Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya:

The Importance of Interfaith Peace-Building for Development

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

The University of Arizona

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Honors Program

By

Grace Hargis

Tucson, Arizona

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Approved By:

Paul N. Wilson

Dr. Paul Wilson
Department of Agriculture and Resource Economics

ABSTRACT

Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya:
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Grace Hargis

Advisor: Dr. Paul Wilson.

Interfaith peace-building is an important step toward increased economic development in Kenya. The use of conflict resolution strategies as components of an international effort for development has become an important topic of research and debate over the past two decades. Within the category of interfaith relations, Christian-Muslim interactions may represent some of the most relevant to development in the world today. Since both focus on expansion through conversion, Christianity and Islam often seem to be in direct "competition for souls," socio-political power, or spheres of influence. The unique history and geographical situation of Kenya is also analyzed, as well as some of the underlying psychological causes of interfaith tensions and distrust. Information collected in Nairobi and Mombasa Kenya in the Fall of 2011 is examined as a case study of Christian-Muslim relations in coastal Kenya. Possible peace-building solutions are suggested from the academic literature on the topic.

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Introduction

Islam and Christianity are the world's two largest religions. While both are "religions of the book," harkening back to many of the same prophets, teachings, and the same historical god; their theological disagreements, political power differences, and competitively convert-seeking focuses, can lead to religious conflict. Poor interfaith relations may be self-perpetuated within a country, leading to cyclical patterns of violence based on religious, and other cultural or ethnic divides. This sort of intrastate violence is a huge hindrance to economic development.

Africa is in a unique position as the one continent where both faiths have significant followings and relatively equal political power. Exact statistics are hotly debated, but estimates range from approximately 75-80% Christian and 15-25% Muslim. Geographically, Africa is divided roughly in half, the northern countries such as Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, and Morocco being primarily Muslim, while southern countries such as South Africa are more Christian. Many of the states with the lowest GNPs and the highest rates of poverty and corruption worldwide are located within Africa.

Figure 1: Christian-Muslim Divide across Africa. Dark represents predominantly Muslim populations, white represents predominantly Christian populations.
Source: Dickson 7.

Kenya straddles the Christian-Islamic divide, with political and economic ties to both the West and the Middle East, and a significant number of citizens adhering to each of the two

faiths. Kenya's economic situation is less than ideal. It is defined as a "developing country" by the International Monetary Fund's *World Economic Outlook 2011* because of its relatively low GDP and is further hindered by ethnic and political violence, as well as religious conflict. Due to these factors, Kenya is home to many grassroots interfaith peace-building initiatives and organizations which can provide valuable information on conflict resolution strategies within the context of Kenya.

This paper will illustrate how Christian-Muslim conflict resolution is a necessary component to the economic development of Kenya while also considering the international factors that contribute to interfaith relations within the country. Christianity and Islam are each explored with regards to their individual views on peace, missions, and geographical history. Analyzing the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Kenya provides insights into the nature of Christian-Muslim interactions across the globe. It also demonstrates how an understanding of place, history and culture all tie in to successful peace-building strategies. The paper will illustrate how political power struggles and international events can be played out at the local level and possible ways in which peace can be achieved, including several employed by the Kenyans themselves.

Chapter 1: Conflict Resolution and Development

Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building as strategies for Development

The use of conflict resolution and peace-building strategies, as components of an international effort for development, has become an important topic of research and debate over the past two decades. The Rwandan genocide of 1994 played a major role in bringing these issues to the forefront:

> "All across Rwanda:murder,murder,murder,murder,murder,murder . . . eight hundred thousand killed in a hundred days. That's three hundred and thirty-three and a third murders an hour—or five and a half lives terminated every minute . . . and add to the death toll the unaccounted legions who were maimed . . . (Gourevitch 133)

The degree of death and massacre during the Rwandan genocide shocked the international community. When the violence was over, economic growth and recovery remained impossible until the Hutus and Tutsis reached a certain level of reconciliation. The genocide's effect on Rwanda's economy, even after the conflict had ended, demonstrated the development implications of conflict and the value of peace-building initiatives to the international community (Kubai 7).

The World Bank is one of the world's largest organizations dedicated to international development. Some of its work since the Rwandan genocide reveals the extent to which peace-building initiatives and conflict resolution strategies have become popular topics in international development circles. The World Bank's most recent World Development Report from 2011 focuses on how conflict depresses development. Titled "Conflict, Security, and Development,"

this document outlines trends in violence and development across the world in recent decades, and how the two affect each other.

The World Development Report 2011 begins by discussing how wars and homicides have decreased in frequency worldwide in the past few decades (WDR 2011. 51). While interstate violence (war) has decreased, small-scale disturbances such as ethnically based conflict, gang violence, and trafficking of various illicit goods, and even people, have often been overlooked in these types of violence assessment analyses. The development community has repeatedly assumed that a society's transition from violence to peace is a relatively linear one, but increasingly studies are demonstrating that many types of ethnic and localized violence are often cyclical. This has been the case with all civil wars since 2003; each has been a resumption of previous intrastate violence such as ethnic conflict or civil war. The development costs of these conflicts, in terms of human life, suffering, and economic repercussions, are huge and continue to compound with repeating cycles of violence (WDR 2011. 60).

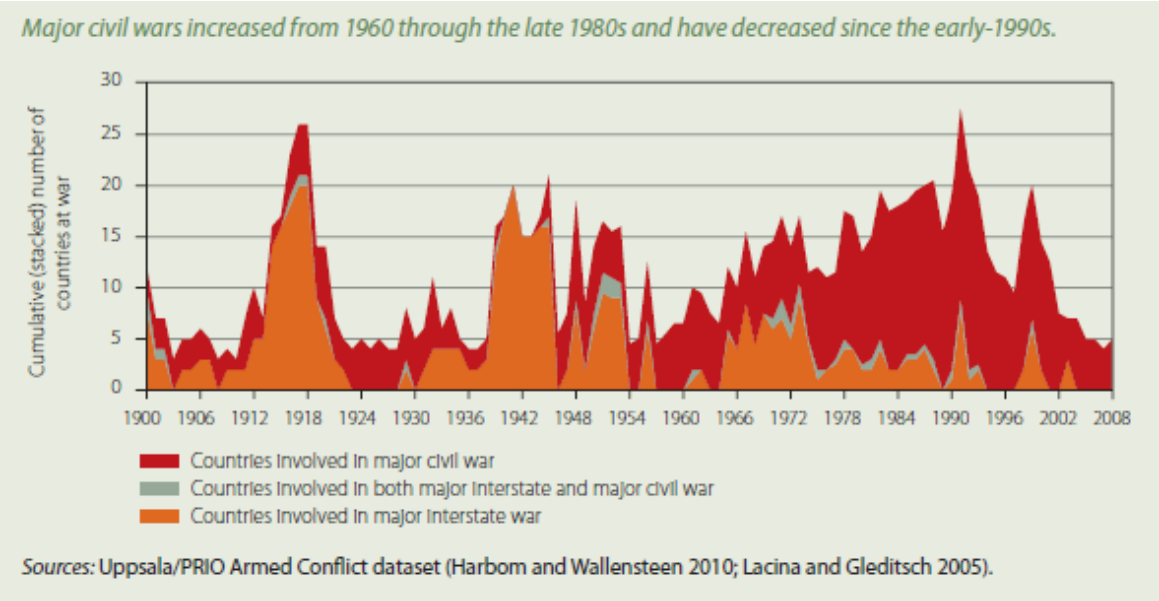

Figure 2: Cyclical Nature of Civil War
Source: WDR 2011. 52

Displacement of people is one significant effect of both large and small-scale violence which can depress development. By taking individuals from their jobs and from the land where they previously made a living, and sending them to already occupied land or more remote/less productive areas in a region, displacement drastically affects a population's economic output. Refugee camps and camps for internally displaced persons are often heavily dependent on outside sources of income and food. People who end up in these encampments were usually self-sufficient and participating in the national economy before violence forced them to relocate for safety reasons (WDR 2011. 61). Other effects include death and loss of loved ones, disruption of trade, destruction of productive land, resources, and tools, shrinking of the labor force due to young boys engaging in violence, and loss of crops when people are forced to flee their land and not be able to properly cultivate it in a given year.

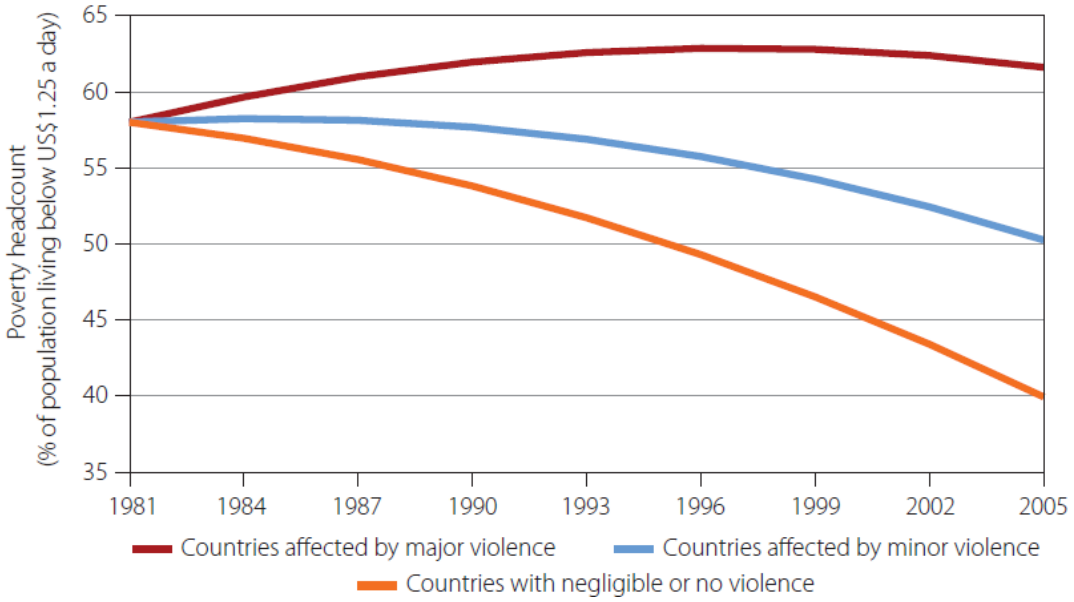

Figure 3: Relationship between Poverty and Violence
Source: WDR 2011. 4

Most countries in the world can report significant decreases in the number of people living in poverty. While it may seem that the continent of Africa is the exception to the rule, African countries are following the same pattern that any other similarly sized group of countries has followed, and when factors which increase the likelihood of civil war are evaluated (factors like GNP, total exports, and ethnic diversity) Africa is currently experiencing slightly less intrastate conflict than models would predict (Collier, Hoeffler 12). Worldwide, there is a direct correlation between countries where poverty levels are static or increasing and countries that have seen violent conflict in the past few decades (WDR 2011. 60), which agrees with the evidence from Africa where violence and lack of economic growth often go hand-in-hand.

The Inverse Relationship between Violence and Economic Growth

The interplay between intrastate conflict and economic development is a topic of much current research. "The Temporal Links between Conflict and Economic Activity" by Gregory D. Hess and Brock Blomberg, argues that the two have a strong inverse relationship.[1] The interaction between conflict and under-development represents a self-reinforcing phenomenon where economic strength can have just as much of an impact on the probability of violence as violence can have on economic development and strength of an economy. Blomberg and Hess specifically cite statistics relating to recessions, stating that a recession makes conflict more likely within a country. When combined with external conflict the chances of internal conflict are even further elevated (Blomberg, Hess 2). During a recession, conflict within a society is

[1] "The Temporal Links between Conflict and Economic Activity was written less than a decade after the Rwandan genocide when violence as a hindrance to economic growth first came to the forefront of development research. The article can be accessed on the World Bank's website and is still a relevant source on the topic.

more likely because of the relative lack of jobs and opportunity as well as the absence of necessary goods and services.

Violence impacts economies largely through private property. Violence often causes the destruction of property and decreases the incentives for capital investments, from both international investors as well as local merchants and farmers. The incentive to buy a hoe which may yield more crops is much lower if one fears that the hoe will be stolen before the harvest even comes or if the field of crops may be destroyed (Blomberg, Hess 4). International investment is likewise tied to stable conditions since few companies want to invest in markets that may fall apart or disappear at any time. Internal violence may also undermine the government of a country, thus depleting the stock of capital and creating widespread instability. This greatly decreases the chances of international investment and can make entrepreneurship almost impossible when loan and banking systems may have collapsed or simply do not exist (Blomberg, Hess 5).

This self-reinforcing cycle can be described as a poverty trap, where conflict leads to economic decline and a failing or contracting economy leads to increasing risk of conflict. To prove this point, Hess and Blomburg examined data from 152 countries and described their findings (Blomberg, Hess 6). They use a Markov probability model which "can be thought of as dynamic contingency tables, where the objective is to account for the observed transition from one state at time point t-1, to either remain in that state at time point t or to switch to another state at time point t" to assess the records (Blomberg, Hess 7). Across regions, and within nations of various regime types (democratic or not), the findings show that most countries are usually

stable and peaceful. But, when a recession or violent conflict does occur, it tends to persist and continue to disrupt the previous peace and stability for generations (Blomberg, Hess 14).

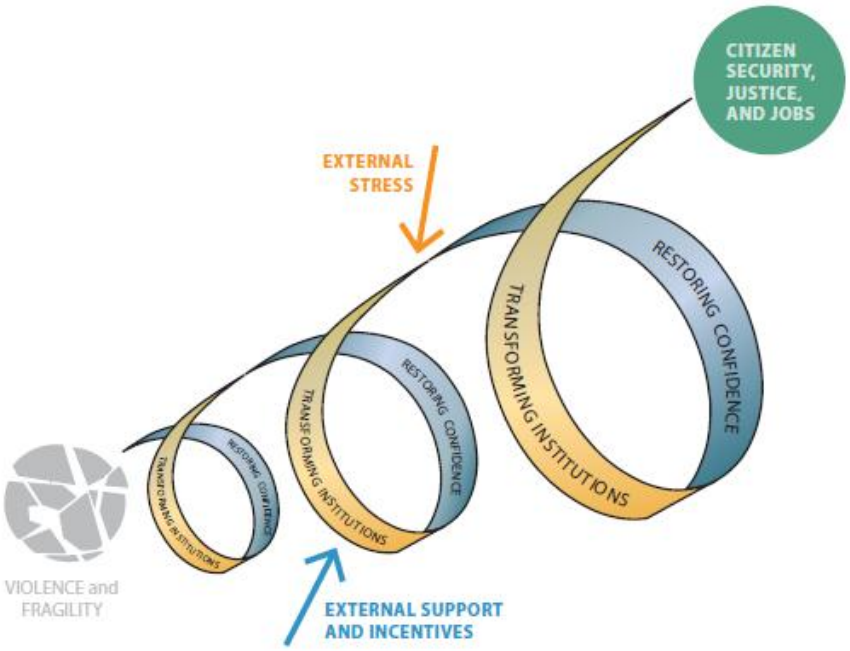

Figure 4: Cyclical Path to Peace
Source: WDR 2011. 131

This article empirically demonstrates the relationship between conflict and economic productivity. To aid development, it may be necessary for organizations to first assist with peace building and/or conflict resolution. Instead of a linear progression, the path to peace is often cyclical, with many dips and turns along the way. Development agencies must help provide external support and incentives for peace, and not be discouraged by seemingly slow progress. Because the cycle of violence and economic decline can be quite difficult to reverse it may also be advantageous to focus on averting conflict in the first place through preemptive reconciliation measures between groups that are at high risk for escalating tensions and initiating violence.

Chapter 2: Interfaith Relations: Christian-Muslim context

Focus on Religious Conflict and Interfaith Peace-building

The role of conflict as a hindrance to development is too substantial a topic to fully cover in any one paper or thesis. By narrowing the discussion down to religious conflict, this paper seeks to focus more deeply on the specific dynamics of how interfaith conflict materializes as well as how it can be overcome. Knowing that conflict hinders development and that preemptive measures may be more effective than reactive ones due to the persistence of the conflict-recession cycle once it has begun, individuals or organizations seeking to learn more about possible prevention methods may want to look into the most common causes of war or widespread conflict.

Marta Reynal-Querol's article titled "Ethnicity, Political Systems and Civil Wars" examines the interaction between ethnic divisions and civil wars and the role of political systems in dealing with them. Three variables are analyzed; language, ethnicity, and religious faith. Between the three, religion is singled out as the most divisive. This is due to the dichotomy that, an individual may speak more than one language and may be half French and also half Saudi, but one person cannot be a member of two belief systems, or (for example) claim to be "half Catholic" (7).

Religion is also described as one of the strongest forms of identity, one that can extend across cultural and language barriers. Since different religions often dictate different ways of

understanding the world, forming social relationships, and perceiving various aspects of life in society, one's faith may be an integral part of one's role in society (Reynal-Querol 7). The author suggests that two people from the same faith background may in fact live together more harmoniously then two people of the same ethnicity or language who do not share the same religion (28).

Reynal-Querol also suggests some solutions for avoiding religious and ethnic tensions or conflict. In Malaysia, ethnic Chinese[2] and Muslims coexist with a certain degree of tension. Violent riots broke out between the two groups in 1969 and the government responded by initiating a proportional voting system. Since then, further riots have been avoided, demonstrating that institutional incentives can help to counteract and prevent violent conflicts (3). The article specifies that, in countries with a large population of animist religions and where other world religions like Islam and Christianity also exist, a dual democratic system where decisions or elections can be decided partially through a proportional system and partially through a majoritarian system, is the best solution for preventing conflict (28).

Christian-Muslim Interfaith Relations

Within the category of interfaith relations, Christian-Muslim interactions may represent some of the most relevant to development in the world today. As two of the largest religions in the world, with around 1.5 to 2 billion adherents each, approximately half of the entire world's population belongs to one of these two religions. Since both focus on expansion through

[2] Reynal-Querol does not address the religion of the ethnic Chinese in this example, but since the other group is listed simply as "Muslims" it seems safe to assume that the ethnic Chinese are Buddhist, Christian, or some other religion which is not Muslim.

conversion, Christianity and Islam often seem to be in direct "competition for souls," socio-political power, or spheres of influence. This creates a whole set of unique scenarios which can be seen playing out across the world. The size and level of competition between Islam and Christianity also provide a strong argument for prioritizing cooperative interfaith relations when pursuing international peace, wellness, and development.

History books are filled with Christian-Muslim interactions, events such as the Inquisition and Crusades. What history books do not talk about as often are the hundreds of years during which conflicts were rare or non-existent, or the thousands, millions, even billions of people who do coexist with their neighbors from faith backgrounds other than their own. This one-sided rhetoric is fueled by religious leaders and adherents emphasizing the faults, inconsistencies, or dangers of the other religion while blindly ignoring the same aspects of their own. Due to the culture of distrust that so often exists between Christianity and Islam, people tend to be much more aware of the ways in which each religion can be and is used to tear apart or discredit the other instead of the teachings in each that promote peace and interfaith dialogue.

Attachment Theory with regards to Interfaith Relations

The ability to interact peacefully in situations where economic or societal pressures encourage competition or suspicion is dependent on the ability to trust and form bonds of attachment. *Peace-Building by, between and beyond Muslims and Evangelical Christians* (2009) is an anthology written by Christians and Muslims exploring the ways in which the two religions can and do coexist, as well as many of the reasons they sometimes do not. Evelyn A. Reisacher,

one of the contributors, delves into the core emotions and mental processes of racial and religious stereotyping. Reisacher utilizes the research of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth on attachment theory to explain how our own perceptions may prevent trust and attachment to persons from another religious background.

Attachment theory posits that to create a true bond with another human being, one must feel that the other is "safe to be with" (Reisacher 159). When terror or trauma are associated with a person, ethnic group, or religious group, these bonds are much more difficult, if not impossible, to cultivate. Yet, without these bonds, real attachment and trust, the building-blocks for coexistence in a peaceful and productive manner, is equally challenging (163). Attachment-preventing fears may be well-founded or they may have little basis in reality. They may be acquired from first-hand experience or stories from others, even stories passed down from hundreds of years before. No matter how false or outrageous, once the fear association is established attachment becomes nearly impossible (162).

The word for this phenomenon is "amygdala," where certain people or even entire groups trigger a fear response in the brain which then hinders attachment. Amygdala is regulated by the higher brain yet is essentially subconscious, so one may react to amygdala without necessarily being aware of what is causing the fear or unease. One example could be an American who has developed the fear response to Arab faces and/or dress. Upon seeing an Arab in an airport, an American may experience a quickened heart-rate or uneven breathing, perhaps without even knowing exactly why. Because Arabs in the media are usually associated with terrorism, and one of the most well-known Arab faces to many Americans is that of Osama Bin-Laden, many

Americans may experience amygdala when seeing someone they perceive as looking like "a terrorist"(Reisacher 158).

Amygdala can be activated by perceived "hostile faces." Due to cultural and physical differences between, for example, Anglo-American faces and Arab faces, one might incorrectly interpret a face as "hostile" due to a misunderstanding of cultural norms regarding facial expressions. One may also assume someone is angry if the person is associated with anger or hostility simply because of their ethnicity or dress. In order for this fear response to be overcome, it is necessary to create good memories and associations with a person, ethnic, or religious group to counteract the bad ones. In the case of faces from other cultural-ethnic groups, one must be "exposed to the whole spectrum of facial expressions: happy, smiling, sad, and so on" in order to better understand what actually is a hostile face and what is not (162).

While experiences of amygdala may not be outwardly expressed or in any way acted upon, their very existence verifies the existence of psychological divides, whether they are ethnic, religious, or based on any other categorization of people. As part of the peace-building process, it is important to dismantle these biased psychological fears. It is true that experiences of amygdala originate from real and valid fears, but the extension of fear-associations to individuals or people groups based on stereotyping is counterproductive to promoting harmonious relationships.

Interfaith Dialogue between Christians and Muslims

Both Christianity and Islam have teachings on peace, cooperation, and graceful disagreement. These teachings have the potential to greatly alter our world where approximately

half of our now seven billion person population is linked with one of these two faiths. While religion has often been used as an excuse for violence and war, it also has a long history of encouraging peaceful relations. Because it connects deeply with social and cultural norms of a society and claims to reach beyond the fully conscious or physical state, religion has a unique potential to move and engage people. That power has been used many times to incite a people to war, but it has also been used to drive people to help, care for, and build up others regardless of whether they share a common faith (Kadayfci-Orellana 19).

Some Islamic teachings on peaceful relations include Tawhid (Unity of Being), Afu (forgiveness), Rahmah (compassion) and Rahim (mercy). S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana describes these as the "Pillars of Islamic conception of peace." He also delves into the Islamic Conception of War, highlighting the Qur'anic verses which argue for certain conduct in war. One such verse, Q2:190, reads "Fight in the way of Alla against those who fight against you; but begin not hostilities" (25). Violence may be necessary at times, but it is not to be engaged in mindlessly or when avoidable.

Tawhid is the "Principal of Unity of God and all being" and is described by Kadayifci-Orellana as being "the central principle which the Islamic understanding of peace is derived from" (21). This concept expresses the fundamental unity of humanity, and rejects a world view based in exclusivity. It is the basis of Islamic universalism and tolerance. Muslims are called upon to seek this universal harmony with God, nature, and fellow humans.

Afu can be translated as "forgiveness." Many Qur'anic verses demonstrate a preference in Islam for "forgiveness over retribution" as demonstrated by the verse where God told

Mohammad himself to "keep to forgiveness …and turn away from the ignorant" (Q7:99). Another verse of the Qur'an reads "the recompense of an injury the like thereof: but whosoever forgives and thereby brings about a reestablishment of harmony, his reward is with God; and God loves not the wrongdoers" (Q42:40). This verse may strike western Christians as surprisingly familiar, sounding quite like Mathew 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy" and 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."

Rahmah and Rahim (Compassion and Mercy, respectively) are also important components of the Islamic idea of peace. God himself is said to state "My Mercy extends to all things" (Q7:156) and "Without doubt My Mercy precedes My Wrath." A common recitation for Muslims upon beginning an activity is "Bi Ism-i- Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim" which means they are beginning "in the name of Allah Who is Compassionate and Merciful" (24).

Glen Stassen has written a response to Kadayifci-Orellana's writing. He discusses her work while also supplementing it with contributions from his own religious heritage. Christianity, he claims, is also richly filled with teachings of peace, though Stassen admits that many Christians have a tendency to be vague on what peace means and how one should act out or encourage peace. However, as the teachings do exist, Stassen argues that Christianity has great potential to be a force for peace.

Stassen goes to the book of Matthew for his examples of Biblical writings on Peace. Mathew 5:43-48 is part of the so called "Sermon on the Mount" where Jesus is speaking to the masses about various guidelines for how they should live. These particular verses include sayings like "…I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you

may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." In Corinthians 13 the Bible reads "Love is patient, love is kind…it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs." With this sort of definition for love, the admonition to love one's enemy is clearly no small task.

Forgiveness is shown to be an important part of Christianity, as well as Islam. According to the Bible the last words of Jesus before his death were "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," demonstrating that even in the midst of betrayal and death, forgiveness is of central importance to the faith (Stassen 54). Stassen also highlights biblical verses touching on the topics of mercy and reconciliation.

Stassen is quick to admit that both religions have their shortcomings, and that adherents to both faiths often fail to practice peace as straightforwardly as their holy texts would seem to require. Looking at his own faith of Christianity, Stassen notes the power and dedication of Martin Luther King Jr. who used Biblical teachings to preach non-violence (62). But in the case of the first Gulf War against Iraq, he points out his disappointment at the lack of a unified Christian stance. There were some Christians who spoke out against the war, decrying it as wrong, but at the same time none of these Christians seemed to take their peace building skills to the next level by actually suggesting any better solutions. To Stassen, peace-building cannot be simply decrying something as bad, it must include the initiative and dedication to try and make things better (Stassen 63).

Despite numerous verses and teachings on interfaith dialogue, Christians and Muslims do not always find it easy to get along or find common ground particularly when it comes to religious or political issues. For example the Qur'an says "Say: "Oh people of the Book! Come here for a word which is in common between you and us: that we worship none but God; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than God." If they turn back, you say: "Bear witness that we are Muslims" (Bakar 136). Yet this attitude of seeking to be the better man, and to find common ground, is a much less common approach by either religion than one might hope.

In connection with her research on attachment, Reisacher points out that there are real fears and concerns that often discourage interfaith dialogue. Stories of Christian persecution in predominantly Muslim countries, as well as restrictions on churches in Muslim parts of the world, are just a couple reasons why Christians may fear open dialogue with a Muslim. Sharia law is another point that may trigger fear in Christians, partially because of the many misconceptions about Sharia as well as horror stories perpetuated by western media (Reisacher 167). Muslims could similarly fear that Christians might weaken their cultural values. The US invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan are very current and tangible examples of the ability of Western, (predominantly) Christian countries have to disrupt many Muslims' way of life.

One way to try to dispel these fears is to find common ground between the two religions. J. Dudly Woodberry outlines many similarities between Christian and Muslim texts and beliefs. Both religions worship one god, both honor Jesus, both agree that human beings are "stewards of God on earth, under God and over creation." Both religions also emphasize the difference between right and wrong (Woodberry 172). By emphasizing the common values between the two

groups peace builders hope people will feel less threatened, defenses will be lowered, and more real communication and true attachment will be possible.

A particularly relevant point to interfaith peace building is that both faiths have writings instructing followers to witness in a gracious way. Both Christianity and Islam are mission-focused religions, creating a situation in which they may see each other as rivals for converts, influence, and power (economic or political.) Yet both of their holy books clearly state that missions are to be carried out respectfully and conscientiously (Woodberry 175). Muslims are instructed; "Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and good exhortation and dispute with them *in a better way*" [3] Qur'an 16:125. And the Bible states; "Always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you *with gentleness and respect*"[4] 1 Peter 3:15. Encouraging missionaries of both religions to adhere to these teachings, staying respectful and avoiding competitive or negative rhetoric, could have a huge impact on the relationship between Islam and Christianity worldwide.

Islamic Da'wah and Christian Missionary Activity

Missionary activity is a particularly troublesome hindrance to peaceful Christian-Muslim relations. One might believe that the great missionary days are over but others argue that, via various aid programs and NGOs, churches are actually more influential and pursuing conversions on a wider scale than ever before (Mwakimako 293). Muslim da'wah is not quite the same as Christian missionary work, but still involves spreading the teachings of Islam and

[3] Emphasis added
[4] Emphasis added

pursuing conversions (Mwakimako 182). Religious schools where funding may be unequal for schools of different religions has proven to be a problem as well. And Christian legitimization for the US invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan on religious grounds has given some the impression that Christians will stop at nothing, even going to war, for the sake of pursuing converts.

Religiously focused or funded NGOs and aid organizations from the US are often Christian, and many have an evangelical focus. These aid organizations may have good intentions, such as those in war-torn Iraq that seek to provide health care and other basic services. Yet the interplay between Christian evangelism and the Sharia death penalty for apostasy[5] creates a very volatile combination where relief aid may actual do more harm to a society than help. In 2006, Abdul Rahman, an Afghani, converted to Christianity. He was arrested in his home country and escaped punishment only by receiving asylum to Italy (179). This harsh reaction to Christian converts in a Muslim society demonstrates the ways in which wide-spread conversions could tear apart families and a society where everyone was previously the same religion.

In 1976 Christian and Muslim scholars and leaders came together in Chambesy to discuss Christian missions and Muslim da'wah for the sake of improving relations (182). The Arabic word for the use of aid and services in evangelism is "diakonia" and it is seen as vastly inferior to "da'wah" which is much more focused on living out one's religion as an example, not for the express purpose of converting. The final declaration of the Chambesy conference condemned the use of diakonia due to the manipulative nature of using money and resources to convert

[5] Apostasy is the rejection of one's faith: in this case, Islam.

vulnerable populations, an action that may later disadvantage that population further in its own social and societal context (Mwakimako 189).

While the Sharia law against apostasy conflicts seriously with freedom of religion, Christian tendencies to combine aid services with evangelism, and worse yet to combine evangelism with the war effort, are just as much a part of the problem. Certain well-known Christians, such as Gerry Fallwell, Pat Robertson, Jerry Vines, and Franklin Graham have hinted or directly stated that US military involvement in Iraq is a good thing because it gives them a chance to evangelize (via development) in areas where the US military has gained control. Graham has declared that Islam is "a very evil and wicked religion" and in the 1991 Gulf War his organization, the Samaritan's Purse, gave US soldiers 30,000 bibles for distribution in Iraq. In April 2003 Time Magazine reported that the Samaritan's Purse and other evangelical organization were waiting at the border of Jordan and Iraq to engage in (their own words) "aid evangelism" as soon as the US military would let them in. Efforts like these seem to link the US invasion with US evangelical missions, which is terribly offensive to people who already have a strong societal and religious aversion to foreign troops invading their land.

In order for Christian missions and Islamic da'wah to coexist in the many places of the world where both religions are spreading, both religions will need to change the negativity of their rhetoric towards each other. Quotes like that by Franklin Graham are not simply influential within the US. Those words get published and read all over the world, by Christians and Muslims alike, and attitudes may be formed accordingly. At a more grassroots level the people engaging in evangelism, preaching by the side of the road, whether Christian or Muslim, have a responsibility to be respectful of those of other religions while they do so. By preaching hate of

another religion people may gain a few converts, but they gain many more enemies and make the world-wide push for peaceful coexistence that much more difficult.

Interfaith Peace-building Strategies

The United Religions Initiative (URI) is a global grassroots interfaith network modeled after and endorsed by the United Nations. The URI seeks to "cultivate peace and justice by engaging people to bridge religious and cultural differences and work together for the good of their communities around the world" (URI website). Founded by William Swing, an Episcopal Bishop, the URI charter was signed in June 2000. Since its founding, the URI has gained recognition as one of the largest interfaith networks in the world which has cooperation circles in 79 countries. As part of their ongoing effort towards religious cooperation, the URI has written and made public a 280-page Peace-building Guide. This guide outlines their mission as well as many of their strategies for interfaith dialogue, increasing understanding, and proactively using the power of religion for peace-building.

The Peace-building Guide defines peace-building as a "Field of practice and of scholarly study" which builds on research, theories, and practice of nonviolent activism, conflict resolution and human rights. As a study, peace-building spans many disciplines such as history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, biology, political science, communication and education policy (Abu-Nimer et al. 12). Religious peace-building (now a part of the larger label "Interfaith peace-building") has become a recognized segment of the peace-building field. Because religious affiliation is so common, especially among the rural and urban poor of many countries, engaging

in interfaith peace-building is a way of including a part of society that may not have access to political power or be involved in more formal peace processes (Abu-Nimer et al. 13).

The URI recognizes peace as an "active process" which ultimately seeks to "prevent further violence and destructive conflict; heal individuals and societies from the effects of violence; and reconcile individuals and communities" (Abu-Nimer et al. 11). In order to cultivate peace, it is necessary to "develop leadership and participation at every level of society" from the grassroots to national and international leaders. Because people involved in religious peace-building often have little or no formal training, grassroots organization has proven to be one of the most effective means of interfaith organization (Abu-Nimer et al. 14).

Bringing peace to their adherents, and to nature and humanity as a whole, is an accepted tenet of most world religions. Yet religions are often used to manipulate individuals and communities into violent action. Understanding religious differences, using respectful rhetoric when discussing other religions, and encouraging increased dialogue and cooperation between religious groups can all help counteract the tendency of religion to be used for conflict (Abu-Nimer et al. 12). The URI Peace-building Guide seeks to utilize the power of religions, their organization and the dedication of their followers, as well as the inherent potential of human beings, to work towards sustainable peace-building within and between individuals, communities, and nations (Abu-Nimer et al. 15).

Chapter 3: The Kenyan Context

Kenya's role in Christian-Muslim Relations

The country of Kenya is in a unique position with regards to interfaith relations, particularly between Christians and Muslims. As an African country geographically located near the predominantly (or exclusively) Muslim states of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and largely Muslim controlled Somalia, Kenya has many modern day connections with the Muslim and Arab world. The coastline of Kenya has historically been economically and religiously linked with the Middle East through trade. A former colony of Britain, Kenya's national language is English. The United Kingdom is Kenya's single largest trading partner and Kenya receives significant aid from both the UK and the United States (Western nations with Christian heritage.) Kenya is home to significant Muslim and Christian populations, though exact statistics are hotly debated.

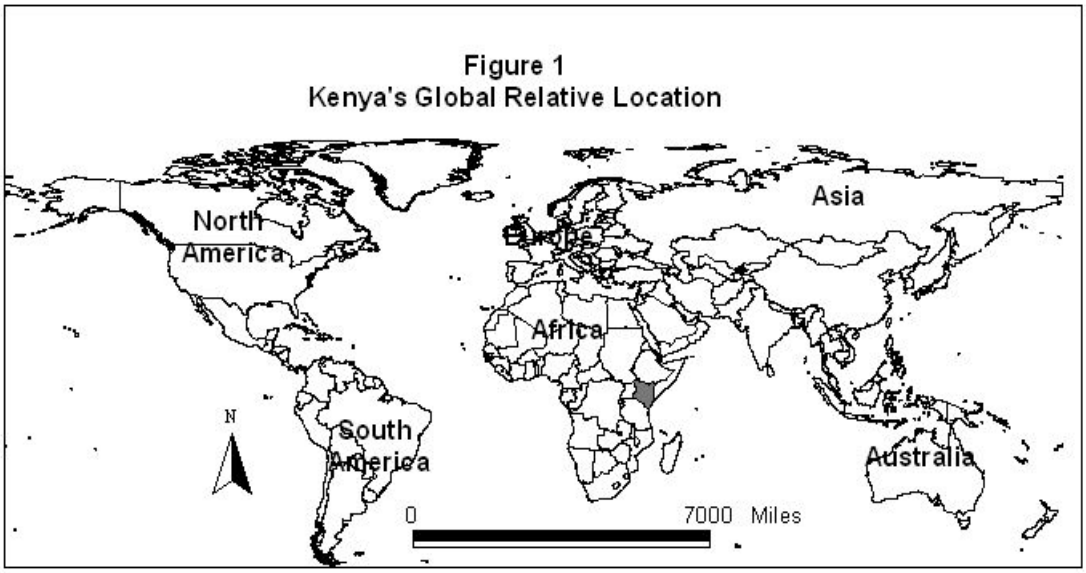

Figure 5: Kenya's Global Relative Location
Source: Otiso 113

Islam predates Christianity in Kenya and East Africa by roughly 500 years, spreading along the coast before the religion even reached the Arab peninsula. Around 1000 CE the first Muslim traders came to the Kenyan coast, trading spices and slaves, among other things (Mwakimako 291). The first documented site of Arab Muslim merchants in East Africa is Lamu, an island off the northern coast of Kenya. As Islam spread through trade connections between the Middle East and eastern Africa, it was a primarily urban religion which did not make significant movements into the interior until much later (Lodhi 88). Those who converted to Islam were mostly Sunni though some became Shi'ite as well. These converts joined the religion voluntarily, they were not forced (Rukyaa 190).

In 1498 Vasco de Gamma came to Kenya and built a large white pillar topped with a cross in the coastal town of Malindi. Only the first of many Portuguese Christian missionaries, his actions embittered the local Kenyans who felt no need for a Christian icon on their land (Mwakimako 291). As Portuguese missionary activity increased, the Christians began buying and freeing slaves as a way to gain converts. The slaves would be bought, freed, and then baptized as Christians. Whole (albeit small) villages sprung up of such converts, who were largely kept separate from the larger population and taught the superiority of Christianity over all other religions. Ignoring the fact that Christian peoples were just as involved in the slave trade in Western Africa, the missionaries successfully spread the idea that slavery was allowed to exist because of the shortcomings of Islam as a religion, and that Christianity was the religion which ended the slave trade (Mwakimako 292).

The British were the next to send their missionaries, eventually turning Kenya into one of their many colonies. The British strongly favored the Christian population; churches and

Christian schools were founded everywhere. These Christian schools had more funding and often taught more modern skills then the older Muslim institutions (Rasmussen 21). This practice leads to differential treatment in the job market and hiring processes, even after Kenya became an independent state. Before and during WWI, British Protestant missionaries competed against Muslims and even Catholics for converts. The environment was highly competitive and individuals spoke of "stemming the tide of Islam" as a righteous goal (Rasmussen 39). Negative rhetoric and "us vs. them" mentalities put strain on interfaith relations, increasing fear and misunderstanding between Christian and Muslim Kenyans.

Kenya's unique history, geography, and religious make-up have given Kenyans a broad range of international connections. Since Islam first arrived along the Kenya coast, its adherents have been relatively more connected to the outside world then their inland neighbors. The coastal people, the Swahili, developed an entirely different culture, adopting Arabic words into their language and wearing the Muslim dress of Oman and other Arab countries (Lodhi 89). Islam has always been a foreign religion in Kenya, and its followers have a historical tendency of being more involved in international issues and more outward looking at the world (Rasmussen 13). Equally influential are Kenya's financial, historical, and linguistic ties to the US and UK.

Factors Hindering Peaceful Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya

Today Kenya's Christian and Muslim populations face serious issues of discrimination, inequality, prejudice, and fear, hindering peaceful and productive relations. Persisting inequalities of political and economic power stemming from the time of British colonization cause many Muslims to view Christians as power greedy and corrupt. Similarly, stories of

terrorism and the so called "War on Terror" by the US, have given Christians in the country an excuse to see Muslims as untrustworthy and violent. Kenya's population is also already severely divided along ethnic and tribal lines. The ethnic violence following the 2007 elections demonstrates how, when turned against each other, certain Kenyan inter-communal relations can turn quite violent[6] (Dagne, CRS 7). As the WDR 2011 pointed out, ethnic violence and trafficking are two forms of violence that may be increasing in certain parts of the world, not decreasing. Kenya has been the location of some of the most violent election based ethnic violence in recent years and is a hub of drug trafficking[7] (WDR 2011. 54). These pre-existing tensions can negatively impact interfaith relations within the country.

All social services in Kenya must constantly compete for funding. Kenya's government struggles to pay for the most basic social need such as doctors.[8] Health programs and other social services are often provided by the international community via various NGOs, increasing dependency and decreasing the pressure for the Kenyan government to allocate funds to such services. In such a capital-poor and internationally-dependent economy the money that is available is fought over desperately. This can increase tensions between Christian and Muslim-run organizations, especially when Christian-run ones seem to be favored by local and national government officials. Islamic organizations may even face being closed down due to supposed

[6] In 2007 fighting broke out along tribal lines over what many perceived as an unfair election. About a month after the initial riots there were several instances of revenge-violence by opposing tribes. Between the two periods of violence, over a thousand were killed; many more were injured, maimed, or lost loved ones. It is estimated that 350,000 persons were displaced by this violence. (Dagne, CRS 7).

[7] In the last decade or so, Kenya has become a hub of drug trafficking, primarily heroine or other opiates, between Asia and Europe.

[8] The health systems of Kenya suffer greatly from "brain drain" where professionals such as doctors often leave the country after obtaining medical degrees in order to receive better wages internationally.

"security threats," an action which is often perceived as an outright attack on Islam by the government (Mwakimako 203).

Schools are another central way in which Christians and Muslims may see themselves as unequal. In Kenya, Christian schools are often free, with funding provided by the Kenyan government as well as international donors such as US churches that want to donate to education, but who are much less likely to do so through secular vehicles. On the other hand, Muslim "madarassas" are much less likely to have international or government funding. The school lunches in Christian schools regularly include pork and other "haram" (unclean, not allowed) food products, meaning that Muslim students who do end up in the free education system are faced with having to bring a lunch (uncommon for most Kenyan students) or going hungry (Mwakimako 294). The schools are often prejudiced against Muslims, teaching Christianity and slighting Islam. Teachers and faculty may be blatantly Islamophobic, and students have few options for gaining equality (Rukyaa 195).

A relatively small but politically charged counter-example to Christian schools and education programs receiving more funding from Kenya bureaucracies and international donors are the Saudi-funded Wahhabi schools which are located and funded throughout the Muslim world by the conservative Saudi sect of Sunni Islam known as "Wahhabism" in the west (Rashid 83). This sect is widely known for its traditional leanings and has been associated with certain cases of "radicalization" of Muslim populations. While less relevant in Kenya, (there are many more such schools in Ethiopia and Sudan than in East Africa) the schools do exist and demonstrate, in a way that some Westerners may be able to see more clearly than with examples

of Christian programs, how religiously funded schools have the potential to radicalize communities and increase religious tensions (Dickson 5).

The combined effect of local government preference for Christian programs and international protestant US financial contributions to selected institutions has resulted in largely separate health facilities and other social service institutions for Christians and Muslims. Sometimes two clinics, one run out of a church and other with an Arab-derived name, may be within blocks of each other. Much like the days of segregation in the US, duplication of services, clinics, schools, and other institutions are common largely because Christian and Muslim services are often kept separate (Magesa 168). This divide is historical, dating back to missionary schools in the colonial era, when British Christian schools were given a head start in obtaining internationally relevant curriculum, English language skills, and better educated teachers as well as school supplies. But its effects still persist today in preferential hiring practices and unequally distributed wealth between Christian and Muslim areas (Magesa 167).

International Influence on Kenyan Interfaith Relations

The international community has a direct impact on Kenya's political and social climate. There is a surprisingly large transfer of information and attitudes from the US to countries like Kenya which receive a relatively large amount of US aid and where English is the official language. A huge problem for ethnic and religious relations in Kenya is that people from a Christian background are likely to have connections via churches or missionary activity to people and communities in the United States, whereas Muslims in Kenya are likely to have family and friends in the Middle East. This can create a dichotomy of interests where some of the

country's population is aligned with the US and some with the Middle East. When those two parts of the world are perceived to be at odds (which seems to be a rather large amount of the time, seeing as the US has been at war with Iraq since 2003 and has also invaded Afghanistan as well as interfered with other countries) individuals in Kenya may be quick to adopt the attitudes of these two international spheres of influence and enact the same arguments and tensions within Kenya along religious lines.

The so-called "War on Terror" is one example of how international events and alliances may effect religious tensions within Kenya. Kenya has, in many ways, been caught in the middle of US efforts to fight terrorism and the terrorists themselves. Kenya has close military relationships with many western nations such as the US, UK, and Germany. Nairobi has been used as the headquarters for corporations, Sub-Saharan activities, and military involvement in East Africa such as combatting perceived terrorism threats. Nairobi's relatively developed infrastructure and economy make it a desirable location for western nations (Otiso 111).

By cooperating with the US in its efforts to fight terrorism, Kenya is seen as aligning itself with a Christian nation that is attacking many Muslim ones (122). This idea may be both affirming to Christians in Kenya and terribly offensive to Kenyan Muslims. Terrorism is associated with Islam and Islamophobia is increasingly openly discussed (121). When terrorist attacks do occur, or even when something which *could* be a terrorist attack happens (such as a grenade thrown into a local bar or club) Kenyans are quick to blame their Muslim neighbors (113). The events of September 11th mean that Muslims today are more likely to be viewed with suspicion in Kenya, and that Christian-Muslim relations are more tense, despite the huge disconnect between Kenyan Muslims and the hijackers of American planes.

To make matters worse, the United States has not always seemed the most loyal of allies as it has pressured Kenya into its global fight against terror. Since the 1998 terrorist bombing of the US embassy in Kenya, the United States has issued a travel advisory to US citizens planning to visit Kenya. Due to its proximity to Somalia, porous border, and enormous (largely uncontrolled) refugee population, Kenya is seen as a high-terrorist-risk location. This is likely to be particularly offensive to a country that bases a large percentage of its economy on the profits of tourism. Kenyans may also perceive that they are more likely to be the target of extremist terrorist attacks, along with the personal loss and decreasing tourism revenues that follow, due to their close relationship with the United States and their willingness to work with the US against terrorists and terrorist groups" (Otiso 124).

Figure 6: Political Cartoon Illustrating the relationship between Western Travel Advisories and the Kenyan Tourism Industry. Source: Otiso 119

Another possible reason for the high instance of terrorism in Kenya is the country's role in the larger Christianity-Islam context of East Africa. As a predominantly Christian country surrounded by many predominantly Muslim states, Kenya may be a target of those seeking

greater Muslim influence in the area. Geography plays a huge role in this dynamic, as does the fact that Kenya's economy and population are relatively large when compared with many of its neighbors. Attacks may focus on trying to aid Islam in the country, making it more prominent or powerful, or counteracting the perceived marginalization of the main Muslim population of Kenya, the coastal Waswahili (Otiso 113).

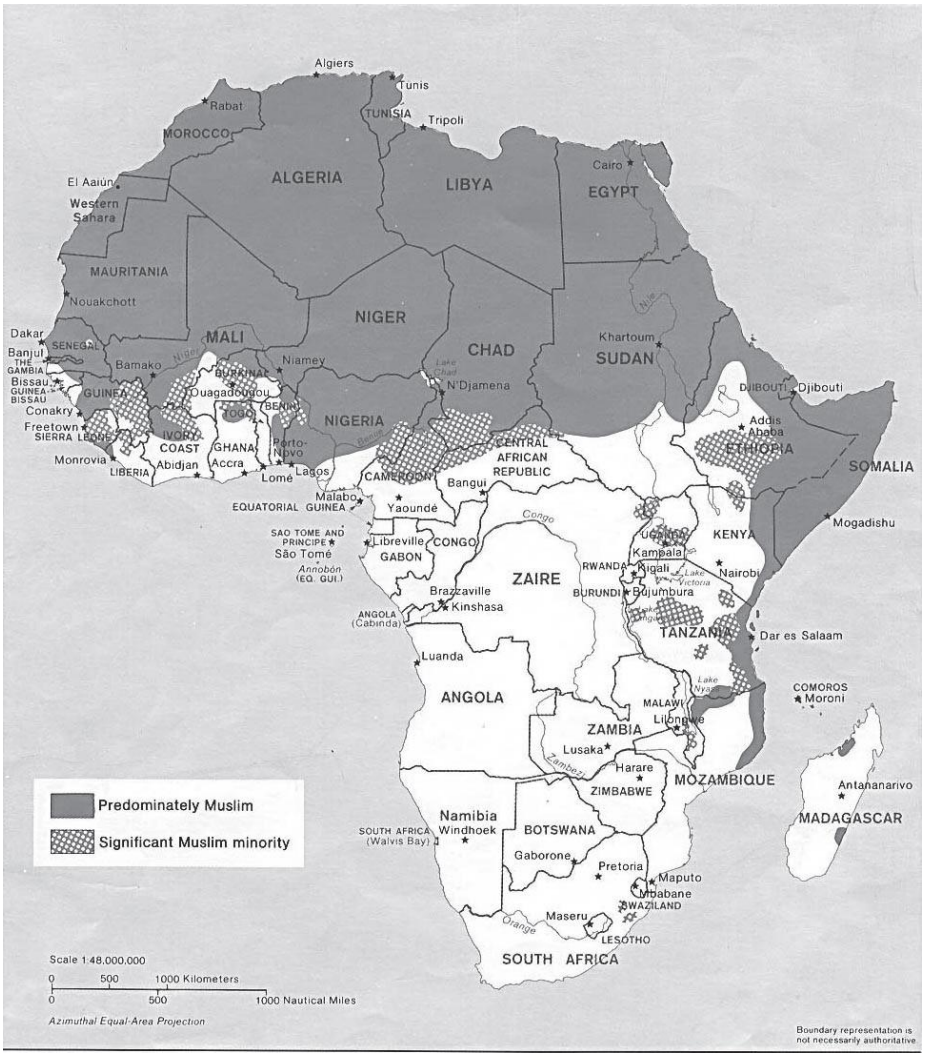

Figure 7: Map of Predominantly Muslim and Christian areas Across Africa.
Source: Dickson 2

The Kenyan people are quick to read (and sometimes read-into) international articles and news stories. This tendency is usually a helpful one, providing international outlooks on the world and global events as well as how Kenya fits in within the larger global debates. But sometimes this habit may backfire, such as when a global power and influential trade partner such as the United Kingdom publishes an article which seems to directly attack some of Kenya's population. A British article in the *Sunday Express* after September 11th which claimed that "Arabs were a bunch of suicide bombers, limb amputators and women oppressors" was widely viewed in Kenya as an example of Christian bigotry against Islam (Mwakimako 289). The article was not intended to reference or reflect Kenyan Muslims, yet it was seen as an attack on Islam, enraging Kenyan Muslims and encouraging the most confrontational of Kenyan Christians. This opened the door for small scale Christian-Muslim disagreements within Kenya to be perceived as part of a much larger world-wide competition for power and influence between the Western Christian powers and the Muslim Middle East (289).

This sort of globalization, where emotions, attitudes, and economies via tourism can be affected by journalists in other countries, has also been blamed for a growing sense of loss of Kenyan identity which may then lead to religious fundamentalism as a way of "returning to one's roots" and seeking to portray a "better," less complicated, time. (Magesa 194). In this way, international debates and conflicts can both increase interfaith tensions within Kenya and strengthen the more traditional (and less open-minded) aspects of both religions.

The Role of Kenya's Politicians and Media

Politics and media within Kenya are also greatly influential and affect the country's attitudes towards Christianity and Islam. So far, all three of Kenya's presidents since independence have been Christian. They have also all been "highlanders", people from certain tribes such as the Kikuyu which are associated with greater economic prosperity. People from the Swahili tribe, those who live along the coast who most likely to be Muslim, feel they have been marginalized by all government leadership since independence.

Initially there was a significant effort by the government of Kenya (and Tanzania as well) to sooth its Muslim citizen's fears of discrimination. The coastal region of Kenya was allowed to set up and adhere to a separate set of laws and they were allowed to settle certain disputes via traditional Islamic Khadis courts[9] (Mwakimako 300). The constitution of the country was strictly secular which greatly helped to promote peaceful relations between people of the two religions for most of Kenya's history (Otiso 120). At the same time, the political leadership has been Christian and presidents have not always proven to be above making divisive comments to bolster their own support. For example, President Moi is known to have spoken of Islam as the cause of slavery, a throwback to the days of the Christian missionaries who bought and freed slaves. Comments like this may be interpreted, by Christians and Muslims, as the general public policy attitude towards Muslims (Mwakimako 293).

[9] In the early twentieth century, when the Sultan was losing power over Zanzibar as well as coastal Kenya and Tanzania, an agreement was set between the Sultan and the government of Kenya. This agreement allowed for a certain degree of autonomy for Muslim citizens who were allowed to practice Sharia law. Separate, Khadis courts were maintained for certain Islamic functions. While these separate courts have been allowed since before Kenyan independence, they have become a highly controversial topic in recent debates over what will and will not be in the new Kenyan constitution.

As the new constitution has been in the process of being written, issues of religious freedom and specifically the rights of Muslims have come up again and again. Khadis courts have been a particularly controversial topic. Radio broadcasts have been used to condemn Khadis courts, linking them with the stoning of women and Islam taking over the country, despite the fact that neither of these attacks are accurate in the Kenya context (Mwakimako 305). The "Abuja Declaration" was made during a meeting in Nigeria in 1998 where a group of Muslim leaders stated their goal to make "Islam the Religion of Africa" (290). The Abuja Declaration was overly zealous wishful thinking on the part of certain Muslim fundamentalists, yet the story has been portrayed by radio stations as having been "a secret" and directly feeds into Christian fears of Muslims gaining too much power and turning the tables to marginalize Christians (290).

The media has, at times, been particularly one-sided when it comes to stories of religious conflicts and tensions. In 1999 there was an incident in South C area of Nairobi where traders were engaged in a disagreement with the local mosque committee over a particular plot of land. The traders (who were almost certainly Christian, though their faith was not mentioned in the newspaper articles) ended up burning down the mosque, much to the committee's dismay. Two days later, a nearby church, Our Lady of Mercy Church, was also burned down. Though these two stories were quite similar, and most likely related, they were portrayed quite differently in the media. In the case of the mosque burning, the disagreement was emphasized but the religious affiliation of the traders was never stated. In the case of the church burning, despite direct knowledge of the circumstances, the act was blatantly blamed on Muslims (298). This sort of

disparity in the media's treatment of two similar stories both demonstrates and aggravates Christian-Muslim tensions in Kenya.

It is not surprising that Muslim citizens of Kenya make claims of being discriminated against and harassed by the state (Magesa 171). The continued discrimination since independence, via Christian public schools and unequal hiring practices as well as employment opportunities, to name a few complaints, has played an important role in how political Islam has formed within the country (US political Islam). As part of a strategy seeking reconciliation between Christians and Muslims in Kenya, recent efforts to reduce the terrorism risk within the country have also focused on reassuring Kenya's Muslim population that such measures are not directed at them. The government has made efforts to include Muslim views in the new constitution in hopes of promoting peaceful interfaith relations (Otiso 127).

Peace-building efforts are crucial for Sustainable Peaceful Relations

Islam and Christianity have a long history of coexistence in Kenya, and compared to other parts of the world the two religions have lived together in relative peace for centuries (Rukyaa 191). At the same time, interfaith relations are dynamic and ever-changing and it should not be taken for granted that relations could not become worse (Mwakimako 287). Religiously funded NGOs and other forms of "aid evangelism" walk a thin line between genuine witness and religious imperialism (Grodz 212). The 1998 attacks on the US embassy served as a catalyst for deteriorating relations (Otiso 120). It is true that neither Christians nor Muslims in Kenya are often extremists, and radical groups within the country do not seem to be gaining any significant

amount of additional support, yet fears still exist and at times tensions do escalate to violence (Vittori, Bremer 24).

Because of the uncertainty of the future of Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya, it is important to look at possible solutions and sustainable ways of improving relations. Negative and competitive dialogue should be avoided in all levels of society. Within homes and schools, from politicians and the media, discriminatory attitudes contribute to tense or violent interactions between Christians and Muslims. Since schooling is such a fundamental part of life for most Kenyan children, a time when ideas are learned and reproduced, many have insisted that public schools must be made secular, not Christian (Rukyaa 200-202). There also needs to be an increase of dialogue and understanding from both sides. Islam needs to be understood in its Kenyan context, not simply lumped with Muslim extremism in East Africa and the Middle East (Dickson 10).

For sustainable peace both sides must make an effort to work together, because both have exhibited intolerance and ignorance in the past. Interfaith dialogue is an important stepping stone, but it must not be viewed as a process of negotiation. Dialogue is not about reaching a compromise or even simply emphasizing the similarities between two groups. For interfaith dialogue to be most effective, it must reject stereotypes and seek a strengthening of one's faith for individuals from both sides (Grodz 208). As understanding is increased, there is hope that interfaith friendships will also become more common and that positive associations with persons from a different religion will allow for true attachment and peaceful coexistence (Magesa 166) (Reisacher 158).

Chapter 4: Case Study

Case Study: Coastal Interfaith Coalition of Clerics

The data and information used in the case study was collected during the fall of 2011 in Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya. In Mombasa, research was carried out during an internship with Coastal Interfaith Coalition of Clerics (CICC), an interfaith peace-building organization that works in the coastal region of Kenya. Information was collected by immersion in the culture, walking the streets and riding the public transportation of both Nairobi and Mombasa, and also through interviews with CICC staff.

Kenya is a very unique place with regards to Christian-Muslim relations. The interfaith politics of Kenya which have so-far been discussed are only one side of the interfaith debate in the country. People's private lives are often much less religiously contentious then their politics, a fact which is hard to fully comprehend without actually living, for a time, in Kenya. One could describe the interfaith climate by saying "Christians and Muslims in Kenya both look down on adherents to the other faith, spouting stereotypes and prejudiced comments on a regular basis" while another could claim "Muslims and Christians in Kenya get along surprisingly well. They often work together, eat together, laugh together, and interact in ways that would suggest they are hardly aware that the other is from a different faith background" and both would be fully correct. The key to this paradox is the way in which Kenyans approach their private (home) lives and their public lives separately.

In the public sphere such as on the streets, in the market, riding a matatu (local public transportation), or eating at a restaurant, Kenyans are almost always cordial and friendly to their fellow Kenyans regardless of religious affiliation. At any given time a matatu may be crammed with Muslim ladies laughing together while adjusting their head or face coverings, men in business suits wearing freshly ironed trousers and ties, a man wearing a traditional cap and robe, and perhaps even a scantily-clad American tourist. People crowd in and out, squished up against one another in the seats, forcing their way to the front when the matatu reaches their stop, without ever thinking twice about the wide variety of religion, ethnicity, and dress that are in that one vehicle. The same is true of essentially all daily interactions in public places.

This is not due to any lack of awareness of the diversity around them. Christians and Muslims are quite easily identified by their attire even if words or names are never exchanged. Islamic men often wear a kanzu[10] and a kofia[11] while Muslim women cover their hair, arms, legs, and occasionally faces, and are likely to wear a black bui-bui[12]. Christian men are much more likely to be wearing traditional western-style clothing such as a button down shirt and slacks while Christian women may be in pants or skirts, t-shirts or even tank tops, though it is still rare to see any pants or skirts shorter than the knee.

Names also reflect religion; Arabic names like "Medina," "Mariam," "Hassan," and "Ahmed" are common among Muslims and more western names such as "Frank," "Kate,"

[10] Long white robes popular on the coast of Kenya as well as Oman and other Muslim countries. A strong example of how coastal Kenyans have adopted certain cultural aspects from nearby Arab countries
[11] Ornately embroidered, flat-topped Islamic hat
[12] Black over-robe. In Kenya these are often decorated around the cuffs and hems with embroidery or rhinestones

"Martha," and "Livingstone" for Christians.[13] It is even traditional for Christians to receive a second, "Christian," name when they are baptized, so a child with a more traditional African name such as "Tumaini" (which means hope) may be renamed "Frank" upon baptism. It is interesting that so called "Christian names" are more directly linked with Western origins than any direct Biblical reference, perhaps a socially manifested example of how the West is usually perceived of as Christian. This means that anytime two people meet or are introduced, or when one person reads another's name (such as on a job application), they are often able to infer the other's faith without religion ever being discussed.

While public relations are almost always cordial in everyday situations, people often sound less tolerant in their own homes among family and friends (Anyenda). Kenyans tend to be separated along various lines, the most divisive of which is ethnicity or tribe. The effects of the 2007 election violence are still very much in people's minds, especially with the next elections coming up in 2012. These divisions and prejudices often play out at home while families watch the nightly news (as well as through the politicians themselves who often utilize divisions for their own election gains.) Comments about the tribes of politicians or other individuals on the news coupled with stereotypes of what that means about his/her decisions or actions are common. Kenyans also constantly crack jokes which often have tribal stereotypes woven through them.[14] Though these things are usually said in a lighthearted and innocent manner, they

[13] Names also reflect tribe, particularly last name. For example the Luo tribe is known to have last names beginning in the letter "O." Both Barack Obama and Raila Odinga (Presidential candidate for Kenya in 2007) hail from this tribe and have the distinctive "O" as the beginning of their last names.

[14] An example of this would be a chain text that was circulating shortly after the Kenayan invasion of Somalia and the surge of news about Al-Shabab, the Islamic extremist group that the Kenyan government was specifically targeting. The chain-text consisted of a list of pronunciations of Al-Shabab based on tribal accents/dialects. For the tribe whose language has no letter "b" in their language the pronunciation was "Al-

may reveal deeper prejudices and repressed anger. Sometimes these biases and jokes are based upon religion.

Tensions between Islam and Christianity may flare when personal issues and questions of faith arise. One example of this situation is interfaith marriage, another is conversion. Kenyans may, in theory, have no problem with either of these ideas. But if the person converting is a friend or family member, attitudes sometimes change. In at least some cases, a child who converts from Islam to Christianity is disowned by his/her parents. The Sharia death penalty for apostasy is not carried out in Kenya[15], but conversion still does not come without a price. In many cases interfaith marriage is not accepted either, and for a marriage ceremony to be performed one of the parties involved is often forced to first convert to the faith of their partner. Since conversion away from one's faith may lead to rejection or disownment by one's family, the stakes are quite high for interfaith couples.

Kenyans are fully aware of the tensions around them, and there are various grassroots efforts and organizations based on decreasing them. One such organization is Coastal Interfaith Coalition of Clerics (CICC). It was founded in 2001, immediately following the September 11th attacks on the United States. It is notable that this organization did not start as a result of Kenyan interfaith conflict, but rather as a preemptive measure by Kenyan individuals who saw the potential of terrorist attacks in the US to aggravate interfaith tensions within Kenya (Anyenda).

Shapop," for another it was "Al-Shababu" and for the wannabe gangster "Al-Shabizzle." The text was certainly humorous but also reflects how clearly Kenyan's often see themselves as divided along tribal lines.

[15] In many Islamic countries the penalty for apostasy, under sharia law, is death. Discussed earlier in this paper, page 16

According to Stephen Anyenda, CEO of CICC, the events of September 11th were immediately recognized, by himself and others in the interfaith peace-building field in Kenya, as an event that could increase religious tension within Kenya. Anyenda explaines:

> "[The] president [of the United States] said they would pursue the enemy wherever he is, and most indications were probably Iraq or that area, and most of those countries are Muslim, but they also have a relationship with the East coast [of Kenya], so suppose some of these people have relatives in East Africa, even in Kenya, what will happen?... Suppose one of those people visited Kenya, a family in Mombasa, he'll still be picked [up], and now he may be tried for terrorism, and the Muslim community will cry that "our own has been picked!" And people have the perception that the US is a Christian nation, so it will be obvious that the Christians are persecuting the Muslims… If you can't avenge the US who is a big brother you can attack the Christians here - so a possibility of religious conflict out of global crisis" (Anyenda).

The role international events play in the socio-political climate of Kenya creates a need for initiatives like those of CICC. Grassroots organizations begun by people like Anyenda have the potential to grasp the multifaceted nature of religious tension in a way that academics or NGOs from abroad are unable to.

Since its founding, the mission of CICC has remained simple: "To create a culture of peace, justice, healing and sustainable development through interfaith dialogue and cooperation in the coast province/region of Kenya." Officially registered in 2005, CICC has since expanded its reach to eleven objectives which complement their central purpose. These goals include:

- "Monitor religious, ethnic and political conflicts within the coastal region with the aim of passing information to our members and partners so as to intervene with the aim of bringing calm and peace on conflict issues at the coast."
- "Carry out civic education in the coast province on issues of peace, security, conflict, constitutional making process, local government and parliamentary representation elections, human rights etc."
- "Monitor terrorist/potential terrorist activities especially in the coast of Kenya with the aim of alerting the security agents of Government of Kenya and other stakeholders for action."

Religious peace-building is certainly the core aim of CICC, but the organization's mission does not stop there. The networks and cooperation gained through peace-building are later utilized for political representation with regards to water and land rights, peace-building between ethnic or tribal groups, and defense against terrorism (CICC website).

CICC primarily promotes peace through interfaith dialogue. One of the organization's first projects was to bring together clerics from the local religions (Christianity and Islam, accompanied by Hindu and assorted African indigenous religions) to begin a dialogue. Some of the religious leaders who were invited refused to attend the first meeting, but over the years more and more have begun attending as it has become clear that working together generates benefits for everyone (Zowe). As one member of CICC, Pastor David Zowe said:

> "God expects us to live together, even while some may be worshipping trees. When there is a fire we are all affected, when it rains we are all affected, when prices go up we are all affected, when Kenya fights Somalia we are all affected."

Kenyan faith leaders and their followers often face many of the same problems, from drought and water shortages, to ethnic violence and threats of terrorism. By facilitating communication and interfaith friendships, CICC seeks to both decrease harmful religious stereotypes and to emphasize common goals.

Religious leaders were the first targets of CICC in part because of the respect they have in their respective communities. According to Anyenda, clerics are important to interfaith peace-building because:

> "…they are role models. They must draw on what their books say about peace. They must be informed themselves. The Bible says blessed are the peacemakers, Jesus even says love your enemies and pray for them. Your values must gravitate towards peace. That way you can talk to your people, even when they are under provocation, that violence is not good, they are peacemakers."

When a pastor or sheik[16] expresses approval or disapproval in the community, people in Kenya tend to listen. And if the cleric happens to be the pastor of the church they attend, or the sheik associated with their mosque, there is likely to be significant peer pressure to follow the cleric's instructions as well. In this way, religious leaders are the ideal target for conflict resolution since

[16] An Islamic scholar and religious leader.

their knowledge, skills, and opinions are likely to affect the attitudes and actions of others (Anyenda).

Clerics are also a logical focus of interfaith conflict resolution strategies because they are often the ones causing problems in the first place. Whereas most Kenyans grow up going to school with people of various faiths, having childhood friends and neighbors, and maybe even family members who follow different religions. pastors and sheiks each attend higher education facilities which are attended exclusively by adherents to their own religion. It is during this time that many develop prejudices against the other faith and solidify their biases that their own religion is correct; the other is wrong, or even bad (Ndune). Recently, CICC's efforts have made an impact. "Today Christian leaders and Muslim leaders can sit together, talk, have tea. That never used to happen. Christians and Muslims could, but not the leaders" (Zowe). This sort of change in attitudes can cause all sorts of positive ripple effects for interfaith relations.

Understanding between the different groups is a core goal of CICC, and organizations focused on conflict resolution. Echoing the words of the United Religions Initiative, Anyenda explains that mutual understanding is the key to overcoming stereotypes and avoiding confrontational misunderstandings. Words like "Crusade" and "Fatwa" should be understood by both religions to avoid miscommunication, and adherents to each faith should have some understanding of the values and desires of followers of the other. "If I know [someone] is passionate about the environment and she sees a tree cut down and she is making noise about the tree I understand why, it is what I expect of her" (Anyenda). This sort of analogy shows how understanding can lead to respect and cooperation, even if values and goals are not always shared.

Street preaching demonstrates some of the dangers that come with a lack of mutual understanding. Cited by CICC members of both faiths as one of the primary stumbling blocks for peaceful interfaith relations, these "open air" sermons are conducted by both Christians and Muslims. Called a "Crusade" by Christians[17] or "Muhather" by Muslims, the preaching may revolve around any number of topics and is not necessarily a problem for interfaith or social interactions. The concern arises when preachers deliberately abuse individuals from the other religion, verbally degrading Mohammad or crying that Christians are pagans and polytheists for worshipping the trinity. Some may intentionally conduct their sermon in an area where the majority of the population adheres to the faith they are attacking. This sort of verbal/spiritual assault may increase interfaith tensions and may even incite violence. More than one such preacher has been beaten in the past decade (Zowe).

Decreasing the confrontational tone of street preaching has been a serious focus of CICC. By conversing with the religious leaders in the area, CICC has been able to reach an agreement between the pastors and sheiks that open air sermons are allowed, but that using them to directly criticize and attack any other religion is not (Zowe). Today, if a man begins preaching an inflammatory message on the street, the local religious leader he is affiliated with will be alerted and will contact him, informing the preacher that he must cease his confrontational methods. CICC has thus succeeded in promoting more peaceful relations and also in distributing the responsibility to local leaders, who are likely to command more authority over the preacher and to be more conveniently located to intervene.

[17] A "Crusade," in the modern Kenyan context, refers to an outdoor or "open air" sermon which is at least loosely aimed at gaining converts. While the rhetoric may be provocative, they are just words and no actual fighting or physical attacks are involved

The religious climate in coastal Kenya has certainly improved in the past decade. Christian and Muslim clerics are more likely to have friends from the other faith and to speak of each other less harshly than before, which has helped to increase mutual understanding between common citizens of both religions. Street preaching has been discouraged by CICC and also by its many clerical members who often help enforce the ban on confrontational rhetoric during open air sermons. Another success has been that the spread of information and understanding throughout communities has spread to the media, so that people in the press are now more tolerant, "they know they are part and parcel of a bigger forum" (Anyenda). These factors demonstrate real changes that have taken place in coastal Kenya thanks to grassroots peace-building methods.

Yet the work remains unfinished. Some fear that while the media is becoming more tolerant, social and international pressures may be pushing individuals to become more radical or conservative within their homes. Territorialism seems to increasing, meaning that ethnic or political tensions could more easily flare. Due to economic decline and the failure of many coastal-region schools, there is an "increase in religious leaders with minimal religious education." This makes interfaith understanding much more difficult because "if they don't even understand their own books, then their views are already skewed" (Anyenda). And finally, organizations like CICC are chronically underfunded, with little help from their own government and only a few international donors. With greater funding CICC would be able to reach more clerics in more rural areas, spreading their influence and conflict resolution skill sets.

Conclusion

Intrastate conflict has the potential to significantly decrease development progress and to devastate local economies. Since the Rwandan genocide, the international community has become aware of this correlation and there has been a significant increase of research on the topic. The relationship between violence and economic growth is a two-way street, where higher instances of violence results in lower rates of growth, and where a lagging economy can likewise contribute to the likelihood of local conflict. Without addressing both low economic growth and intrastate conflict simultaneously, any efforts to improve either factor are unlikely to succeed.

Interfaith relations are just as important as relations between people of different tribes, ethnicities, or who speak different languages. Religious identities are arguably even the most divisive and thus warrant specialized peace-building efforts. Christianity and Islam are both mission-oriented religions which creates a competitive tension between the two. Missionary activities within developing countries need to be pursued with sensitivity to the existing local ethnic and religious tensions to safely avoid aggravating or creating new divisions. It would also be best for missionary work to avoid being linked with aid work, as the Chambesy Declaration suggests.

Development organizations and initiatives must consider peace-building strategies to mend societal wounds and enable economic growth. In order to have the greatest impact, development workers need to focus on collaborative efforts with local community members, and cooperation between different ethnic, social, or religious groups within the community. Also,

development strategies need to remain religiously neutral in order to equitably benefit all of the local population and not create new divisions within society.

Kenya's interfaith relations are a product of the country's history, geography, ethnic and religious makeup. They are also greatly affected by its role within the greater international context with regard to political power, economic strength, and international events. This case study on Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya demonstrates the importance of peace-building initiatives. Within Kenya there are many grassroots organizations working on Interfaith peace-building and using that framework to also work towards development. CICC provides a model of how to use local knowledge to combat Christian-Muslim tensions by reducing inflammatory rhetoric, public criticisms of other faiths, and by using interfaith peace-building to strengthen local communities and work towards other goals that benefit everyone within the community. In this way, CICC demonstrates how interfaith peace-building is both essential to development, and can be an integral part of any development focused initiatives.

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