality, and at the human level, it is friendship that provides the most ready access to the realm of personal meaning. It is to friends that we ordinarily express our deepest feelings, our hopes and fears, anxiety and inner faith, and with friends we move past the causal. And we share what is in our hearts. It moves to know those qualities of other believer’s life that can be known on in that two-way relationship known as friendship.”

### **1.0 Introduction**

Dialogue is an issue like motherhood; almost everyone is in favour and likes it as a good thing. It is so self-evidently valid that many of us feel that we need not think about it. Dialogue is honoured in our rhetoric. Malawi’s first head of state Hastings Kamuzu Banda used to talk about contact and dialogue... if anything went wrong. However, interfaith dialogue as a process of communication to bring about more tolerance, mutual understanding and harmony in every society, carries a more prominent agenda or desire; that of deepening knowledge about the other.

The fluctuating relationship between Muslims and Christians and among their various denominations has since called for dialogue as a solution which helps to know oneself ever more profoundly, to know the other ever more authentically and to live ever more fully accordingly.

Dialogue is an answer to the need for co-existence, cooperation and collaboration between Muslims and Christians and how best to go about achieving it which leads to long standing tradition of tolerance and understanding. Gambia and Niger (99% Muslim) have demonstrated

the fruits of dialogue where the two countries know no difference between a Christian and a Muslim except for religious ceremonies. This tradition dialogue should bring about real friend that provides the most ready access to the realm of personal meaning; it is to friends that we ordinarily express our deepest feelings, our hopes and fears, anxiety and inner faith, and with friends we move past the causal. While sharing our convictions as a people of God/Allah, dialogue moves us to know those qualities of other believer's life. At the heart of interreligious dialogue is an effort to build trust and deepen communication across conflict lines which of course, varies from initiative to initiative. It depends on the context, timing of an intervention and on the peacemaker's analysis of the role of religion in the conflict being addressed.

## **2.0 Historicity of religious dialogue in Malawi**

Like in many countries, dialogue in Malawi strives for more tolerance, mutual understanding and respect among ethno religious and political groups. It has very much been associated with the political development in Malawi.

### **2.1. Dialogue during the one era**

There was practically no religious dialogue between and among religious groups let alone with government at least before 1992. The chasing or deportation of the Jehova's Witness from Malawi by the regime marked the animosity that existed between them and government. The religious grouping went against the four key principles of government (unity, loyalty, obedience and discipline). This did not imply that dialogue was not needed but that the regime did not just give space to it; to the extent that even Roman Catholic's small Christian communities were seen as a threat to government. It was the oppression to the Muslim community as one prominent religious leader once said: "Some religious groups are sleeping lions waiting for the time to roar." The Dutch Reformed Church, Nkhoma Synod was the only Christian denomination which had a position of privilege within the country because the then head of state who was its elder.

Malawi as a multiethnic state has been a peaceful and free country where religion was then never a source of conflict or tension. Ethno-religious differences were suppressed so that people were not allowed to identify themselves religiously or ethnically, but only as Malawians while strictly adhering to the four corner stones. A search through the newspapers showed no evidence of religious dialogue taking place before the aforementioned period.

## **2.2 Dialogue during the multi-party dispensation**

The dawn of the multi-party system of government in the early nineties gave rise to freedom of worship by various religious groups in Malawi, most of which were not given sufficient space to grow prior to this period. However, the advent of more religious groups in need of growth and recognition ushered in a culture of competition among them, a situation that has heralded an increase in the manifestation of tensions and misunderstanding amongst the majority Christian and minority Muslim populations in the country. This growth has instigated a power struggle between different religious groups, resulting in struggles over geographical dominance between faiths over control of specific areas and the desire to woo more membership. This situation has been characterized by continued proselytizing by each faith group – self-righteousness and superiority over other groups.

This situation did not allow for constructive dialogue among religious groups at the level of communities and local religious leaders, thereby contributing directly to the lack of tolerance and peaceful co-existence among adherents of various faith groups. For instance, the minority Muslim community within Malawi continues to feel insecure among the dominant Christian community. These feelings of insecurity are compounded by aggressive conversion campaigns by each faction or religious denomination. The two religious groups battle over constituents and converts for their growth and recognition.

All these historical and present events which are social, economic and political in nature continue to have negative effects on interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Today, politics in particular, stands out as one the major root causes of religious instability that undermines an enabling environment for constructive dialogue in Malawi. The growing tendencies by political leaders to invest massively in wooing faith communities to promote their agenda make religious leaders vulnerable to any manipulation.

In his book called “The Catholic Church and Politics in Malawi: The Circle of Silence and Prophetic Engagement (1964-2004)” Gerard centres on the interface between the Church, state and the wider society. He brings to the fore the silence of the Church on political matters up to 1992 when Catholic Bishops produced a Pastoral Letter called “Living our Faith” which brought about a new face of the Church in Malawi. Before the above period, one hardly notices any form of open engagement by the Catholic Church with state politics using its social teaching. The

period was characterized by the state's abuse and gross violation of human rights of its citizens, a situation that this book grapples with. As a prophetic institution, the church did not do much to inform and influence public opinion and processes in matters of political and economic governance, in spite of its well established and elaborate body of social engagement. It is therefore, the intent of this book to investigate the reasons that disabled the Catholic Church from living and using its social teaching as an alternative narrative to the autocratic regime at time it was needed most.

The Bishop's 1992 Letter marks the rediscovery of the church's prophetic voice and relatively continued engagement with the state and society. The letter made a great contribution to the advent and establishment of political and religious diversity in Malawi.

Concurring with these views, James Tengatenga says that after independence, in 1964, there seemed to be a silence on the part of the church in matters of political engagement except for endorsement of government policy and offering prayers at political gatherings. A number of incidents happened that might have made the church speak, but it did not until the Catholic Bishops' Letter that spurred the Church into action, bringing about a concrete utopia in the establishment and consolidation of democracy. This letter courageously touched on the ills of the one party system and it was supported by almost all religious groups in Malawi including the Muslims to demonstrate deep their concern about the regime. Thus without the church, the state called Malawi today would not be here in that form, and was it not the Roman Catholic Lenten Pastoral Letter of 1992 which triggered democracy? One automatically thinks that the sufferings under the one party era affected Malawians as a people irrespective of their religious affiliation. What was critical about the pastoral letter is that it united different religious groups including Muslims to reflect on the common enemy of freedom and peace. Muslims and Christians could meet informally to discuss of concern in Malawi.

Dialogue mainly occurs between Muslims and Christians in Malawi, and the dialogue initiative has been inspired by the growing number of conflict incidents between Muslim and Christian communities within Malawi. They each aims to consolidate, maintain and control their territorial areas. Unfortunately, dialogue has often happened following a crisis.



Players in dialogue included the Public Affairs Committee (PAC), an umbrella body that constitutes all religious groups in Malawi, Forum for Dialogue and Peace (FDP) and Centre for Social Concern.

### **2.2.1 Rationale for dialogue in Malawi**

Dialogue in Malawi has been a response to the growing tension between Muslims and Christians in specific areas in Malawi. The country shares the concerns of the religious radicalization of both Muslim and Christian faithful. In Malawi, the Centre for Social Concern established dialogue structures in Nkhotakota and Karonga, Balaka, Lilongwe, Mangochi and Machinga districts. the Centre established Local Advisory Committees (LACs) to initiate and oversee the dialogue activities in the said districts and beyond.

### **2.2.2 Achievements of dialogue**

- Muslims and Christians have cooperated in issues of national importance such as demanding transparent, accountable, responsive and inclusive governance in Malawi at the level of PAC.
- Both Muslims and Christians have facilitated peaceful elections in the named districts from which other districts have learned lessons.
- Both groups have consolidated district dialogue structures to cushion any conflicts incited by different factors.
- More knowledge has been gained about each other's faith and practices which has reduced misconceptions and stereotyping. Both Muslims and Christians work together in initiating and carrying out dialogue sessions both within and outside their communities to increase tolerance, mutual respect and understanding.
- They invite each other to feasts/celebrations and funerals which deepen their understanding and mutual respect. A number of Christian students were invited to pray in the central mosque in Balaka district.
- Together Muslims and Christians contributed to the 2009 general elections in Mangochi district, in 2014 Balaka also registered peaceful elections.

### 2.2.3 Challenges of Dialogue

The challenges of dialogue are various and are incited by various factors.

□ **Scramble for converts.**

This puts dialogue as a secondary activity; all groups want to grow in numbers. While Christians and Muslims compete for converts, the newer religious denominations see both Muslims and Christians as unsaved. On the other hand, the Christians fear the Islamization of Malawi through a presidential vote. This was more apparent in the run up to the 1999 general elections where religion featured highly in political campaigning and the UDF in particular was branded as the party for Muslims. The opposition accused Muslims of trying to force Islam on the country. When the UDF, or rather Bakili Muluzi, emerged the winner, people in the Northern Region demonstrated and vented their frustration on people from the Southern Region, especially Muslims, by forcing them to leave the Region. Several mosques were burnt down and these incidents became the first recorded in recent times that people (Christians) carried out violence against Muslims in Malawi.

□ The political manipulation of religious groups is currently one of the main challenges, it renders dialogue illusive. Adherents have two masters, their calling and the political elites. The youth who are often at the behest of a radical clergy are of clergy have been targeted by the same political to carry out religiously and politically motivated violence. As a solution, the Centre for Social Concern has aggressively involved the youth, women groups in training sessions and networking in order to de-politicize religion.

□ **Deep-rooted prejudices.**

Misconceptions and deep-rooted prejudices are also causes of lack of dialogue. People of different faiths say a lot about the other, whether true or not.

#### **What Muslims say about Christians**

#### **What Christians say about Muslims**

Christians are unclean, they do not clean themselves after visiting the bathroom, instead they use tissues Muslims are polygamists – marry up to four wives plus they also believe there are virgins in heaven which is false.

They eat dirty food (haram) including animals that die on their own Lovers of violence, terrorism and wars

They enter the church with shoes on and sit on chairs arguing that only God can sit on his throne

They are also dirty because they spit everywhere and at any time

They do not pray but always ask God to do something for them They oppress women; in certain countries women are not allowed to drive. Women are not allowed to go to the graveyard

They worship idols and having a number of hangings which they believe represent God.

Priests secretly marry sisters (concubines)

Muslims squeeze and was the dead and the water is used to cook rice during *sadaqah*

They do not respect themselves in dressing especially women They pray separately from women. In general women are not allowed to stand before men.

Christians do not have leaders but commanders

Muslims leave shoes outside the mosque where they can be stolen.

Their religion is not the last one that leads to salvation.

### **3.0 Conclusions and recommendations**

#### **3.1 Conclusion**

Dialogue as an encounter with the other is not an option. It is a reality that both Christianity and Islam will continue to expand which calls for more aware of this developing. After all, Muslims and Christians have been living together peacefully in spite of their remarkable differences.

#### **3.2 Recommendations**

- Deepen our Christian understanding of Islam by including the Islamic literature in the formation of priests, sisters, brothers and lay people
- There is need to change our mindset about Islam; let us get closer and encounter the other; visit their mosques and information bureau.

### **Muslim Point of View by Sheikh Hameed Kongwe**

We do acknowledge the closer working relationship with the Catholic Church and other religions. The engagement with other faith groups has started with our first Malawian president. We do feel we could see the possibility of working together though some tensions has started because of the interference of the political parties and using the religions as means of achieving their ambitions. We accept an employment as a challenge. Intermarriage is another way of living together. We do have days we pray together in our places of worship.

In the Colonial regime and in the early years after independence some people were forced to run to other countries such as Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia. The main reasons were due to differences in political views and bad treatments by the ruling party. They were some people of different Christian groups who migrated to other counties such as Jehovah witnesses (religious view differences). As for now Malawi is a secular state with secular constitutions. In regard to the issues of radicalization we do have training against it. We make awareness and proper investigation of any new group and their values and aim. The following questions were raised: -

- **What are you doing in regard to the issues of radicalization?**
- **How do you manage with the religious dialogue as a competition for more converts is an on-going issues?** Dialogue is not a process of conversation or a weakness but rather is aim at promotion of tolerance.

TOPIC 1 (By Fr. Simon Mbutia)

## **The Concept of Marriage According to the Shari'a**

### **Introduction**

While sexual instinct is a part of our biological nature, marriage is a part of the social and cultural nature of the human society. While sexual instinct is geared towards the preservation of the species, marriage is geared towards the preservation of lineage as well as social order and the well-being of the society. For this reason, almost every society on the earth has made certain rules in order to secure itself. In this line, Islam has developed a unique system for the preservation of its subjects, its values, its societies and the universal umma large.

Marriage and family life are of great importance in Islam. Marriage is considered to be the “basis of the Muslim community. A good and sound society can only grow if a man and a

woman are bound in a solid relationship through the sacred contract of marriage”.<sup>1</sup> Muslim teachings concerning marriage are mainly based on the Qur’ān and the Tradition (*Sunna*) of the prophet. Regulations about marriage are considered to be of divine origin and, therefore, binding to all believers. Though all Muslims believe in this, there may be some variations from country to country regarding certain aspects of marriage depending on the legal school followed and the influence of local customs. Islam gives a lot of importance to sexual enjoyment. A *hadith* (tradition of Muhammed) says that “licit sexual enjoyment is the best thing that Allah gave to mankind”. At the same time Muslims also emphasize that the objective of marriage is “not just in order to have pleasure but also provide security and live together in stability”.<sup>2</sup>

Muslims do not believe that a man is capable of keeping celibacy for long duration of time unless he has some problems. This is why Islam insists that every man should marry to avoid temptation. It is also considered to be a part of the Tradition of Mohammad who, when he learnt that some of his zealous followers were passing nights in prayer and avoid relations with their wives discouraged that. He taught that he prayed and had intercourse with his wives. He asked those who follow his Tradition to do likewise.

The Prophet is reported to have said: “Whoever chooses to follow my tradition must get married and produce offspring through marriage (and increase the population of Muslims), so that on the Day of Resurrection, I shall confront other *umam* (nations) with the (great) numbers of my *umma* (nation)” (Reported in the *Wasa’il al-Shia*).

The Prophet is reported to have said: O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry, because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his modesty, and whoever is not able to marry, should fast, as fasting diminishes his sexual desire” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*).

The Qur’an says: “And marry off the single among you and among the righteous of your male and female slaves. If they are poor then Allah will supply their needs from his generosity. And Allah is expansive, knowing. And let those who do not find marriage hold back until Allah grants them of his generosity. (Quran 24:32-33)

---

<sup>1</sup> Kouthar, Allie Cader (Šayha), “Family Life in Islam/ Women in Islam”, *World Family Policy Forum*, 2003, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Borrmans, Maurice, “La famille musulmane à travers le fatwa-s”, in Younès, Michel (ed.), *La Fatwâ en Europe: Droit des Minorités et Enjeux d’Intégration*, Profac-CERC, Lyon, 2010, pp. 110-111..

## Marriage in Islam

The legal term used in the Islamic law to refer to marriage is “*nikah*”. The word refers to both the marriage contract (*‘aqd*) between a man and a woman and the sexual relationship between them. The contract of marriage creates a legal bond and a social contract between the husband and wife for an indefinite period of time.<sup>3</sup> The word: ‘*nikah*’ is mentioned in al-Quran in several places like in Surah al-Baqarah verse 221, 230, 232; Surah al-Nisa’ verse 3, 22, 25; Surah an-Nur verse 3, 32, 33 and Surah al-Ahzab verse 49.

Muslim marriage contract (*nikah*) is a highly religious sacred covenant (*mithaq*)<sup>4</sup> which legalizes sexual intercourse and hence, the procreation of children. It is considered essential to the realization of the essence of Islam,<sup>5</sup> hence the saying that marriage is half one’s religion. It reflects ‘the practical bent of Islam’ for it combines the nature of both worship (*ibadat*) and social relations (*mu’amalat*).<sup>6</sup> Thus, marriage *nikah* implies a process through which a man and woman ,by means of a particular form of contract (*‘aqd*), are united and live together legitimately as husband and wife.

## Contract

The contract of marriage is concluded through the request by the husband-to-be to the woman or lady he wants to marry and the acceptance of the request by the wife-to-be. The request and the demand requires that there be two witnesses. However, sharia does not require that the two spouses be present. Either of them or both of them can delegate someone to represent them. Normally, spouses who are still minors or brides who have never been married are represented by their guardian.

---

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Rakesh Humar Singh, Textbook of Muslim Law, Universal Law Publishing Co., New Delhi, 2011, p. 59

<sup>4</sup> Mithaq in the Qur’an refers to Sacred Agreement between God and certain prophets e.g. Between God and Abraham. However, in spite of marriage being regarded as solemn, it is not considered as a sacrament or as unbreakable. Islam allows divorce.

<sup>5</sup> Esposito, John L., Women in Muslim Family Law: Contemporary Issues in the Middle East. Syracuse University Press, 2001, p. 15

<sup>6</sup> Islam classifies human actions under two categories: *ibadat* or matters of worship are actions considered as a part of the believer’s relationship with Allah while *mu’amalat* refers to actions that deal with social interaction in the society. Islam considers that in Nikah there are elements of worship because Allah made it a necessity for the continuation of human race on earth, for the increase of believers etc. It is also social interaction as it creates bonds, duties and responsibilities between the spouses, and creates a new relationship between the families of the two spouses.

The contract of marriage creates duties and rights: The husband pays dowry to his wife (tradition teaches that dowry is first of all as an exchange the woman. He already provides shelter, protection and daily maintenance to his new wife. He is the sole responsible of the fonancial needs of the family. On her part the woman gives herself to the husband to satisfy his sexual needs, to give birth to his children and do the domestic chores. He also promises to obey the husband.

The contracting partners are free to add certain conditions to the contract. For example, a husband may require that the wife doesn't get a job or leave the house without his permission. A woman may require that the husband doesn't get another wife etc. If the other party violates these conditions, this could provide grounds for divorce.

One of the criticism leveled against the Muslim marriage contract is that is does not create equal duties and responsibilities. One reason is the unilateral right to divorce given to the husband which the wife does not have. Likewise, the husband has unlimited authority over the wife and can even refuse her to work or go outside the homestead without permission. Even in matters of conjugal relations, it is allowed to the husband to deny the wife sex as a punishment if she is disobedient and even to segregate her for a long period if she does not change her behaviour. The permission to segregate a wife assumes that the husband has other wives where he satisfies his sexual needs.

The structure of a Muslim marriage is highly patriarchal in nature.<sup>7</sup> The husband is considered the head of the household and has authority over the wife. Some Muslim scholars base themselves on Qur'an 4:34 to show that such authority is divinely conferred.<sup>8</sup> The wife is supposed to obey the husband in everything that does not violate religious rules. Islam does not allow a woman to decline sexual requests from the husband except during her monthly period when she is considered to be in a state of impurity. A prophetic *hadith* says that if a woman

---

<sup>7</sup> Richard C. Martin (editor), *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ISLAM AND THE MUSLIM WORLD*, Macmillan Reference USA: Thomson/Gale, NY, 2004 p. 430.

<sup>8</sup> "Men are in charge of women, because Allah has made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). So, good women are the obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah has guarded. As for those from whom you fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Lo! Allah is ever High Exalted, Great." (Pickthall's Translation)

refuses to have sex with her husband, then the angels will be cursing her throughout the night. In case of disobedience, the Qur'an allows the husband to segregate his wife and deny her sex even for long periods. In such a case it is assumed that the husband has other wives where he satisfied his sexual needs. If the wife in question doesn't reform even after sexual segregation, then the husband is allowed to beat her.<sup>9</sup>

### **Divorce (*Talaq*)**

Under *shar'ia*, the husband has the unilateral right to divorce his wife without cause. He can accomplish this by uttering the phrase "I divorce you" the clear the intention intention of divorcing. If he does this, he must pay her a sum of money agreed on before the wedding in the marriage contract and also allow her to keep her earlier dowry. Once the woman is divorced, she waits for a period of three months ('idda) to make sure she is not pregnant of her previous husband. Then, she is free to marry someone else. If the former husband regrets of haing divorced his wife, he can take her back before the three months are over. He is allowed to do this two twice. However, if he divorces her for a third time, shari'a does not allow him to take her back unless she first marries someone else and gets divorced. On the other hand, classic *shari'a* lays out very limited conditions under which a woman can divorce a man (he must have been infertile at the time of marriage; if he becomes insane; if gets infected with leprosy or another contagious skin disease). However, even in this case, the woman in question needs to go to a Muslim court and sue for divorce. If the court is convinced, then the divorce is granted. Most Muslim nations, including Egypt and Iran, now allow women to sue for divorce for many other reasons, including the failure to provide financial support, domestic violence and irreconcilable difference. The divorce granted by a court is known as *khul'*.<sup>10</sup> Another way is which a woman

---

<sup>9</sup> Idem.

<sup>10</sup> Legally speaking, *talaq*, repudiation of the wife, is a unilateral act (*iqa'*), which acquires legal effect by the declaration of the husband. Likewise, a woman cannot be released without her husband's consent, although she can secure her release through offering him inducements, by means of *khul'*, often referred to as "divorce by mutual consent." As defined by classical jurists, *khul'* is a separation claimed by the wife as a result of her extreme "dislike" (*karahiyya*) toward her husband, and the essential element is the payment of compensation (*'iwad*) to the husband in return for her release. This can be the return of the dower, or any other form of compensation. Unlike *talaq*, *khul'* is not a unilateral but a bilateral act, as it cannot take legal effect without the consent of the husband. If the wife fails to secure his consent, then her only recourse is the intervention of the court and the judge's power either to compel the husband to pronounce *talaq* or to pronounce it on his behalf. See, Dr. Rakesh Humar Singh, note 8 at p. 90.



can get separated from her husband is convincing him to divorce her in exchange of the dowry (she returns dowry to him or pays him a sum of money).

### **Polygamy**

The Qur'an allows Muslim man to marry up to four wives at a given time.<sup>11</sup> A wife cannot forbid the practice. However, if she happens to be the first wife, she can put it as an additional condition in the marriage contract and use this condition to ask for divorce if her husband takes a second wife. Polygamy is considered legal as it is allowed in the Qur'an and by tradition. However, some countries limit it through legislation. It is banned in Tunisia and Turkey, though reportedly it is still practiced in some areas of Turkey. In the classic times, not only was it allowed for husbands to have up to 4 wives at a given moment; husbands were free to have concubines and could also have sexual relations with their female slaves. Instead, women can only have legal sexual relations with their husband alone.

### **Child Custody**

Any children born in a Muslim marriage belong to the father and not to both parents. This is because the Muslim marriage, *nikah*, is a contract and not an alliance. In this contract, the woman receives a compensation in form of dowry, maintenance, shelter and protection. In case of divorce the father automatically gains the custody of his children, though a mother, if she is Muslim, may be allowed to keep the children when they are young (boys until they are 7 and girls until they are 12). But this happens only if the woman does not remarry. In case of divorce or the death of the husband, the woman waits for a period of three months, to make sure she is not carrying a child of the former husband and then she is free to marry someone else. In case she does not remarry, she keeps the children on behalf of her in-laws. In case she wants to remarry, the in-laws take care of their son's children.

### **Inheritance**

---

<sup>11</sup> "And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four" (Quran 4:3) This verse and others like it condone polygynous relationships (between one man and multiple women—but not one woman and multiple men). Men are allowed to marry up to four women, provided that they can treat them all equally (see Quran 4:129).

In Islam, inheritance is a complex issue. When a married man passes on, his wealth does not belong to the nuclear family alone. It is distributed to a wide range of heirs. His parents, siblings, wives, and his own children are entitled to inherit from him. Normally, women (mother, wife, sisters and daughters) inherit half what males inherit. In the seventh century A.D., when the Qur'an was revealed and shari'a was developed, the right to inherit was a major step forward given by Islam to women. However, *shari'a* also dictates that men inherit twice the share of women because, traditionally, men are financially responsible for their wives and children. A married woman is obliged to spend any money on the family. All the financial burden belongs to the husband alone.

### **Muslim Women Can Only Marry Muslim Men**

The Qur'an (60:10 and 5:5) allows Muslim men to marry women from the People of the Book (Jews and Christians but not pagan women). On the other hand, because of the unlimited authority given to the husband over the wife and the fact that children belong to the father alone, Islam refuses to allow Muslim women to have non-Muslim husbands. This is because this would subject the Muslim woman to the authority of a non-Muslim husband who would possibly hinder her from practicing her faith. Secondly, children born of a Muslim mother would end up following the non-Muslim religion of their father. Thirdly, Islam considers itself to be superior to all religions. Allowing a Muslim woman to marry a Jew or Christian would mean to subject the superior religion to the authority of a husband who belongs to a lower religion. A popular Tradition attributed to Muhammad says that "Islam should always be above and not below". This saying has many other implications in the society outside the family sphere. Regarding the prohibition of Muslim women to marry "pagan" wives (Qur'an 2:221) the Qur'an says that such women risk seducing their husbands to abandon Islam.

Another controversial reason for which Islam forbids Muslim women marrying non-Muslim husbands is because Muslim tradition tended to consider marriage a form of enslavement.<sup>12</sup> This is because of the culture that prevailed at the birth of Islam and during its early years when shari'a was formulated. At that time, men were allowed to buy female slaves and who became their possession. This gave them ownership of these slaves and the right to have sexual intercourse with them. Islam considers marriage to be a form of enslavement. This is

---

<sup>12</sup> See, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam* Kecia Ali. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010

because the man pays mahr to the wife to be, thus acquiring rights over her body and the right to have sexual relations with her. Early Muslim jurists saw marriage as a transaction that gave a husband, in return for payment, a type of control or dominion (*milk*) analogous, albeit limited, to a master's power over his female slave: "The connection between *milk* and lawful sexuality stands at the core of all regulations of marriage and divorce..."

### **Some Uncommon Forms of Marriage**

The most common form of marriage in Islam is the regular one between a man and a woman for an indefinite length of time. (Even though most couples live together for life, Muslims do not say "till death do us apart" because divorce is always a possibility even though is considered to be "one of the worst things that Allah permitted". A second form of marriage is called a *nikah mut'a* or temporary marriage for sexual enjoyment. This type of "marriage" is common in Shi'a Islam and is designed to make otherwise illicit sexual acts licit by a short-term legal arrangement. Muhammad, during his military expeditions, is reported to have allowed the warriors who accompanied him to practice this form of marriage. A few Sunni Muslims also practice it.

Although the majority of Sunni Muslims reject *nikah mut'a*, they accept *nikah misyar*, in which both prospective husband and wife agree to give up certain normal marital rights, like living together, equality between wives, rights to income, rights of home-keeping, in order to be married. This can be understood as a middle ground between regular *nikah* and a *nikah mut'a*.

### **Conclusion**

From a glance, Christian and Muslim marriages may look a lot alike. However, by looking closely at Muslim marriage, we see that there are major differences. Marital contracts within Islam elevate marriage above the mundane while allowing for the reality of man's frailty. Islam considers man as incapable of abstaining from sex for a long period unless he has problems. Celibacy is considered unnatural. Sexual enjoyment is considered to be the first objective of marriage while other objectives such as procreation come after. While in Christian marriage children belong to both spouses, in Islam children belong to their father alone. Islam allows man to have multiple wives. It also allows man to divorce and remarry. As we have seen above it also gives room for temporary sexual arrangements and partial forms of marriage. Both temporary

and partial forms of marriage expose a baser nature of a contractual view of marriage that falls far short of God's plan for lifelong covenantal relationships. Unfortunately, many Christians (mostly Christian women) who enter into marriage with Muslims men have no idea about the implications of a Muslim marriage.

## TOPIC 2

# **Pastoral Implications of Inter-faith Marriages Between Muslims and Christians.**

### **Introduction (Inter-faith marriage as a tool of expansion).**

In Sub-Saharan Africa as well, as in Western countries, where Muslims are a minority, the percentage of Muslim men who marry Christian women is higher than in the countries where Muslims are the majority. In the Western countries, this tendency may be attributed to the need for Muslims of migrant origin to acquire residential papers and eventual citizenship. However, this does not explain why Muslim men in Sub-Saharan African countries choose to marry Christian girls while they could marry their fellow Muslims.

Islam has existed for centuries in some Sub-Saharan African countries. In some areas, a form of African Islam has been created over the centuries. This form of Islam respects African hospitality as well as tribal, clan and family ties above religious ties. In places where that form of Islam exists, inter-marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims is common and has existed for decades if not for centuries. It is possible to see a Muslim husband with a Christian wife, while some or all of the children are Christian like their mother. It is also possible to see Muslim women married to non-Muslim men with the full consent of their families. In areas where such marriages exist, Muslims, Christian and Traditional believers live together in harmony. Religion does not play an important part in the choice of the spouse. Tribal, clan and family ties are considered to be more important.

On the contrary, the new trend of Muslim men marrying Christian women is taking place in an atmosphere of renewed Islamic activism and renewed aggressivity towards all that is not "Islamic". It is also taking place at a time when "African Islam" is being weakened by zealous young Muslims who have been educated in the Muslim universities such as al-Azhar in Egypt,

Islamic University in Khartoum, the Grand Mosque University in Mecca, Saudi Arabia etc. These young men come back with an Arabised Islam and consider the Islam of their fathers and their ancestors to be deficient. At times they found new Muslims where they teach a strict form of Islam. They also get financial support from the Arab world, while adopting an aggressive attitude towards all that is not Islamic. This raises the question: Why do such youths who want to live a more strict religious life seek to marry Christian women, yet they would not allow any Christian man to go near their daughters or sisters?

The answer is that these young men see this as a part of their mission for the expansion of Islam. They target the most educated and intelligent Christian girls. At times they aim for the most devoted ones. Such an approach has several objectives. First, it humiliates Christians by showing that the Muslim men are better conquerors than Christian men. Secondly, they make sure that they are reducing the number of Christians as the children born of such marriage will automatically be Muslim. Thirdly, some may want to eventually convert that woman into Islam even though it may take a long duration. Fourth, by aiming at the most intelligent and successful Christian women in the society, they hope to use her as bait for other Christian women. Unfortunately, many Christian women entering to marriage with Muslims have no idea about the implications of such marriages.

### **Inter-Religious Marriage in According to Shari'a**

Muslim men are free to marry Muslim women and vice versa. However, when it comes to marriage outside Islam, Islam has strict regulations. Classic Islamic law relies on Qur'an 60:10 to assert that Islam does not allow a Muslim man to marry pagan women. The Qur'an here refers to the polytheists of the pre-Islamic Arabia who had not yet embraced Islam and uses the term (*kāfir*) even though the jurists extend this to include all the women who are not from the people of the book. Qur'an 60:10 says:

O ye who believe! When believing women come unto you as fugitives, examine them. Allah is Best Aware of their faith. Then, if ye know them for true believers, send them not back unto the disbelievers. They are not lawful for them (the disbelievers), nor are they (the disbelievers) lawful for them. And give them (the disbelievers) that which they have spent (upon them). And it is no sin for you to marry such women when ye have

given them their dues. And hold not to the ties of disbelieving women; and ask for (the return of) that which ye have spent; and let them (the disbelievers) ask for that which they have spent. That is the judgment of Allah. He judgeth between you. Allah is Knower, Wise. (Qur'an 60:10 Pickthall's translation)

Several modern Islamic states seem to subscribe to this point of view by maintaining prohibition of marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim men in their personal status code. Article 29/5 of the Moroccan *Mudawwana* explicitly forbids marriage between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man.<sup>13</sup> Also in Algerian constitution there are a number of articles condemning this form of marriage. Article 13 of the Algerian family code bill of 1973 and article 27 of the 1981 bill consider such marriage as automatically null and void.<sup>14</sup> An exception is Tunisia where a year ago the parliament passed a motion allowing Muslim women to marry non-Muslim men.

On the other hand, Islam allows a Muslim man to marry women from the people of the book, i.e. Christian or Jewish women. In such a case, the women are not obliged to convert to Islam, but their children automatically follow the religion of their father. The permission for Muslim men to marry women from the people of the book is based the following Qur'anic verse:

This day are (all) good things made lawful for you. The food of those who have received the Scripture is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them. And so are the virtuous women of the believers and the virtuous women of those who received the Scripture before you (lawful for you) when ye give them their marriage portions and live with them in honour, not in fornication, nor taking them as secret concubines. Whoso denieth the faith, his work is vain and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter. (Qur'an 5:5 Pickthall's translation).

## **Marriage Between Muslim Women and non-Muslim Men**

---

<sup>13</sup> Wassila Ltaief, International law, mixed marriage, and the law of succession in North Africa: “. . .but some are more equal than others” in LEGAL INSTRUMENTS AND GENDER INDICATORS, UNESCO, 2005 p. 335

<sup>14</sup> *Op cit.* p. 336

The classic *shari'ah* and the modern single rule on interfaith marriage do not allow Muslim women to marry non-Muslim men. Those who subscribe to this opinion quote Qur'an 2:221:

Wed not idolatresses till they believe; for lo! a believing bondwoman is better than an idolatress though she please you; and give not your daughters in marriage to idolaters till they believe, for lo! a believing slave is better than an idolater though he please you. These invite unto the Fire, and Allah inviteth unto the Garden, and unto forgiveness by His grace, and expoundeth His revelations to mankind that haply they may remember. (Qur'an 2:221, Pickthall's translation).

“This verse, considered an early Medinan revelation and traditionally interpreted as referring to polytheist Arabs (*mušrikāt* and *mušrikīn*) was later read in conjunction with 5:5 as a general interdiction of interfaith marriages”.<sup>15</sup>

Some Muslim scholars have tried to give logical explanations why Muslim women are not allowed to marry non-Muslim men. They think that such a marriage would put Muslim women under the authority of a non-believer and, as a consequence, endanger their faith. Yusuf al-Qaradawi says that the husband is the head of the family and he is responsible of his wife. He thus concludes that a Christian or Jewish husband cannot guarantee the rights of a Muslim wife because he does not honor their religion and is not concerned with their rights. This is why Islam cannot put the future of its daughters in the hands of non-Muslims. On the other hand, al-Qaradawi says that interfaith marriage can only be based on husband's respect for the wife's beliefs. Muslims believe in the divine origin of both Judaism and Christianity in spite of later distortions. They also believe in *Tawrat* and the *Injil*. Muslim husbands are, therefore, capable of respecting the faith of the women of the book.<sup>16</sup> Later in his contribution to the *Islam al-Zawjah* debate Al-Qaradawi seems to accept that in the West women enjoy freedom and there is no danger of being oppressed by their non-Muslim husbands.

The explanation that non-Muslim husbands will not respect their Muslim wives, however, is only plausible in a patriarchal environment where husbands have absolute powers over their

---

<sup>15</sup> Parolin, *supra* note 1, p. 2

<sup>16</sup> Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf, *Al-Ḥalāl wal-Ḥarām fil-Islām*, Maktabah al-Wahbah, Cairo, 2007 (29<sup>th</sup> edition), p. 165.

wives and where laws do not protect women rights. Regardless of the reasons given to justify this prohibition, Dr. Khalid Abou el-Fadl, a professor of law at the University of California says that there is a unanimous consensus among scholars regarding this question. He says: “Surprising to me, all schools of thought prohibited a Muslim woman from marrying a man who is a *kitābī* (from among the people of the book). I am not aware of a single dissenting opinion on this, which is rather unusual for Islamic jurisprudence because Muslim jurists often disagreed on many issues, but this is not one of them.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Conversion of one Spouse in a Non-Muslim Marriage to Islam**

When a spouse in a non-Muslim marriage embraces Islam, there are different solutions depending on the religion they follow and if it is the husband or the wife who converts. In case it is the husband who converts to Islam, it will depend on the religion of the wife. The Council of Muslim Scholars (Jamiatul Ulama) in South Africa explains the solution as follows: “If the woman is an *Ahlul-Kitaab* (Christian or Jew as described above) then the *Nikah* is intact but if she follows some other faith then in an Islamic state the following procedure will be adopted: The *Qaadhi* will invite her to Islam: if she accepts then the *Nikah* will be intact, but if she refuses or maintains silence then the *Qaadhi* will annul the marriage. If this situation occurs in a non-Islamic State then upon the woman spending three menstrual cycles, the *Nikah* will be instantly annulled.”<sup>18</sup>

When it is the wife who converts to Islam, the classic law, as well as most constitutions of modern Muslim states, require that the man too converts if he is *kitābī*. If the wife passes the waiting period (*‘iddah*) before the husband converts, then their marriage is dissolved. As for marriage between two pagans, when one of the spouses embraces Islam, whether the husband or the wife, their marriage is dissolved unless both converted together. The jurists quote Qur’an 60:10 to justify their arguments. The verse asked the believers not to return believing women who run away from their unbelieving husbands. It also asked the believing men not to hold on to unbelieving wives. There are several *hadiths* quoted to justify separation. Thus, classic law and

---

<sup>17</sup> Khalid, Abou el-Fadl, On Christian Men Marrying Muslim Women, at <http://www.scholarofthehouse.com/oninma.html>

<sup>18</sup> Jamiatul Ulama (Kwazulu-Natal), Marriage Outside Islam, <http://www.zawaj.com/articles/outside.html>.



the modern single rule do not foresee a situation where a Muslim woman would live with a non-Muslim husband whether by marrying a non-Muslim when she is already Muslim or if she converts to Islam after marriage while her husband remains non-Muslim.

### **Christian and Other non-Muslim Men who Would like to Marry Muslim Women**

A Christian, Jew or any non-Muslim man who wishes to contract marriage with a Muslim woman is obliged by the family of the girl and the by the Muslim community to embrace Islam. The procedure is simple: The candidate is supposed to recite the Islamic creed (*shahada*: I confess that there is no divinity apart from Allah, and I confess that Muhammad is his messenger). This formula is to be recited in Arabic language, facing Mecca, in the presence of 2 male witnesses. Then he is supposed to sign a document that he will commit himself to Islam for the rest of his life. He is asked to renounce his former faith. Even if the person pronounces the *shahada* just for the sake of marrying the woman, for Muslim family of the girl this is important as it protects them from accusations of marrying off their daughter to a non-believer.

Such conversions are one of the major contributions of conversion of young men (in Africa and elsewhere) to Islam. WHn such men choose to convert for love, as Christian we are obliged to respect their choice.

However, this may create several problems. For example, some of these young men may end up feeling guilty for having renounced their faith because of a woman. At the same time, they are afraid of returning to their faith unless they move away from the Muslim area where they professed Islam. And even when they travel away, they may still be afraid of losing their wife if they return to their faith. Secondly, such conversions may create conflicts between the young man and his family, as well as friends. In extreme cases some families have cut ties with their sons who embraced another religion (especially in Egypt). Such rejection pushes him deeper into his own new religion.

As for Christian girls who would like to marry Muslim men, they are not obliged to change their religion. However, it can also be complicated. First, the marriage is to be celebrated in a mosque in Muslim majority areas. In Muslim countries, it would be a crime to conduct such a marriage in a church. Secondly, some Christians frown on such marriages and some families

have even excommunicated their daughters for marrying Muslims. Thirdly, the lady is not assured of retaining her faith. Muslims live in extended families and the in-law will always apply pressure to the daughter-in-law to embrace Islam.

### **The Teaching of the Catholic Church About Inter-Religious Marriages**

The Catholic Church discourages marriages between its believers and non-baptized persons. The reason is that such marriage does not help to realize a community of faith which should be the foundation of the Christian family, making both spouses witnesses of the love of Christ for the Church. This is mentioned in the Canon Law promulgated in 1990: “*Marriage between two persons, one of whom has been baptised in the Catholic Church or was officially received in and has not formally abandoned it, is invalid*” (1086 § 1).

### **Exception to the Rule**

The above code of the Canon Law allows for a “dispensation for the disparity of faith” (§ 2). This prerogative, which must be motivated by a “just and reasonable cause” (Canon 1125), is reserved to the local bishop. Such exceptions are also mentioned in the Catechism of the Catholic Church which, however, points out the difficulties involved in such marriages, and especially due to the religious divergency involved in such families (n. 1634). At the same time, the Catechism also sees in such marriages the chances of evangelizing their non-Christian spouse, who can be attracted by the life witness of the Catholic spouse (n. 1637).

Mixed couples that opt to contract marriage in the Catholic Church have conditions to fulfil. Both are supposed to write a declaration. The Catholic party needs to declare their commitment to “resist all the dangers of abandoning their faith” et have to promise to “sincerely do everything possible to make sure the children are baptised and brought up in the Catholic faith”; The non-Muslim spouse is supposed to “declare that they are well informed about such promises” so that later they will not pretend not to know them. Finally, “the two future spouses must be instructed on the finality and the essential components of marriage, which should not be excluded by any one spouse” (Canon 1125).

The problem of the conditions set by the canon law is that they can only function when the Catholic spouse has an upper hand. As we have seen above, Muslim men are free to marry

Christian girls while Catholic men cannot marry Muslim women. This means that the Muslim partner, according to the requirements of Shari'a is in control. Since such marriages are celebrated in the mosque, the conditions laid down by Islam apply. The question then arises: a Catholic woman who marries a Muslim man in the mosque, Is her marriage valid and can she access the sacraments even if she wanted to remain Catholic?

### **Consequences for Christian Girls who Marry Muslim Men**

The Christian wife of a Muslim husband is, in principle, not obliged to abandon her Christian faith. However, such a freedom has to face several obstacles that tend to reduce the possibility of living her faith fully:

The spouse cannot impose the Church requirements on her future husband. Therefore, she might have to renounce a Church wedding.

If she does not convert to Islam and the husband dies, she has not right to inheritance.

She cannot transmit her faith to her children. Islam requires that the children of a Muslim father be automatically Muslim.

In case of divorce, the woman automatically loses any guardianship over the children. In Islam children belong to the father and not to both parents.

She may have to embrace values that are alien to Christianity and to her culture such as the separation of gender, lack of freedom of movement, denial to work outside the family etc.

She has to organize her life according to the values of Islam such as religious purity rules, Ramadhan fasts.

At times, she will be under pressure from the extended family to embrace Islam. If there are other co-wives or wives of her brothers-in-law who happen to be Muslims, she might end up being treated as inferior to them because they are Muslims while she is not.

### **DAY THREE**

## **Current State of Islam in the Sub-Saharan Africa: Its expansion and Influence in Politics, Economy and Society.( By Fr. Felix )**

### INTRODUCTION

Historically, Islam touched the continent practically within the early stages of its inception through military campaigns that saw Muslim conquerors sweep across North Africa from Egypt to Morocco and crossing over to Spain by 711. The Muslim rollout on this side of the Mediterranean Sea was accomplished largely at the expense of Latinized and Christianized North Africa, thereby practically installing an Islamic belt in the northern part of Africa which has lasted to date. Riding on the waves of colonization, Christianity will have but an ephemeral resemblance of reversing this situation. The region has evolved to constitute what is today known as the Maghreb, five North African countries characteristically Islamic, and Egypt with a prominent Islamic south prolongation into Sudan.

Further along the eastern coast, Arab sea traders, now converted to Islam, will assure the spread of Islam all the way down to present day Mozambique, establishing trading posts that eventually became the staging posts for the inland Islamic penetration of the continent. Thus, it is from these two fronts that Islam will later find its way into the rest of the continent using three main gateways; trade, Sufism and conversion.

The main commentators about the Islamization process have cast it as “penetration” that advanced by regions and stages. In North Africa, from Egypt to Morocco, the initial process was conquest, when Arab or Arab-led armies took over the main cities and agricultural areas that stretched along the Mediterranean. But these forces neither moved into the mountains above the plain, nor attempted to go south into the Sahara Desert.

In looking at the south, or Sub-Saharan Africa, the commentators have postulated a process in three stages. The first presence came from merchants involved in the Trans-Saharan trade. These entrepreneurs and their families lived principally in the towns, often in quarters that were labeled “Muslim.” They lived as minorities within “pagan” or non-Muslim majorities. This phase is often called “minority” or “quarantine” Islam. The second phase often goes by the name “court” Islam, because it features the adoption of Islam by the rulers and members of the ruling classes of states, in addition to the merchants. No significant effort was made to change local religious

practices, especially outside of the towns. The third phase can be called “majority” Islam, whereby the faith spread beyond the merchants and ruling classes to the countryside where most people were living.

Muslim traders inadvertently transported Islam into the interior of the continent while pursuing their trade ambitions, thereby opening up the continent to a deeper Islamization by ‘clerics’ and more especially by Sufi orders. Over the centuries indigenous people have steadily taken to Islam through conversion and other factors such as contact with agents of Islamization from the Islamic heartland of the Middle-East have assured the permanent implantation of the religion on the African continent.

Thus, the current state of Islam in Sub-Sahara is a direct outcome of these early developments which have contributed not only to its foundation but also to its sustainability. It is against this background that we can analyze and understand contemporary expansion and Influence in Politics, Economy and Society.

## **I. EXPANSION; CONCEPTUAL TOOLS**

Using Mostly the demographic year book, Houssain Kettani studies the Muslim population in Africa and he estimates that about 27% percent of the total population are Muslims. His study has the interest of indicating settlement patterns of the Muslim population in Africa, with North Africa claiming more than 90%, followed by West Africa with a predominance of slightly over 51%, the Eastern Africa coast with around 28%. Southern Africa trails behind with a mere 7%. This pattern is graphically represented by maps depicting a gradual concentration along those lines.

As earlier mentioned, the expansion of Islam in modern times has to be understood against the background of the early historical introduction of the religion on to the continent, its evolution over the centuries and its current manifestations. This has to be perceived in terms of a multifaceted Muslim campaign, not always concerted or organized by a centralized overall organ, but buoyed by spontaneous participation of its zealous adepts. It is a movement inherent to Islam itself, in that Islam is a missionary religion, seeking growth through conversion of new adepts into its fold and pretending to universalism. Theoretically, there are some Islamic concepts which help explain the Muslim drive towards expansion; *da‘wah*, Jihad, Islamization,

etc. Rather than phenomenologically describing the Islamic expansion, it is good also to analytically understand what underpins Islamic expansion.

### 1) *Da'wah*

Etymology: The Arabic term *da'wah* (lit., "call, invitation, summoning", to enter the fold of Islam) is used especially in the sense of the religious outreach or mission to exhort people to embrace Islam as the true religion.

Historical development: After the death of Muhammad (632 c.e.), the leadership of the Muslim community became a controversial issue.... During the eighth century, the legitimacy of the Umayyads was increasingly put into question. Based in Baghdad, the Abbasids were accusing them for claiming kingship, *mulk*, thus vesting human leadership with an attribute and power that only God possesses. The lavish customs of the Damascus court underscored the anti-Umayyad *da'wah*. *Da'wah* thus became mainly an internal Muslim matter.

However, the external aspect of *da'wah*, "calling mankind," acquired increasing juridical importance in connection with the military expansion of Islam. According to the classical theory of jihad of the early Muslim conquests, warfare against non-Muslims could not be undertaken, nor could the protective tax of non-Muslims, *jizya*, be levied, had not a summons to Islam, *da'wah*, been issued.

During the early centuries of Islamic history, *da'wah* often had strong political orientations when used to mean a summons to support a claimant to Islamic rule. New movements would spread their ideologies of Islamic statehood through highly organized and disciplined networks of information and indoctrination. In this sense, *da'wah* came to inherit a religio-political dimension, being the call to accept the rightful leadership of a certain individual or family. *Da'wah* in the religio-political sense aimed at establishing or restoring the ideal theocratic state, based on monotheism. Here *da'wah* can be understood as political propaganda inflated by Qur'anic terminology. In spite of variations in the use of the term throughout history, this has been a recurring tendency.

An important example of the application of *da'wah* in history is the case of the Shi'ite Fatimids. Between 969 and 1171 they ruled a vast empire, with Cairo as the capital. For the Fatimids, who belong to the Isma'ili branch of Shi'a, *da'wah* meant the appeal to give allegiance to the seventh

imam, Muhammad b. Isma'il. Initially, their propaganda was directed against followers of the main branch of Shi'ism, the Imamis or Twelvers. As their power grew, the Fatimid *da'wah* turned against the Abbasid Sunnites, challenging their caliphal authority.

The Fatimids amplified the concept of *da'wah* in accordance with Shi'ite doctrines of permanent revelation through the imams. ... it became increasingly organized and extensive. *Da'wah* was thus institutionalized, integrating political claims with theological elaboration, centered around several educational institutions, most notably the al-Azhar University of Cairo.

In a functional perspective, the core of the Fatimid use of *da'wah* was similar to that of the Sunnite Abbasids. The amplification of *da'wah* among these competing groups involved an understanding of political propaganda and aspirations based on theological criticism against other rulers. In both cases, thus, the core concern was the leadership issue. The Qur'anic term *da'wah* was rendered relevant primarily in the context of claims to political power. The Fatimid idea that propagation and acceptance of Islam should not be regarded as a singular event, but as a continuous process, forebears central themes in modern uses of *da'wah*.

Decline in usage of *da'wah* from the time of the Fatimids to early modern times, despite the significant expansion of Islam that occurred in both Asia and Africa. Two of the reasons for this recession may be the legal formalism and the development of Sufism:

- The authority of institutional law appears to have contributed to circumventing the centrality of the concept of *da'wah*, which was primarily understood in terms of the connection between religious legitimacy and political power.
- The logic of Sufi expansion has usually been essentially different from state-centered or establishment Islam and, as a consequence, not in need of conceptions of *da'wah* in the religio-political sense.

European colonialism and Christian mission brought Muslims into intense encounters with non-Muslim ideas and practices. Facing such challenges, many Muslims felt a need to reconsider or defend Islam, as well as to inform non-Muslims about Islamic principles and creeds. In this context, partly novel conceptualizations of *da'wah* claimed a core position in the Islamic debates and practices.

Of more lasting impact with regard to the rethinking of *da'wah* was the Salafiyya movement, the leading figures of which were Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897), Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905), and Rashid Rida (d. 1935). Inspired particularly by Ibn Taymiyya's (d. 1329) early critique of *taqlid* and legal formalism, they called for the reform of Islamic law by reopening the gates of *ijtihad*. The movement also took a decisively critical stance to the influence of secular and Christian ideas. ... Of more lasting impact, however, were the Salafiyya efforts to strengthen Islamic awareness and solidarity in face of modernity. Thus, *da'wah* increasingly was understood in terms of edification and, most prominently, education, *tarbiya*.

A preceding event of paradigmatic importance was the abolition of the caliphate in 1924. *Da'wah* increasingly became an endeavor to reform the individual, rather than the public, institutions of society. Thus, society was to be Islamized "from below." This vision can be ascribed mainly to Hassan al-Banna (d. 1949) and Abu l-A'la. Maududi (d. 1979), who were both of towering importance for the conception of *da'wah* among later generations of Islamists.

A different methodology of *da'wah* was suggested by Tablighi Jama'at, founded by Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas in 1927. This movement of Sufi background turns its back on political activity and concentrates on the devotional life. Yet, it emphasizes the centrality of *da'wah* in terms of a missionary duty. ... *Da'wah* is to be performed as voluntary preaching of the message in small groups. Instead of, for instance, publishing books or arranging publicly visible events and campaigns at university campuses, *da'wah* is performed from door to door.

In 1962, Saudi Arabia founded the Muslim World League, Rabitat al-'alam al-Islami, for promoting international *da'wah* efforts. This was one year after the establishment of an Islamic university in Medina for the training of *da'wah* workers. ... The activities of the Muslim World League increased in the 1970s when several councils, such as the World Council of Mosques, were formed. The idea of promoting international Islamic cooperation through the Council of Mosques was partly inspired by the previous establishment of the World Council of Churches.

Due to the oil boom of the 1970s, enormous oil revenues allowed countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to lend most substantial support to the Islamic movement that worked for the (re)establishment of "true" Islam. Funds were used for, among other things, Islamic research projects, charities, distribution of Islamic literature, international conferences, and festivals.



Previously, Muslims had been largely opposed to relief-work and social-welfare concerns as part of *da'wah* endeavors, criticizing Christian missions for using such efforts in order to make proselytes. Increasingly, however, charity directed primarily to Muslims has become an integral part of much *da'wah* work.

As a reaction to the Saudi influence on organizations like the Muslim World League, new *da'wa* instruments were formed in other countries. In Libya, for instance, Mu'ammār al-Qadhafi established the Islamic Call Society, *Jam'iyat al-Da'wah al-Islamiyya*, in 1972, concentrating on *da'wah* efforts in sub-Saharan Africa. A decisive blow on Saudi Arabian hegemony was the Iranian revolution of 1979. The *da'wah* efforts of the Iranian Islamic Information Organization once again highlighted the question of political legitimacy.

In the late twentieth century, new *da'wah* organizations cropped up all over the Muslim world, including in Europe and North America. Moreover, many governments set up *da'wah* departments for education and propaganda, particularly in the universities. In Pakistan, for example, the University of Islamabad in 1985 created a *Da'wah* Academy for training *da'wah* workers, producing and distributing literature in several languages as well as organizing conferences, special courses, and other events. The academy has an extensive international network of cooperating *da'wah* organizations, including the Muslim World League. Another important *da'wah* organization, whose primary objective is to propagate Islam through missionary activities, is the Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI), which was started in 1982 by Ahmed Deedat in Durban. ... Particularly significant in Europe and North America, the IPCI has concentrated on polemics against Christianity. The increasing interest in social welfare as a part of *da'wah* work was reflected, for instance, in the formation in 1988 by the Muslim World League of the World Muslim Committee for *Da'wah* and Relief. Education and health care is on the program of many *da'wa* organizations, like the Indonesian Diwan Dawat al-Islam and the West African Ansar al-Islam.

Among Muslim intellectuals, not least in Europe and North America, *da'wah* to a significant degree has been associated with interfaith dialogue. Thus, Qur'anic injunctions such as "Invite all to the Way of thy Lord" (16: 125) have been reinterpreted in an ecumenical sense.

However, the visions of al-Banna and Maududi are continuously present, especially in African, European and North American organizations. ... The conception of *da'wah* among such

organizations combines ecumenical efforts with insistence on edification and mobilization among Muslims, predominantly by book publishing and, increasingly, by engagement in the political and educational systems of the Western societies.

“In the modern period, *da‘wah* most often refers to Islamic missionary activities, which are increasingly characterized by long-range planning, skillful exploitation of the media, establishment of study centers and mosques, and earnest, urgent preaching and efforts at persuasion.” ... *Da‘wah*, then, is the cutting edge of Islam and as such is directed at fellow believers as well as at the multitudes outside the ummah who nevertheless possess the God-given *fiṭrah* (sūrah 30:30), or "inherent character," also to be intentional Muslims.

### **Da‘wah and tolerance**

According to Salim al-Hasi: “The Arabic word DA‘WAH means ‘an invitation’ or ‘a call to share.’ Therefore, DAWAH in its essence merely means the conveyance of the message of Islam to people.”

*Da‘wah* as mission should never be spread by force (sūrah 2:256). If the hearers refuse to embrace Islam, then they should be left alone. But a committed Muslim should not give up the task of *da‘wah*. Underlining the aspect of conveyance, several Qur’anic verses indicate that the concept is void of compulsion and obligation.

DA`WAH should not be understood as the struggle to convert people into the faith. Islam did not declare the conversion of people to the faith as an obligation of Muslims. We read in the Quran what means:

{But if they turn aside, We have not sent you as a watcher over them; on you is only to deliver (the message); and surely when We make man taste mercy from Us, he rejoices thereat; and if an evil afflicts them on account of what their hands have already done, then surely man is ungrateful.} (Ash-Shura 42:48)

Muslims strongly believe that their duties in DA`WAH are limited to the conveyance of the message. They also believe that embracing Islam is due to guidance, which only occurs by the grace of Allah.

{It is true you will not be able to guide everyone whom you love; but Allah guides those whom He will and He knows best those who receive guidance.} (Al-Qasas 28:56)

Performing DAWAH is governed by several guidelines. First, there is no compulsion in religion.

{Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And Allah hears and knows all things.} (Al-Baqarah 2:256)

Second, DAWAH should be practiced with wisdom and the best preaching.

{Invite (all) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for your Lord knows best who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.} (An-Nahl 16:125)

Third, Muslims are not held responsible for the deeds of other nations.

{Say: You shall not be questioned as to our sins, nor shall we be questioned as to what you do.} (Saba' 34:25)

## **2) Jihad**

In addition to organizations and networks concentrating on Da'wa (the intensive propagation of the radical-Islamic ideology through missionary work) there are others who focus on the Jihad (in the sense of using forceful means). Some groups combine the two. The choice of Da'wa-oriented groups for non-violent activities does not always imply that they are non-violent in principle. Often they simply do not yet consider armed Jihad expedient for practical reasons (Jihad can be counterproductive or impossible because of the other side's superiority) or for religious reasons.

In early 2011, as the Arab Spring revolutions were just beginning, a NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE concluded that for most analysts, "the past few weeks have the makings of an epochal disaster for Al Qaeda, making the jihadists look like ineffectual bystanders to history while offering young Muslims an appealing alternative to terrorism." The vast majority of terrorism experts believed the revolutions sweeping the Middle East and North Africa were the death knell not only for regional despots, but also for the jihadist movement.

In fact, the opposite occurred. The significant spike in terrorism in Africa since the onset of the 2011 Arab Spring revolutions is as undeniable now as it was unanticipated at the time.

Even if the Middle East and South Asia generally attract greater political and media attention, the large and growing problem of jihadism in Africa can no longer be ignored. This is perhaps illustrated most vividly by the data of the 2013 Global Terrorism Index. For number of deaths attributable to terrorist violence, Nigeria came fourth after Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In a newer survey at the end of 2014 it even comes second for number of deaths, behind Iraq but ahead of Afghanistan. In November 2014 alone 786 people were killed by Boko Haram in Nigeria. If one considers that the number of victims in Nigeria increased significantly in 2014, and also includes deaths in Somalia, Kenya, Tunisia, Libya and Algeria, it becomes clear that Africa is in fact one of the most important arenas of jihadism.

The comparison of the very different African terrorist organizations laid out in this study clearly demonstrates that there is no independent pan-African jihadist ideology. The groups' propaganda rests on a rather narrow shared base, according to which the governments in the region, regardless whether Muslim or Christian, are all lackeys of Western (or Christian) imperialism (or unbelief) and must therefore be violently removed.

In Libya the efforts of Ansar al-Sharia and other groups are directed above all against the attempts by non-Islamist political forces to form a secular central government. Their actions have played a decisive role in bringing the country to the brink of a devastating civil war. In Tunisia the jihadists have also grown stronger since 2011. Their objective is to prevent a stabilization of the new political system through sporadic attacks. This has not succeeded, but the jihadists hold out in the mountainous regions along the Algerian border, while the open border to Libya remains a source of danger for Tunisia's internal security. In northern Algeria al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb is greatly weakened and no longer in a position to threaten the stability of the state. Much more threatening are the activities of groups operating in the name of AQIM or as splits from it in Mali and the Sahara. Although they have lost their refuge since the French intervention of early 2013, they continue to profit from the permeability of the region's borders.

Nigerian jihadism is currently stronger than its North African counterpart and characterized by spectacular acts of violence. The pure numbers of victims, as well as targets including the major city of Maiduguri in the north-eastern state of Borno, military bases in Cameroon and villages in

Chad, demonstrate that the formerly local group of Boko Haram has mutated into a powerful violent organization with a wide radius of operations. It no longer mobilizes to introduce sharia, but to destroy the entire state and its disbelieving citizens. In Africa's most populous nation, the occupation of even just one region by violent actors has far-reaching and catastrophic repercussions on security, as well as on the economy of the entire country. In Somalia al-Shabaab stands under pressure after important senior figures were killed in US drone attacks or defected to the government. Yet the organization continues to grow, as does its support in Kenya's coastal regions where the Muslim population feels excluded and disadvantaged by the Kenyan state.

According to an article published by the BBC last June, after the 2012 killing in Kenya of the Muslim cleric Aboud Rogo Mohammed (accused of supporting al-Shabab in Somalia), his followers came under pressure and moved south. They built a presence in Kibiti, Tanzania, and crossed the Ruvuma River into Cabo Delgado by 2015. Using incomes made from smuggling, religious networks, and people-traffickers, the extremist cells paid to send young men to Tanzania, Kenya and Somalia for military and Islamic training. The income also helped bring radical clerics to Mozambique.

Especially in sub-Saharan Africa (Nigeria and Somalia) the jihadists demonstrate a pronounced interest in establishing their own state. And the major territorial gains of Boko Haram in Nigeria leave no doubt as to the importance of finding new approaches to dealing with terrorist groups in Africa. These will have to focus above all on the local causes of their popularity.

Although both al-Shabaab and Boko Haram operate successfully in their own terms, each binding several thousand supporters and placing weight on formal acceptance by al-Qaeda (al-Shabaab) or solidarity with the Islamic State (Boko Haram), the fighters of both organizations operate largely in their own countries and rarely travel to join jihadist operations in Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan. ... The consequence is that jihadists from sub-Saharan Africa are more likely than their counterparts from Tunisia or Algeria to be found operating in their home region. This expands the possibilities to find responses to the jihadist challenge at the local or regional level. The flip side is that it is considerably more difficult to reintegrate fighters who have attacked "their own people".

### **3) Islamization**

“It is indeed accurate to state that the goal of *da‘wah* is to Islamize; but it is more complex, more sinister, and more far-reaching than the idea of missionary work it suggests.”

(Islamize) comes from the word (Islam), so it is, in short, to make something relate to Islam or to make it in the accordance with the worldview of Islam. We can say that Islamization started with the first message of the Prophet Muhammed (SAW), and after him, all his companions, Muslim scholars and revivalists undertook this mission. But the term (Islamization) has been widely used during the last three decades of the second millennium.

(Islamization) appears to be synonymous with the term Islamic Revivalism (Renaissance) which is defined as a reform-oriented movement driven by a conscious change in Muslim thought, attitude and behavior and characterized by a commitment to revive Islamic Civilization.

Therefore, it is clear that the term Islamization refers to planned and organized changes designed to improve the individual and society by conforming them to Islamic norms. There are three major forces constituting this movement:

- (a) Reformism that refers to forces that tend to reform Muslim society by reforming individuals with the help of the basic social institutions.
- (b) Activism that refers to a political or jihadist movements.
- (c) Intellectualism which refers to the movement of Islamization of knowledge that inspires and motivates Muslim intellectuals to advance, promote and disseminate knowledge, to seek reformation of Muslim thought, Islamic methodology and to facilitate Islamic transformation of Muslim communities in Muslim as well as non-Muslim countries.

As the Islamization is so important and an urgent need to revive the whole Ummah from its weakness and backwardness, the Islamization of knowledge (IOK) is the most important and urgent step to that aim. It is the first stage in that path. Prof Mumtaz Ali indicates that

"Contemporary Islamic revivalists have convincingly argued for the need for comprehensive Islamization of all dimensions of private and public life. But according to them, this goal cannot be achieved until and unless contemporary secular knowledge and modern Western educational system are Islamized".

Following the early uncoordinated penetration of Islam into Africa which saw the community grow into the second largest on the continent, Islam has continued to expand across the continent, driven by the desire to implement da‘wah, Islamize the continent or participate in jihadist campaigns. These three factors play out in four main domains in favour of Islamic propagation; Islamic governments, Muslim International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and individual Muslim Initiatives.

*a) Muslim Governments*

Although Muslim states participate in the modern era of nation-states, their functioning is predominantly defined by fostering and protecting the Islamic character of their citizens. Hence da‘wah, Islamization and even jihad are part and parcel of the political agenda of the Muslim states. Governments, primarily those of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Iran, fund radical da‘wah efforts and, occasionally, jihadist efforts. [From 1973 through 2002, the Saudi kingdom spent an estimated \$87 billion to promote da‘wah abroad. Josh Martin estimates that, since the early 1970s, Middle Eastern charities have distributed \$110 billion. To give just one example, the Saudi Al-Haramain foundation (closed in 2004) built 1,300 mosques, sponsored 3,000 preachers, and produced 20 million religious pamphlets.]

In a continent with nearly 650 million Muslims, most of them Sunnis, Saudi Arabia has employed its religious identity as a leverage to extend its influence. Its interference in Nigeria’s domestic affairs, notably by backing the Sunni Izala society, illustrates Saudi attempts to consolidate a strategic and ideological foothold among Africa’s Muslim population.

- AFRICA AND THE SAUDI-IRANIAN RIVALRY

Indeed, in West Africa, Iran and Saudi Arabia have both tried to use sectarian tensions as a leverage in order to extend their own influence. They have used similar strategies, i.e. funding mosques and Islamic schools, thus establishing their own networks in Africa, in the name of which they are then able to justify their interferences. For instance, in Nigeria, where, as described above, Saudi Arabia has been very active, Riyadh and Tehran have financially and politically supported the domestic Sunni and Shiite domestic groups, thereby deepening the country’s sectarian divide.

Moreover, prior to 2015 and the signing of the nuclear deal, Iran was eager to use Africa to break out of its isolation on the international stage. Its efforts focused on the Horn of Africa, where some states were facing similar diplomatic confinement. The relationship between Iran and Sudan, based on military and intelligence cooperation, illustrates this approach. Sudan thus became strategically significant for Tehran by enabling it to supply arms to its proxies. Likewise, Iran established similar strategic cooperation with Somalia and Eritrea. Therefore, Iran's desire to establish a foothold in the region, which would notably have enhanced its influence on the international stage by granting it control of two straits vital for international trade – Bab al-Mandeb and Hormuz – soon emerged as a direct threat to Saudi interests. Saudi Arabia thus responded by using financial carrots and diplomatic pressures to make these countries break off relations with Iran – and it succeeded. Likewise, Riyadh has used this same strategy, namely financial inducements to keep states away from Iran and bring them under its control, in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Iran is not the only state with which Saudi Arabia has been rivaling in Africa. Two major Middle Eastern powers, Egypt and Turkey, have been competing with Riyadh's influence. Indeed, by intervening in East Africa, the Saudi kingdom has stepped in Cairo's backyard. Saudi attempts to develop a military presence in Djibouti, but also their interest in Ethiopia's sources of energy, have fueled Egypt's suspicion about its partners' intentions.

Likewise, Riyadh's activities in Africa will likely clash with Turkish interests. Apart from its many economic enterprises, Ankara, through its schools and foundations, has emerged as a significant rival regarding Sunni leadership in the region. Yet, it should also be highlighted that competition for influence in Africa is raising tensions within the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. The dispute with Qatar has been extended onto the African continent, where the Qatari emir's visits to Senegal, Guinea, Ghana and Ivory Coast were translated as a direct challenge to Saudi economic and political influence. Sudan, Eritrea and Djibouti have similarly been drawn into the tensions and have downgraded their relations with Qatar. As a response, Qatar has withdrawn its peacekeepers from Eritrea and Djibouti.

Therefore, although Saudi investments offer significant potential for the development of the African continent, the transfer into Africa of pre-existing religious or political tensions, with Iran as well as with other Arab countries, provides additional opportunities for the African Muslim



communities which end up benefiting from the competition among major Muslim countries vying for greater influence.

- **Turkey**

Turkey's Diyanet, the directorate of religious affairs, housed in the office of the prime minister, puts Islamic policies into practice. In 2006 it hosted, in Istanbul, the first Religious Leaders Meeting of African Continent Muslim Countries and Societies, attended by religious leaders from 21 African countries. ... In 2009 the Diyanet invited 300 Muslim students from countries including Mozambique, Togo, Mauritania, Sudan, Uganda and Côte d'Ivoire to study as imams in Turkey. ... The Diyanet, the budget and reach of which has extended significantly in recent years, has served to distinguish Turkey from other emerging powers engaged in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), in that its policy goes beyond humanitarianism and economic interests. Turkey is a member of the OIC, together with 22 SSA countries for which Erdoğan has given particular attention to aiding development. As prime minister in 2005, he toured six OIC members – Burkina Faso, Chad, The Gambia, Mali, Niger and Senegal – and launched a programme to improve food security and the cotton industry in these countries. Turkey has also collaborated with the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Center for Development of Trade to encourage industrialization in Africa.

b) International Muslim Organizations

For as long as it existed, the caliphate portrayed some semblance of unified leadership, bringing all the Sunni Muslims under one leadership umbrella. Following its abolition in 1924 and in resonance with changes on the world stage, Muslim organizations with a certain pretense to internationality have emerged. Having failed to achieve their initial goal of reconstructing the caliphate, most of these organizations have now become instrumental in providing the necessary framework for Islamic social intervention through sustainable da'wah.

- **THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)**

OIC is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world. It endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

The Organization was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco on 12th Rajab 1389 Hijra (25 September 1969) following the criminal arson of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem.

The Organization has the singular honor to galvanize the Ummah into a unified body and have actively represented the Muslims by espousing all causes close to the hearts of over 1.5 billion Muslims of the world. The Organization has consultative and cooperative relations with the UN and other inter-governmental organizations to protect the vital interests of the Muslims and to work for the settlement of conflicts and disputes involving Member States. In safeguarding the true values of Islam and the Muslims, the organization has taken various steps to remove misperceptions and has strongly advocated elimination of discrimination against Muslims in all forms and manifestations.

#### DA'WAH ACTIVITIES; A PROSPECTIVE VISION

Islamic da'wah is a fundamental pillar in the field of joint Islamic action. The Organization of the Islamic Conference believes that da'wah should start from an effective, positive, flexible and objective strategy allowing the Islamic Ummah to achieve its objectives.

In compliance with Islamic resolutions adopted at the level of the Islamic Summit Conference and the Council of Foreign Ministers which call for the dissemination of the teachings of Islam with a view to reinforcing Islamic solidarity, unifying efforts aimed at defending Islamic causes, a serious initiative has to be taken at the international level to promote knowledge of Islam in the three official languages of the OIC and to highlight the tolerance and noble values Islam is preaching and establish dialogue among world religions and civilizations in order to strengthen cooperation relations and reinforce commonalities. This can be achieved through:

1. Linking Muslim communities to the rest of the world through the organization of symposia and conferences to clarify the civilizational image of Islam and Muslims in the outside world.
2. Contribution of the Coordination Committee to building bridges of fraternity and cooperation among contemporary civilizations so as to bring about human coexistence of humanity as a whole.

3. Conducting more research on the challenges facing the Islamic Ummah in the 21st Century and the way to address them.
4. Reacting to the false allegations against Islam and the Islamic civilization.

- **Muslim World League**

Riyadh's program to spread the Wahhabi doctrine in Africa often functions through purportedly Muslim international organizations. Perhaps the most prominent of these is the Muslim World League (MWL) that, despite its purported nongovernmental status, was created and is maintained by the Saudi government. MWL Secretary General Dr. Abdullah Al-Turki, for example, formerly served as the Kingdom's Minister of Islamic Affairs, and it has been estimated that 99 percent of the League's financing came from Saudi Arabia.

Founded in 1962, the MWL advocates "the application of the rules of the Shariah either by individuals, groups or states" and develops "methods of the propagation of Islam in accord with the dictate of the Quran and the Sunnah." Toward these ends, the MWL and its various arms coordinate worldwide efforts of Muslim preachers, construct mosques, promote Islamic education and culture through the mass-media, and extend humanitarian relief to the misfortunate.

MWL work in sub-Saharan Africa was initiated from the time of the organization's founding, paving the way for an attempt at continent-wide Islamist coordination in 1976 with its sponsorship of the first All-Africa Conference held in Mauritania. At the conference the MWL could already claim that it was providing in Africa immense "moral and material support to Islamic organizations in accordance with the principles of [the Islamic] religion which ordains solidarity and brotherhood among Muslims throughout the world."<sup>8</sup> This would become the MWL's leitmotif over the following decades.

Evidence of the MWL's continued commitment to sub-Saharan Africa is found in its sixteen foreign offices located in the region (nearly half of the worldwide total), in addition to 36 (of 70 worldwide) offices of the International Islamic Relief Organization, a subsidiary body the MWL. Through these offices the MWL has done much to advance Islamism. As the Islamist regime established its control of Sudan in the early 1980s, for example, the MWL gave Khartoum two million copies of the Quran for conversion work and assisted in the training of religious teachers.

- **World Assembly of Muslim Youth**

The World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), established in 1972, is another Saudi maintained “independent” organization – its secretary general Sheikh Saleh bin Abdul Aziz Al Al-Sheikh doubles as the Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs – actively promoting Islamism, funding at least 48 mosques in sub-Saharan Africa. Much of WAMY’s activity, however, is directed toward education. In war torn Somalia, for instance, where youth are particularly susceptible to radical influences, the organization funded the Imam Nawawi educational complex serving 2,300 Somali students.

### **C) Nongovernmental organizations**

Including also local charity organizations, they directly undertake da‘wah, Islamization programs and even support jihadist initiatives. Sunni Islamic NGOs such as the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates are of more interest than Shiite NGOs at the present time because they are more numerous and more active in the West. Many well-funded Islamic “charitable” foundations support da‘wah indoctrination, even if they stop short of funding jihadist activities themselves.

- **Africa Muslims Agency**

Since January 1987, the Africa Muslims Agency also known as Direct Aid International operated in 29 countries in Africa and one of the key elements of Africa Muslims Agency since January 1987, has been to institutionalize Relief work. Africa Muslims Agency played a key role in the 80’s in bridging the gap in Africa between the indigenous population and the donor community.

Over the past 30 years Africa Muslims Agency/Direct Aid International has established itself as a trustworthy, dependable organization that supports the underprivileged in Southern Africa and on the Continent of Africa, when it comes to winter projects, Ramadhan feeding, disaster relief, it has many successes e.g.: Somalia in the 90’s, Sudan, Kenya, Mozambique floods, drought stricken areas, thousands of masjids, water projects that are currently being done in Niger, Mozambique and Malawi. It has built thousands of water wells on the Continent of Africa, hundreds of Schools and Educational Facilities, multiple number of hospitals/clinics as well a few fully fledged universities, many orphanages where thousands of orphaned children that are supported through AMA/DAI programmes all over Africa, many bursaries are also given, there

are many success stories of people that have grown tremendously because they have come through the AMA educational programme.

The organization has offices in 29 countries around Africa, four thousand full time staff members for when a crisis happens in a certain area, the office there assists the people on the ground to be able to continue work even after the media has left, even after the bottle neck is released. It builds, digs boreholes, drills water wells, builds masjids, builds classrooms, to create da'wah, to bring people to the religion of Islam and to be able to educate them.

- **Hizmet**

At the forefront of Turkish civil society engagement in Africa is the 'Gülen movement' – referred to by the exiled followers of Fethullah Gülen as Hizmet, meaning service for others. The movement began as a faith-based, non-political, cultural and educational effort inside Turkey, and it has since spread globally. It puts a premium on interfaith dialogue, and once had close ties to the AKP – with which it agreed on the need to take advantage of globalization's opportunities. The movement's financial support comes from a tradition of Turkish and Islamic charity, especially provided by the business community. ... The movement is best known in SSA for the high-quality schools – primary and secondary institutions, as well as one university – that Turkish business people inspired by Gülen have financed. There is no central organization in charge of the schools, which are fee-paying private institutions with rigorous academic standards, and which follow the curriculum of the host country. There are close ties between the schools and Turkish sponsors doing business in the countries where they are located. A key to their success is the network that they provide. Graduates in the DRC, for example, often speak Turkish and help drive Turkey's commercial interests. There are approximately 96 Gülen-affiliated schools in SSA countries. Nigeria has the most (17), and is the location of the only Gülen-affiliated university in Africa – the Nigerian Turkish Nile University in Abuja. Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania all have six or more schools.

The influence of the Gülenist movement on Turkey's Africa policy has been such that it was credited by many observers with pioneering the opening up to the continent, but the recent schism in relations between Erdoğan and Gülen has led some within the Turkish establishment to call for a revision of foreign policy. President Erdoğan has even urged foreign governments, including those in SSA, to close down Gülen-affiliated projects. At the Second Turkey-Africa

Partnership Summit in November 2014, Erdoğan warned the assembled African leaders of the ‘hidden agendas’ of the Gülenists. Pro-government media sources have reported that Erdoğan has managed to convince Gabon and Senegal to shut down Gülenist-run schools, and that the Republic of the Congo and Somalia have implemented processes for their closure. However, President Filipe Nyusi of Mozambique has expressed his support for the movement, announcing in mid-2015 that he intended to visit the Gülenist school in Maputo from which his son had graduated. Côte d’Ivoire’s deputy education minister was reported as having informed one news agency that Erdoğan’s stance against Africa was ‘similar to colonial states’ in seeking an ‘educationally backward’ continent.

- **Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH)**

Turkey’s non-governmental Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), which provides relief following wars and natural disasters, began its activities in Africa in 1996 with the delivery of aid to Somalia. It now operates in 35 SSA countries. It has, for example, constructed hundreds of water wells; and as of March 2014, IHH had performed more than 76,000 cataract-removal operations in Africa. The organization also conducts Qurban campaigns to ensure that impoverished Muslims receive meat from animals that have been slaughtered in accordance with Islamic requirements.

- **Kimse Yok Mu**

Kimse Yok Mu (‘Is Anybody There’ – KYM) is a non-governmental, Gülen-inspired relief organization, established after the 1999 earthquakes in Turkey, which has expanded globally. Unlike the Gülen affiliated schools, KYM has a formal, hierarchical structure and organized mechanism for fundraising. Between 2006, when it began assistance to Africa, and 2013, KYM provided about \$65.4 million to 45 countries. KYM assistance to Africa reached its highest point in 2011, but it has since declined; in 2013 it distributed about \$17.5 million to 43 African countries, with most aid going to development projects, health, education, water wells and support for orphans. During Ramadan KYM offers iftar (fast-breaking meals) and food packages in many SSA countries. The AKP government’s efforts against the Gülenist movement have even extended to KYM, which has had its bank accounts frozen and which was reported in April 2015 to be under investigation for alleged terrorist activities. None the less, KYM, which inter alia aims to build 1,000 new schools in Africa by 2020, has subsequently signed a memorandum

of understanding with the African Union on efforts to increase cooperation in aid, development and education.

#### **D) Individual Muslims**

Although the above operate on the basis of organizational structures, much of their success depends individual Muslim zeal. All the Muslims, to a varying degree, individually participate and contribute to da‘wah, jihadist campaigns or Islamization efforts; some by providing the necessary material needs at all three levels, others through personal involvement, be it in charitable work, be it in verbally spreading the message of Islam and inviting others to join.

#### **II. Source of Finances**

The Islamist infrastructure worldwide relies heavily on zakat, the mandatory charity demanded by Islam, usually 2.5 percent of one’s annual earnings. One way of financing the agenda of Islamization is investing these efforts in humanitarian aid. Individuals who are poor or needy are assisted by these funds. There is a meaningful tie between the giver and the receiver, but both the giver and the receiver are assumed by the agents of da‘wah to be working toward one goal: Islamization. For the recipient of such aid, the way to give back is through da‘wah.

In 2015, the British-based Development Initiatives group estimated that “the global volume of Zakat collected each year through formal mechanisms is, at the very least, in the tens of billions of dollars.” If informal mechanisms are included, “the actual amount available is likely to be much higher, and could potentially be in the hundreds of billions of dollars.”

State-sponsors of Islam have been conducting their jihadist campaign in Africa for more than 40 years, but only began to gain great leverage with their burgeoning petrodollar influence in the 1970s. Despite African Islam’s historically temperate tradition, Islam was met by insufficient resistance to arrest its spread. This phenomenon is explained by the scholar Eva Evers Rosander, who notes that “in relations between African Muslims and foreigners from the Arab (oil) countries, those who have the financial means dictate the Islamic discourse.”

Saudi Arabia also provides considerable official assistance to African communities. An example of a channel for such assistance is the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) that commenced operations in 1974 – established to support development projects and programs primarily in

Africa and Asia. Between 1975 and 2002, the SFD granted loans to sub-Saharan countries totaling more than \$1.9 billion. Additionally, over roughly the same period the SFD provided grants to African countries facing exceptionally difficult circumstances in the amount of nearly \$750 million. This assistance, while not explicitly designated as propagation activity, is part of the Islamization process.

Riyadh is also involved in overt propagation of Islam south of the Sahara – according to several Saudi sources, more money is provided to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs than to Saudi ambassadors for activity in Africa. While it is difficult to quantify the Kingdom’s involvement in the region, some anecdotal evidence hints at the scope of its activity. Saudi Arabia has fully or partially funded numerous mosques and Islamic centers – that some accounts suggest number in the thousands – throughout sub-Saharan Africa: examples include the King Faisal Mosque and Center in Guinea (\$21.3 million), the King Faisal Mosque in Chad (\$16 million), Bamaco Mosque in Mali (\$6.7 million), and the Yaondi Mosque in Cameroon (\$5.1 million).<sup>16</sup> The funding of these, of course, is often implicitly contingent on the appointment of a Saudi approved imam.

The Kingdom has similarly participated, on a grand scale, in propagation through formal education. A donation of \$13.9 million, for instance, allowed the construction of the King Fahd Charity Complex Plaza that serves as an endowment for the Islamic University in Uganda. Similarly, the International University of Africa (formerly the Islamic African Center) in Sudan, established to, in the words of its first director, “fight against the hatred and rancour towards Arabs and Islam which European colonialism has implanted in the hearts of Africans,” has received considerable funding from Saudi Arabia. Less conspicuous is Saudi support for innumerable madrassas that are, as explained by one Ethiopian journalist, “jihad factories nurturing potential bin Ladens.”

### **III. Strategies**

From North Africa to Indonesia, and beyond, Muslim individuals and organizations are strenuously dedicated to missionary activities, utilizing the media and other advanced means of communication and "market research." Da‘wah faculties are prominent in Muslim training schools and universities, and the hope is that the strong obligation to spread Islam will be felt by Muslims at all levels of society.



Often da‘wah happens near conflict zones. In places where Muslims seem beleaguered, Islamic “charitable” efforts are nearly always accompanied by da‘wah.

And while much attention is paid to the possibility that poverty encourages Islamism, markedly less consideration is given to Islamism’s facilitation of poverty. By creating inter-communal strife and dueling systems of law (one of which, shari’a, is by no means growth-friendly), Islamism discourages the very investment that has the potential to pull Africa out of the economic abyss.

Islamization lays a foundation of Islamic awareness that is a necessary precondition for the introduction of Islamism. Activity to promote social welfare – a tactic adopted from Christianity – is a primary method used by international Islamists attempting to demonstrate to African Muslims their importance to the umma. The short-term objective of such activity, then, is the creation of distinct Islamized segments of society that can later be leveraged for Islamist objectives.

Once established, Islamized populations are led toward acceptance of Islamism by measures intended to portray the secular status quo as antithetical to Muslim well-being. Islamist fringe elements attempt to foster a mood of defiance among Islamized populations against external influences. One commonly utilized tactic, for example, is to petition that Muslims be permitted to be governed by shari’a. The inevitable opposition to this demand confirms to Muslims their sense of persecution, allowing increasingly radical rhetoric and action to become acceptable. By portraying themselves as defenders of legitimate Muslim rights, Islamists are thus able to wrest control from the moderate center.

It has long been Riyadh’s policy to export the state faith, however, and when oil revenue began to swell the Kingdom’s coffers, Saudi propagation of Wahhabism in sub-Saharan Africa commenced in earnest. Common methods employed in this endeavor include the funding of mosques, Islamic centers and madrassas; the facilitation of travel to the Kingdom for purposes of the hajj and educational exchanges; the contribution of humanitarian aid and other charitable work; and the provision of support for “indigenous” Wahhabi organizations. This collective effort has been aimed at assuring Saudi control of the Islamic message reaching Africa’s Muslim populations.

Saudi encouragement of Islamization in the region is marked. The Kingdom has transported and hosted hundreds of thousands of Africans performing the hajj, many of whom have undertaken the pilgrimage at the full expense of the Saudi government. It has distributed inestimable copies of the Quran in strategically important African languages such as Somali, Hausa and Zulu. And in 2002 alone, the Kingdom provided Iftar meals in 31 African countries benefiting more than 430,000 fasters.

Saudi dissemination of Wahhabi ideology has, moreover, taken advantage of technological advances. The recently established Channel Islam International – made possible through the patronage of Prince Bandar Bin Salman Bin Mohammed Al Saud, who serves as an advisor to Crown Prince Abdullah and as Chairman of the Private Commission for Islamic Call in Africa – attempts, with its satellite reach into more than 60 African and Middle Eastern countries, to “sow the seeds of religious education and growth, in meticulous compliance with the teachings of the Noble Quran and of the Prophet Muhammad.”

Riyadh’s propagation activities in sub-Saharan Africa have met with great success. A number of movements and organizations have been borne of Wahhabi inspiration – from the Izala of Nigeria, to the Al-Falah of Senegal, to the Jamiatul Ulama of South Africa. Often, Saudi Arabia directly funds these groups, as is the case with the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council and the Muslim Association of Malawi. Importantly, the indigenous face of these groups puts them in a particularly advantageous position to advance their program from the bottom up – grassroots methods for the introduction of Wahhabism include the co-opting of local media and the organization of public meetings, among others. The significance of these movements cannot be underestimated.

All in all, different factors account for the expansion of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa today.

- Muslim states: by supporting da ‘wah work in Africa, intervention in bilateral interstate relations which favour the acceptance of Islam and by playing host to African Muslims, especially young students wanting to pursue their Islamic studies.
- Muslim organizations: in this era of NGOs, Muslims are taking their share through realization of social projects, alongside providing the necessary infrastructures to the indigenous communities; mosques, madrasas, schools, clinics, etc.

- Migration factor: Muslims, like any other people, are in constant movement into and within the continent, thereby indirectly exporting Islam into places where it has never been that significant before.
- Traders: Muslims from the Middle-East and Asia have seized investment opportunities in retail and wholesale businesses as well as construction works where they have not only employed the natives who may not have been Muslims initially but also bring realities of their religion into daily contact with their clients.
- Marriages: getting married to or marrying in a Muslim family has drawn into the fold of Islam new members sometimes beyond the person directly concerned.
- Qur'anic schools: many are the children who have found themselves to be Muslim through peer influence and participation in Muslim activities.

#### IV. INFLUENCE

##### **a) Politics**

In the early stages of its history in Africa, Islam sought more to collude with local political leadership to pave its way into society at large. Of late it has not only found profound inroads into the African politics but continues to exert increasing influence.

- With the help of petrol-dollars, gulf states have lured some African politicians not only into embracing Islam but also to make religious concessions towards it, e.g. building sumptuous mosques, luring their countries into the OIC.
- Membership to the Organization of the Islamic Conference provides multiple channels by which Islam is now funneling down its political influence on the continent. As stated on its website: “The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world. It endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.”

- Even as a minority community, Muslims constitute an electorate category courted by politicians. Muslims more and more seek going beyond active support of politicians to actually imposing themselves and their religion in the political arena.

- The growing impact of political Islam in the political landscape of Africa is being redefined as well; active participation in global alliances against the perceived Islamic threat, pre-emptive policies and measures to contain growing Islamic influence and to ward off risks of Islamic radicalization.

## **b) Economy**

Islam which claims to cover every aspects of human society has also exerted considerable influence in the economic domain of Africa.

- Inter-state bilateral trade: Thanks to the oil rich countries, Islam has been able to exert economic influence on Africa even at the top political level. Many countries have benefited and continue to benefit from inter-state bilateral economic agreements.

- Financial institutions: organizations such as the Islamic Development Bank, Kuwait Fund for Development, Africa Muslim Agency, Islamic Relief Agency, etc., channel considerable amounts of aid to Africa through economic cooperation and loans. Islamic charitable organizations and individuals: they wield a lot of economic influence. The practice of Zakat generates a lot of resources which are then redistributed among Muslim populations. More and more these organizations are becoming more sophisticated in their disbursement of the resources thus collected, embarking on projects with long-term impact especially in the agricultural domain and rural development.

- Islamic Finance: Through its own religious principles, Islam is also redefining the understanding of economy (Islamic finances, halal authorities). At this level, Islam prides in its proposition of a model deeply rooted in Islamic ethics; the Islamic financing. In their IMF working paper on Islamic Finance in Africa, Enrique et al conclude: Although Islamic finance in Sub-Saharan Africa is at a nascent stage, its potential lies on the size and expansion of its Muslim population and the concomitant expansion of Islamic finance activities in other parts of the world. The development of Islamic finance in SSA could usefully complement countries' efforts to deepen their conventional financial systems by broadening the range of available

options, extend maturities, and facilitate hedging and risk diversification. In addition, Islamic financing can also contribute to the development of small and medium enterprises and microfinance activities.

- On a popular level, cities like Dubai have become referential for wholesale and retail entrepreneurship. The growing informal market economy has led to intensified interactions with the Middle-East, leading to greater exposure of Africans to the Arabo-Muslim culture.

### **c) Society**

Today more than ever before, Islam has become an unavoidable reality in the African society. The impact of Islam on the society is mostly due to its religious particularisms. Practically Islam provides its religious coloration to every aspect of social life, blending at times with the African culture and coexisting with it most of the times. In major parts of the continent, Islam tends to be tolerant towards local culture. However, there has been a growing tendency towards radicalization and intolerance. Islam is influencing society in some of the following manners:

- Education: Islam is a complete system with its own education program adapted to the different stages of its adepts' growth cycle. Much of this education takes place around the mosque in the madrasa and demands of the participant regularity in attendance and perseverance in duration. The expectation is such that Muslim children are expected to give equal if not more importance to their religious education at the mosque as they do to secular education, where this not discouraged even. Therefore, the influence of Islam on education in Africa would therefore have to be understood in its own terms and not in terms of the acceptance or rejection of it. Whatever be the case, the outcome is that Muslim children who have been shielded from western education end up not participating actively in domains that require exposure to western education. Apart from Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Muslim community has tried to accommodate itself with western education either by proposing hybrid school curricula for their children or parallel programs in which the children can take part simultaneously.

- Linguistic: undisputedly, the lingua franca among all the Muslims is Arabic, even those who do not master it at all are expected at least to learn and pray in Arabic. Although as a language is has not really made significant gains in terms of popular usage, Arabic has left indelible marks on some African languages such as Swahili and Hausa. The teaching of Arabic

to Muslim children has contributed their literacy in Arabic and Islamic sciences, something that may be enticing for children potential converts.

- Marriage: in regions with long-standing practices of Muslim coexistence with other traditions, it has been relatively common to see Muslim women getting married to non-Muslim men. But in regions where the Islamic phenomenon is rather new, there has been the tendency to instrumentalize marriage as a tool of proselytization and Islamization.

- Family: although very much similar to African families in many aspects, Islam has had its impact on family particularly by emphasizing the universal character of the Muslim brotherhood, all Muslims are brothers, and also by accentuating some of such practices as are already found in traditional African families; polygamy, circumcision, male dominated patriarchal systems.

- Culinary habits: restricted foodstuffs such as pork and forbidden drinks with alcoholic content have become the dividing line between Muslims and others. To guard and guide against consumption of such halal authorities have been instituted and are gaining popularity even among non-Muslims, albeit for want of proper government authorities to regulate food safety. In this line, the issue of animal slaughter is increasingly becoming an issue in multi-faith communities, let alone food sharing during social and mixed family gatherings.

Dress code: like in other domains, Islam has a prescribed dressed code particularly for female adepts. Generally, Muslims pride themselves in their dress code a religious distinctive mark. Donning such attires displace the preponderance of Islam in a given locality and can sometimes be used to mark the entry into the fold of Islam. Although a practice found also among other religions, the Muslim dress code is not without controversy in western oriented secular societies.

**Areas with inter-religious tension, conflicts, violence or terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa. What are the causes and how can the problem be resolved.(  
By Fr. Richard Kyakaaga)**

11.00-12.30: Second session: Areas with inter-religious tensions, conflicts, violence or terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa. What are the causes and how can the problem be resolved.(Richard)

The presentation aims at looking at the contemporary situation of religious related conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa; catalysts, causes and areas of these conflicts and the way forward in responding to them. One of such Catalysts is seen to be the Arab Spring, War against terror and the Islamic Movements in the Middle East.

## **1. Arab Spring**

The Arab Spring was a series of anti-government protests, uprisings, and armed rebellions that spread across the Middle East in early 2011. But their purpose, relative success, and outcome remain hotly disputed in Arab countries, among foreign observers, and between world powers looking to cash in on the changing map of the Middle East.

### **1.1 What started the Arab Spring?**

It was sparked by the first protests that occurred in Tunisia on 18 December 2010 in SidiBouزيد, following Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation in protest of police corruption and ill treatment.

### **1.2 Why the name?**

The term "Arab Spring" is a reference to the Revolutions of 1848, a year in which a wave of political upheavals occurred in many countries throughout Europe, many resulting in an overthrow of old monarchical structures and their replacement with a more representative form of government. 1848 is called in some countries the Spring of Nations, People's Spring, Springtime of the Peoples, or the Year of Revolution; and the "Spring" connotation has since been applied to other periods in history when a chain of revolutions end in increased representation in government and democracy, such as the Prague Spring, a reform movement in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

But the events in the Middle East went in a less straightforward direction. Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen entered an uncertain transition period, Syria and Libya were drawn into a civil conflict, while the wealthy monarchies in the Persian Gulf remained largely unshaken by the events. The use of the term the "Arab Spring" has since been criticized for being inaccurate and simplistic.

1.3 The causes of the Arab Spring, or as some call it, Arab Awakening, were many and long-gathering. For decades, Arab populations had faced repression of free speech, human rights abuses, economic mismanagement, corruption and stifling of political dissent. A major goal of

the protesters everywhere from Tunisia to Bahrain and Syria was to create more participatory and representative political systems, a fairer economic system, and independent judiciaries.

The protest movement was, at its core, an expression of deep-seated resentment at the aging Arab dictatorships (some glossed over with rigged elections), anger at the brutality of the security apparatus, unemployment, rising prices, and corruption that followed the privatization of state assets in some countries.

Despite the enthusiasm with which many especially young people embraced this demonstrations, there was no consensus on the political and economic model that existing systems should be replaced with. Protesters in monarchies like Jordan and Morocco wanted to reform the system under the current rulers, some calling for an immediate transition to constitutional monarchy, others were content with gradual reform. People in Republican regimes like Egypt and Tunisia wanted to overthrow the president, but other than free elections they had little idea on what to do next.

And, beyond calls for greater social justice, there was no magic baton for the economy. Leftist groups and unions wanted higher wages and a reversal of dodgy privatization deals, others wanted liberal reforms to make more room for the private sector. Some hardline Islamists were more concerned with enforcing strict religious norms. All political parties promised more jobs but none came close to developing a program with concrete economic policies.

#### **1.4 Was Arab Spring a Success or Failure?**

Arab Spring was a failure only if one expected that decades of authoritarian regimes could be easily reversed and replaced with stable democratic systems across the region. It has also disappointed those hoping that the removal of corrupt rulers would translate into an instant improvement in living standards. Chronic instability in countries undergoing political transitions has put additional strain on struggling local economies, and deep divisions have emerged between the Islamists and secular Arabs.

But rather than a single event, it's probably more useful to define the 2011 uprisings as a catalyst for long-term change whose final outcome is yet to be seen. The main legacy of the Arab Spring is in smashing the myth of Arabs' political passivity and the perceived invincibility of arrogant



ruling elites. Even in countries that avoided mass unrest, the governments take the quiescence of the people at their own peril.

The countries that had the Arab Spring are Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Morocco, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Jordan.

## **2. The Making of ISIS**

The roots of ISIS trace back to 2004, when the organization known as “al Qaeda in Iraq” formed. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who was originally part of Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda Network, founded this militant group.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq began in 2003, and the aim of al Qaeda in Iraq was to remove Western occupation and replace it with a Sunni Islamist regime.

When Zarqawi was killed during a U.S. airstrike in 2006, Egyptian Abu Ayyub al-Masri became the new leader and renamed the group “ISI,” which stood for “Islamic State of Iraq.” In 2010, Masri died in a US-Iraqi operation, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi took power.

When the civil war in Syria started, ISI fought against Syrian forces and gained ground throughout the region. In 2013, the group officially renamed themselves “ISIS,” which stands for “Islamic State of Iraq and Syria,” because they had expanded into Syria.

In 2014, ISIS controlled around 34,000 square miles of territory in Iraq and Syria and in November 2017, the group lost its last stronghold, Rawa, a small town in northwestern Iraq, having lost Raqqa, their headquarters in Syria in October of the same year.

## **3. Rise of Terrorism in Africa**

The terror activities have grown exponentially in the continent of Africa in these years, not only in terms of the number of attacks but also the number of countries affected due to increased proliferation of terrorist groups.

In May 2016, it was reported that while much of the international coverage of religious extremism and terrorism focused on conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, the violence in sub-Saharan Africa was on a par with that region. A comparison was made of attacks by the

major extremist groups in those regions between January and the end of April 2016 and it was found out that:

- ISIS in Iraq and Syria instigated at least 148 attacks, killing at least 2,092 people. At least 870 were civilians.
- ISIS in Libya instigated 54 attacks, killing at least 393 people. At least 90 were civilians.
- Al-Shabaab in Somalia instigated 161 attacks, killing at least 749 people. At least 162 were civilians.
- Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin instigated 74 attacks, killing at least 821 people. At least 601 were civilians.

### **3.1 Africa becomes the new battleground for ISIS and al-Qaeda as they lose ground in Mideast**

On October 14th 2017, there was a massive blast in Somalia's capital of Mogadishu and other related terror attacks in Somalia and elsewhere like in Niger, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Mali etc..., last year and this year, highlighted that Africa was becoming a new battleground against al-Qaeda and the Islamic State as they were being driven out of the Middle East.

The Islamic State, or ISIS, was seeking a safe harbor after major losses in Iraq and Syria. And al-Qaeda was trying to secure its future by expanding operations and alliances in the sub-Saharan region.

“The collapse of the Islamic State’s stronghold in Raqqa (Syria) was likely to cause a re-coalescence of fighters on the continent, most of whom come from North African countries.

Tunisia alone is said to have sent at least 6,500 volunteers who joined al-Qaeda and ISIS in Syria and Iraq. Many of these after the defeats were seen to likely join an expanding terrorist network in West and Central Africa. “The region is likely to be hit by a severe wave of returning Islamic State fighters while al-Qaeda expands into other states such as Niger, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. Niger has become a new source for recruits, and Ansar al Islam, an al-Qaeda franchise, is now active in Burkina Faso and most probably involved down south in the turbulent Central African Republic.

Al-Shabab was involved in nearly 1,000 of about 2,000 attacks by militant Islamist groups in Africa last year, according to the Africa Center for Security Studies in Washington, D.C. and three-quarters of the violent events linked to ISIS in Africa occurred in Egypt. The Somali group has had a long affiliation with al-Qaeda but now appears to be cooperating with ISIS, controlling much of the countryside, analysts said. It is believed that Al-Shabab in East Africa is now stronger in Africa than al-Qaeda is in the Middle East and no longer looks to them for mentorship but still benefits from funds raised by their network in the Arab Gulf countries.

In terms of statistics, according to the IHS Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre, the terror attacks by radical groups in Africa have increased by 200 per cent and fatalities by more than 750 per cent during 2009-2015 . A number of groups have been terrorising the civilians and governments alike in several parts of Africa. While global terror groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and al Qaeda have made their presence felt in the region, other local groups too have gained prominence over the years. The deadliest of these are Boko Haram, al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al Shabaab. As a result, an arc of instability is spreading across Africa, from Nigeria in West Africa, Mali in Sahel, Libya in North Africa, to Somalia in East Africa.

### **3.2 Some of the prominent Groups in this new resurgence of Islamic radicalism**

#### **3.2.1 Nigeria: Boko Haram down, but not out**

In Nigeria, Boko Haram (meaning Western education is sin) continues to target civilians and government infrastructure despite several rounds of operation conducted by the Nigerian Army. Boko Haram, that came up in 2009, had emerged as the 'world's deadliest terrorist organisation' by 2014. In the last eight years, it is said that Boko Haram has taken 20,000 lives, displaced 2.6 million people, created 75,000 orphans and caused about nine billion worth of damage. Links with the ISIS, with leadership tussle between AbubakarShekau and ISIS favouring Abu Musabal-Barnawi, have turned the situation more complex. While there may have been some reduction in Boko Haram-led violence in the country due the Nigerian Army's counter terrorism campaign, the group continues to expand its operations in neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Niger and Chad.

#### **3.2.2 Sahel: Resurgence of al Qaeda**

In Sahel, there is a resurgence of al Qaeda. The four terrorist groups that continue to wreak havoc in the region - AQIM, Mokhtar Belmokhtar's al Mourabitoun, Ansar Dine and Macina Liberation Front - have recently decided to combine forces and merge into a single group called Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (Group for Support of Islam and Muslims). They have also pledged allegiance to the al Qaeda leadership. This regrouping of terror groups is ominous for countries such as Mali and the neighboring Niger, Cote d' Ivoire and Burkina Faso that have borne the brunt of their attacks in the past.

### **3.2.3 Somalia: al Shabaab on offensive**

In Somalia, the notorious al Shabaab was on the offensive in 2017 and had taken control of some towns after defeating the troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The group had increased its attacks on African Union bases, Somali government facilities, targets in neighbouring Kenya and, for the first time in a show of strength, had also launched attacks in the northern Puntland autonomous region. This came as a surprise as the al Shabaab had steadily lost ground over the last six years. It lost control of the capital Mogadishu in 2011 and then was pushed out of Somalia's major cities by the 22,000-strong African Union force deployed in the country.

The withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops from Somalia and the announcement by the African Union to withdraw AMISOM too (triggered primarily by reduction in funding by the European Union), may have been to an extent responsible for al Shabaab's comeback. The attacks in the north may have been a move to regain control by the pro-al Qaeda al Shabaab leadership, after the recent declaration of allegiance to ISIS by Abdul Qadir Meemen, leader of the faction based in Puntland. Another issue of concern was the possibility of revival of friendship between the al Qaeda of Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and al Shabaab. In the past, al Shabaab is reported to have trained cadre along with AQAP. The Saudi Arabia-led war against Houthis in Yemen seems to have benefitted the AQAP. This group appears to have rapidly gained control over chunks of territory in Yemen. The emergence of nexus between al Shabaab and AQAP could make the situation in Somalia deadlier.

### **3.2.4 ISIS in North and Southern Africa**

The ISIS has for long planned to establish a caliphate in North Africa but this was thwarted after it was routed out of Sirte, the last ISIS strong hold, in December 2016 by the Libyan National Army, with air support provided by the United States (US). Since 2014, pro-ISIS terrorist groups have been active in North Africa, particularly in Tunisia and Libya. In Libya, the instability following the collapse of the Muammar al Gaddafi regime, and the presence of numerous indigenous factions and also the porous borders, provided a fertile ground for the expansion of ISIS in the country. Moreover, Libya's long unmonitored coastline too provided the ISIS with a channel to Europe. Between 2014 and 2016, ISIS expanded its presence in multiple cities in Libya, including Derna, Benghazi and Sirte. While the terror group was driven out of most of the region under its control, there are chances that remnants of the group may reconstitute and again create problems.

In Tunisia, Ansar al-Sharia, an ISIS affiliate, has been responsible for a large number of terror attacks in the country. It has also been the main facilitator of ISIS fighters from the country to West Asia. Tunisia, earned the ignominious tag of being the key recruitment ground for the ISIS (about 6,500) in Syria and Iraq. ISIS is known to have been recruiting youth from eastern as well as southern Africa to fight its wars in Syria and Libya. In Kenya, coastal Tanzania and Zanzibar, youth from the Muslim communities are vulnerable to the ISIS recruitment drives. Reports suggest that at least 140 youth from South Africa may have joined the ISIS. These terrorist outfits are using both internet as well as networks of radical clerics to lure the youth from the region.

#### **4. Way Forward**

##### **4.1 The political initiatives**

There is a growing recognition in Africa that terrorism is a transnational problem and, therefore, there is a need for cooperation at the continental level to effectively deal with it. Over the years, African countries have devised various measures to deal with this threat at the pan-African level. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted at Algiers in 1999, had put in place a solid framework to deal with the scourge of terrorism. It not only defined terrorism but also laid out areas of cooperation among the member states as well as guidelines for the extradition. This was followed by a Plan of Action on Prevention and Combating terrorism in 2002, which put forward several measures for

border surveillance, issue of machine readable passports, checking illegal transfer of weapons, introduction of legislation preventing the financing of terrorism, and sharing of information and intelligence on terror activities. The Plan of Action incorporated international standards for combating terrorism, in line with the provisions of the UNSC Resolution 1373 of September 28, 2001. It also called for the establishment of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT).

However, the most important instrument is the 2004 Protocol to the 1999 Algiers Convention. This Protocol recognised the “linkages between terrorism and mercenarism, weapons of mass destruction, drug trafficking, corruption, transnational crimes, money laundering and illicit proliferation of small arms” . The Protocol also addressed a major weakness of the 1999 Convention, which is, lack of an implementation mechanism. The 2004 Protocol mandated the African Union’s Peace and Security Council to monitor and facilitate the implementation.

Unfortunately, despite the existence of these instruments, terror networks continue to operate in the region. This is mainly due to the tardy implementation of the counter terrorism framework by the member states. For example, the 2004 Counter Terrorism Protocol needed ratification by minimum 15 states before it could come into force. However, it took more than a decade to finally operationalise this key instrument in 2014. Moreover, some of the key states facing terror attacks such as Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia and Chad are yet to ratify it. Much of the delay has to do with insufficient financial resources and lack of necessary political will amongst African states to implement it. A large number of countries do not have the funds to enforce the counter-terrorism measures. For example, boader fencing would be extremely costly and most of the states are in a dilemma about utilising the limited development-oriented funds for such tasks. Also, a large number of African countries, while understanding the transnational nature of terrorism, shy away from seeking external intervention or support as it is considered a challenge to their national sovereignty.

Another important factor could be the very nature of states in Africa. Most of the counter measures to deal with terrorism have dealt with enhancing the capacities of the states in the continent. However, this has proved to be counterproductive in some cases, as greed and corruption overwhelmed feelings of nationalism amongst section of political elites. For example, it has been reported that in Somalia the arms transfers from the US found their way to al Shabaab

due to corruption in the ranks of the Somali National Army. Similarly, there are reports that suggest that Boko Haram may have supporters within the state structures in Nigeria, particularly in North Nigeria.

## 4.2. CATHOLIC RESPONSE TO TERRORISM: REJECT HATRED AND PRAY

### 4.2.1 Solidarity and prayer

The very first response should be an expression of solidarity or closeness with the victims of the violence. Very soon after learning of any of the terrorist attacks, the Pope Francis invites all to pray for the families of the victims, and invites all those listening around the world to join him in entrusting the defenseless victims of such tragedies to the mercy of God.

### 4.2.2 Condemn evil

The killing of the innocent, whatever the motivation, must be absolutely and unconditionally condemned. Pope Francis describes terrorism as “an unspeakable attack on the dignity of the human person,” and always reaffirms with vigor his conviction that “the path of violence and hatred does not resolve the problems of humanity.” Moreover, “the use of God’s name to justify this path is a blasphemy.” In this, The Holy Father repeats the strong language of the 2004 Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, which teaches that “it is a profanation and a blasphemy to declare oneself a terrorist in God’s name” (No. 515). Pope St. John Paul II spoke in similar terms in his message for the 2002 World Day of Peace: “No religious leader can condone terrorism, and much less preach it.”

### 4.2.3 AVOID HATRED

The horrific scenes of acts of terror, can easily lead us to be consumed with anger and hatred toward those who carried out these crimes. In a statement issued the day after the Paris attacks in November 2015, Archbishop André Vingt-Trois of Paris prayed for “the grace of a firm heart, without hatred.” He appealed to the French faithful not to indulge “in panic or hatred” and to continue in the path of “moderation, temperance and control.” Because the terrorists were allied with the Islamic State and invoked Muslim sayings, the temptation to give into feelings of anger or hatred toward Muslims must be resisted.

### 4.2.4 Support the Peace Makers

The Catholic Church is a universal religion. Our Church reaches beyond the special interests of any particular country. In this regard, the Church recognizes that there are groups and nations motivated by violent ideologies that can only be resisted by military means. The Catechism of the Catholic Church in paragraphs 2243 and 2309 lays out the traditional requirements for a “just war.” On this point, however, the Church urges the cooperation of the international community for addressing serious threats to peace and stability. Vatican II’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, affirmed the need for international cooperation “in view of the increasingly close ties of mutual dependence today between all the inhabitants and peoples of the earth” (No. 84). The terrorist attacks anywhere in the World remind us that we are dealing with a worldwide structure of ideological violence. Pope Francis sees what is happening as a piece of the “piecemeal Third World War.” This is a war that must involve international cooperation and goodwill on the part of people of different faiths and nations.

#### **4.2.5. Trust in Christ**

We understand as Catholics that this is a war that must be fought with spiritual and not merely military weapons. St. Paul reminds us that “our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens” (Eph 6:12). The powers of darkness have inspired many ideologies of violence throughout world history. We must not give in to hatred, anger, or despair. We must stand firm “girded in truth, clothed with righteousness” (Eph 6:14). We must find hope in the words of Christ: “In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world” (Jn 16:33).

#### **4.3 What can be done locally in our Parishes and Circumscriptions**

- Acknowledge the presence Islam in the area
- Create awareness among our Confreres and the Local Church
- Continue to create awareness among the different faith groups regarding the dangers of hatred and mistrust.
- Be on the look-out on foreign interferences that import violence and terrorism



- Alert the relevant authorities of the possible dangers looming under the guise of development projects.
- Encourage creation and sustenance of joint interreligious council or centers of social concern
- Train qualified personnel in areas of Islam and Interreligious Dialogue.
- Let our Secretariats be more proactive....
- Get more time to talk about Islam in gatherings assemblies
- Identify people who can help
- Try to meet the parish priests in your area and the diocese
- Community council could help for the discussion
- Have more formation programs
- Try to organize and meet the elders

**NEXT MEETING.**

**PROPOSALS**

- 1) TO ETHIOPIA
- 2) MOZAMBIQUE

**WHEN?** Between October-November in 2020.

**THEME FOR THE NEXT MEETING:**

The following themes were proposed and voted for the next meeting:

1. DA' WA \*
2. PASTORAL APPROACH TO ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM.
3. PRAYER & SPIRITUALITY ---
4. THEOLOGICAL STATUS OF ISLAM \*

5. FAITH & INCULTURATION ---
6. MARRIAGE \*
7. CONCEPT OF SIN AND SALVATION
8. **THE CONCEPT OF GOD/TRINITY/JESUS/REVELATION IN ISLAM AND IN CHRISTIANITY: THE PASTORAL APPROACH**
9. CONCEPT OF FREEDOM AND CONSCIENCE & HUMAN RIGHTS
10. THE CHALLENGE OF MODERNITY TO ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY: THE PASTORAL RESPONSE
11. BASICS OF ISLAM
12. WHAT ISLAM SAYS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY
13. TYPES OF ISLAM: THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND MANIFESTATIONS
14. PASTORAL CHALLENGES IN OUR WORK OF EVANGELIZATION WITH REGARD TO MUSLIMS: A survey...
15. Islamic Sharia and its implications to society

NB: The underlined topics have been covered already. The topic chosen for the next meeting will be:

**THE CONCEPT OF GOD/TRINITY/JESUS/REVELATION IN ISLAM AND IN CHRISTIANITY: THE PASTORAL APPROACH**

Evaluation of the Meeting

### **Travelling**

-Confers felt well received

-Some expressed some little of miscommunication of dates of meeting and arrival

### **Reception and accommodation**

-There should be constant power supply and internet

-Some services can be improved even though we congratulate them (center management) for having attended to our needs so careful.

3. Services

#### **4. Topics**

-handled and presented with expertise

- was a good moment of updating our way of doing sessions

-extend the invitation for others who may wish to participate especially from the locals areas

#### **5. Participation**

-Members participated so well and we thank them all.

-It could be recommendable to invite the local priests of the diocese hosting the meeting according to the means available.

#### **Observations: -**

- More workshop is needed

- Let the different provinces and Circumscriptions organize workshops to make awareness

- Try to engage different groups such as leaders, catechist and women in our mission areas

- Write more in our newsletter and magazines about Islam

- Look carefully on our future candidates in the formation houses after conversion from Islam

#### **Conclusion: -**

Fr Richard has thanked all the participant and their Provinces and the GC. He wished all a safe trip back to their respective provinces.

17:45 the meeting has come to an end on Wednesday.

## **LETTER OF SOLIDARILTY TO RCA**

“... for the sake of Christ, then I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities; for when I am weak then I am strong” (2 Cor. 12: 9-10).

### The Cost of Mission

Dear Comboni Confreres, Bishops, Comboni Sisters and Lay Comboni Missionaries with all the members of the Christian Community in Central African Republic, we, the Comboni Missionaries gathered here in Lilongwe-Malawi from the 25th to the 29th of November 2018, for our meeting of the Reflection Group on Islam, send you our warmest greetings.

We have been following, with great concern and sadness, the rising levels of violence in your country since 2016. So many people have been victims of relentless and vicious tribal, political and religious conflicts. Thousands have been displaced, hundreds have been brutally massacred in the holy places where they had come for worship or were there to seek refuge.

We are greatly saddened by the latest news of the killings of more than 40 people including the Vicar General of the Diocese of Alindao. May their blood, united with the blood of Jesus Christ and many martyrs, be the sacred sign and seed of lasting peace and reconciliation for the country!

We could only imagine the horrors and the fear that freezes your hearts at the sound of the shootings and cries of the people being slaughtered in your Church compounds!

We could guess your perplexing sadness when you gaze at the slain bodies of the people whom you catechized and baptized teaching them the ways of non-violence according to the Gospel values.

We could imagine your feelings of powerlessness when you have no protection for your very lives and for the lives of the people you love and who have come to you for refuge scared to death with their beloved ones.

What suffering might this be causing you to see that most of the victims of this war are the people who have no part in the conflict: the mothers, children elderly and the sick, people in who are now in tears not knowing where to go to and whom to turn to!

Above all we imagine how hard it might be for you the feeling of being abandoned and cut off from your beloved ones, pushed to question the very presence of God in all these unfortunate events: Where is God?

Dear brothers and sisters in the Mission, we feel what you feel. We had wished that t one of you would have been present with us in the conference to share with us facts on the ground the agony that you and your people are experiencing at this very moment.

From our side, as a sign of our solidarity with you and with the people you serve wholeheartedly, and aware of the dangers you face as you remain in your mission posts, putting your very lives in danger for the sake of the Gospel and of the People of God, we would like to remember you by:

1. Dedicating to you, in a special way, the Holy Eucharist of the last day of our conference which will be presided by Fr. Mariano Tibaldo- the General Secretary for Mission.
2. Committing ourselves to remaining in touch with you through the established forms of communication so that you share with us your fears, anguish and anxieties in the midst of all these sufferings

Being proud of you, for you are truly making common cause with the people on the Cross with Christ in the footsteps of our Founder and in accordance with our charism we send you our regards

With our deepest spirit of solidarity and Prayers

### **Participants of the Reflection Group on Islam**

1. Fr. Mariano Tibaldo – Rome
2. Fr. Gaislain Amoussou – South Sudan
3. Fr. Richard Kyankaaga – Sudan / Egypt
4. Sch. Cosmas Musonda – Zambia
5. Fr. Edward Kanyike - Malawi-Zambia

6. Br. Enrico Gonzales - Chad
7. Fr. Crespim Cabral Baraja - Mozambique
8. Fr. Jean Marie Muketalingi - Malawi
9. Fr. Isaiah S. Nyakundi- Ethiopia
10. Fr. Fasil Kebede Kenya
11. Fr. Desire Bodola- Malawi
12. Fr. Abraham Hailu Ethiopia
13. Fr. Jude Burgers - South Africa
14. Fr. Leopold Adahle Togo/ Ghana Bene
15. Fr. Simon Mbuthia Egypt / Dar Comboni

“I am ready to make common cause with you; ... from now on no rain, no sun ... will stop me from being yours...my joy will be complete when I give my life for you.... (St. Danial Comboni in Khartoum)”

« et il m'a dit: " Ma grâce te suffit, car c'est dans la faiblesse que ma puissance se montre tout entière. " « ... C'est pourquoi je me plais dans les faiblesses, dans les opprobres, dans les nécessités, dans les persécutions, dans les détresses, pour le Christ; car lorsque je suis faible, c'est alors que je suis fort. »(2 Cor. 12: 9-10).

#### Le Prix de la Mission

Bien cher Confrères, évêques, sœurs et laïcs comboniens et les communautés chrétiennes en la République Centrafricaine ; nous, missionnaires comboniens ici à Lilongwe, Malawi, en assemblée du 25 au 29 Novembre 2018, pour le compte du groupe de réflexion sur l’Islam, vous, envoyons nos salutations les plus chaleureuses.

Nous avons suivis, avec grande inquiétudes et tristesses, le niveau très élevé atteint de violences dans votre pays depuis 2006. Beaucoup de gens ont été victimes de conflits sans relache et vicieux de tribalisme, de politique et de religion. De milliers de gens ont été déplacés. Des

centaines autres ont été brutalement massacrés même dans les lieux Saints de cultes où ils étaient venu pour prier ou pour chercher refuge.

Nous avons été attristé par les dernières nouvelles tueries où plus de 40 personnes, en incluant même le vicaire général du diocèse d'Alindao ont été massacrés. Que leur sang, unis à celui de Jésus Christ et de beaucoup de martyres, soient le signe sacré, le grain de la paix durable et de la réconciliation du Pays !

Nous pouvions seulement imaginer l'horreur et la pleure qui pétrifie vos cœurs quand vous écoutiez les crépitements des balles et les cris des gens qu'on tranchait les gorges dans la parcelle de vos Eglises et paroisse!

Nous pouvions deviner votre tristesse perplexe quand vous regardiez les corps inertes du peuple que vous aviez catéchisé et baptisé en leur enseignant la voie de non-violence selon les valeurs des évangiles.

Nous pouvions imaginer votre sentiments d'impuissance quand vous n'aviez pas de protections même pas pour votre propre vies, pour celles de gens et de leur bien-aimés qui avaient trouvé refuge auprès de vous.

Quelles souffrances vous ont envahies de voir la plupart de victimes de cette guerres soient des gens qui n'y ont pas pris part active tels que: les mères, les femmes, les enfants, les vieillards lesmalades et les gens qui sont maintenant en pleure ne sachant où aller et à qui se tourner!

En plus de cela, nous imaginons comment cela a été très difficile pour vous ; vous sentir abandonner et couper de vos bien-aimés et probablement pousser jusqu'à la question de la présence de Dieu dans ces évènements malchances : où est Dieu ?

Très chers frères et sœurs en mission, nous sentons ce que vous ressentez. Nous aurions voulu que quelqu'un parmi vous soit présent avec nous dans cette conférence pour partager avec nous les faits sur terrain, l'agonie que vous et votre peuple, avez expérimentée et que vous expérimentez en ce moment.

De notre côté, comme signe de solidarité avec vous et votre peuple que vous servez avec tout votre cœur, en sachant le danger que courez en restant dans votre poste en mission, même en

mettant en danger votre propre vie pour la cause de l'évangile et de peuple de Dieu, nous voulions nous souvenir de vous en ceci :

3. Dédication spéciale à vous et vos intentions de la dernière célébration eucharistique de notre conférence. Cette dernière sera présidée par P. Mariano Tibaldo, le secrétaire général de la mission.

4. Nous nous engageons à rester unis et en contact avec vous au travers l'établissement de forme de communication pour que vous nous partagiez vos larmes, angoisses et inquiétudes dans toutes ces souffrances.

Etant fiers de vous pour ce que vous faites comme causes communes avec les gens sur la croix du Christ en suivant les pas de notre fondateur et en accord avec notre charisme, nous vous envoyons nos intentions et nos respects les plus distingués,

**Avec notre esprit de solidarité et prière**

**Participants de groupe de réflexion sur Islam.**

- a. Fr. Mariano Tibaldo – Rome
- b. Fr. Gaislain Amoussou – South Sudan
- c. Fr. Richard Kyankaaga – Sudan / Egypt
- d. Sch. Cosmas Musonda – Zambia
- e. Fr. Edward Kanyike - Malawi-Zambia
- f. Br. Enrico Gonzales - Chad
- g. Fr. Crespim Cabral Baraja - Mozambique
- h. Fr. Jean M. Muketalingi - Malawi
- i. Fr. Isaiah S. Nyakundi- Ethiopia
- j. Fr. Fasil Kebede Kenya
- k. Fr. Desire Bodola- Malawi



- l. Fr. Abraham Hailu Ethiopia
- m. Fr. Jude Burgers - South Africa
- n. Fr. Leopold Adahle Togo/ Ghana Bene
- o. Fr. Simon Mbutia Egypt / ComboniLanguage Centre

« Je suis prêt à faire cause commune avec vous ;... à partir de maintenant ni la pluie, ni même le soleil... ne m'empêcheront pour être votre... Ma plus grande joie sera le jour où je donnerai ma vie pour vous... (St. Daniel Comboni à Khartoum) »