**Ideological Rivalry: PROCMURA and Ideological Challenges in the Quest for Interreligious Conflict Resolution in Africa**

*Obwonyo James B.*

*University of KwaZulu-Natal*

**Abstract**

*Although African Christians and Muslims have been living side by side over the centuries, some are still either ignorant of each other, consumed by aggressive attacks on religions, or reluctant to engage in contentious ideological issues. Thus ideological rivalry between sacred and secular institutions becomes an inevitable challenge in Christian-Muslim relations. In most cases, religious interference with politics or vice-versa does not work well especially when religious leaders are politically intoxicated and divided. PROCMURA has to identify and conceptualize the type of unity needed among and between the two faiths to ensure peaceful resolution to inter-religious conflict (IRC). Inter-religious unity is the most challenging task PROCMURA has to undertake, and this may not be achieved without a common ideological approach to IRCR which is based on religious values and norms. A common conceptual approach could be accelerated among inter-faith communities through active participation of influential PROCMURA's inter-religious peace practitioners in the process of constitutional and educational curricula at both national and regional levels. Any aggressive, ambiguous, theocratic and secular systems might jeopardize peaceful co-existence and aggravate conflicts between communities. PROCMURA should advocate for direct involvement of inter-religious peace-actors in peace processes and policy-making to enhance understanding of IRCR in Africa.*

***Key words: PROCMURA, Inter-religious, ideology, Sacralisation, Politicization, Secular, Commensuration, Values, Norms***

**Introduction**

The phrase 'inter-religious conflict' here is all about Christian and Muslim efforts to mitigate contentions conceptual and ideological issues that divide them in the process of conflict resolution and peace-building.

This article examines whether the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa's (PROCMURA's) approach to Interreligious conflict resolution (IRCR) enhances understanding or aggravates conflict between Christian and Muslim communities in Africa. The organization's approach has been reviewed through three ideological components namely: sacral, political, and secular ideologies to advance the case of the author. Several ideologies have been widely studied by many scholars, but their discourses are not all covered here.

Methodologically, this article is a qualitative work designed in comparative manner to examine PROCMURA's approach to IRCR in the light of the three ideologies stated above. I have limited the findings of this piece of work on specific relevant resources available on PROCMURA. I made use of the organization's basic documents: books, journals, conference minutes, reports, strategic plan, communiqués, and its website. Some relevant external resources were also examined to consider other opinions.

I have briefly examined PROCMURA's origin, core values and its approach to IRCR. The three ideological issues were also examined to understand the extent of their impact on the organization's approach to IRC in the continent.

## PROCMURA's Origin and Core Values

The Islam in Africa Project (IAP) was born out of three Christian trends (Bijlefeld, 2009). The project was on whether to intensify missionary outreach in Islamic societies to convert Muslims or to abandon any attempt to convert Muslims to Christianity to maintain peaceful co-existence among the two religions.

> In the 1950s, the field of Christian reflections on the relationship with the world of Islam showed two significantly different trends. In some circles, the call was heard for renewed and intensified missionary outreach, while others pleaded for total abandonment of any attempt at conversion. Both views and the underlying sharply contrasting theological evaluations of Islam, played a role in the deliberations that led to the formation of our project, and some comments on both seem therefore in order. (Bijlefeld, 2009)

The third trend had preferred to avoid Muslim communities altogether because it was assumed that Muslims will never change.

> When I first became interested in working among Muslims, my own fellow missionaries in Nigeria and Ghana were not encouraging. They said. "Why do you want to waste time with them? They will never change." (Dretke, 2009)

Regardless of doubt and suspicion that surrounded the project, three contributors have shown their resilience to realize the project by laying down its basic ideas. First, Dr. Hendrik Kraemer (in Dretke, 2009) stated the fundamental position of the "church as witness-bearing" in the world. Second, J. Spencer Trimingham (in Dretke, 2009) has drawn Christian attention to focus on both "historical and social factors" between Christianity and Islam. Thirdly, Bishop Kenneth Gragg's (in Dretke, 2009) idea has taken shape in IAP as "a church-related organization that sought to extend a hand of peaceful friendship to Muslims across the continent". Based on Gragg's principle idea, the IAP was established by African Churches with the support of European and North America partners.

It was "intended for countries south of the Sahara" where the majority of Christian and Muslim communities are living together (Brown, 2009). The establishment process commenced at the meeting of International Missionary Council (IMC) in Accra, Ghana in 1957, followed by two conferences of All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in Ibadan, Nigeria and of Oegstgeest in the Netherlands in 1958 (Dretke, 2009). Eventually, the organization was inaugurated in Accra, Ghana in 1959 under the name "Islam in Africa Project (IAP)". The IAP was not meant to be a 'programme'. It was initially a European 'project' in Africa which later on has been taken over by African churches.

> One of the reasons our founding fathers settled upon the name "Project" was because they anticipated that in due course the churches of Africa would take over the work of IAP. It was not to be a "forever" Project (Dretke, 2009).

The project was championed by Pierre Benignus (b.1912-1963) of the Paris Missionary Society. The IMC purpose was to devolve African Christians' understanding of Islam and Muslims to prepare them for post-independence's political and inter-religious challenges (PROCMURA, 2014; Kerr, 2003). The IAP's second aim, besides Church responsibility to embrace Muslims with love of Christ, was to equip Christians on Islam through Christian schools and to ensure faithfuls witness to Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa.

> A second goal of the project […] was to implant good courses on Islam and faithful witness among Muslims in all the seminaries and Bible School Colleges in all of sub-Saharan Africa where there was any Muslim presence at all (Dretke, 2009).

The IMC expected African Christians in the decolonized Africa to witness their faith to their Muslim counterparts 'faithfully' and 'constructively' in dialogical approach in the process of political transition and nation building. The IAP as a 'project' never terminated as it was initially expected by the IMC. The more the project was operational, the more the founders' vision became predictable.

Impressively, in 1985 the noun 'programme' which sounds durable, was suggested by Babs Mala, a professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria to replace 'project' (Dretke, 2009). The deliberate call for radical change of the organization's name was probably due to some reasons: (a) to secure African ownership, ensure the sustainability of the organization, and (b) to pursue the unaccomplished Christian-Muslim relations' task in Africa by Africans (Dretke, 2009).

In 2003, the IAP became PROCMURA which is currently based in Nairobi, Kenya and still holding to the IAP "Mission Statement" as its core values (PROCMURA, 2014).

1. Faithful Christian witness to the Gospel in an interfaith environment of Christians and Muslims that respects the spirit of good neighborliness.
2. Christian constructive engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful coexistence.

Based on these two principles, PROCMURA remained operative over years through Area Committees or "constituencies"[1] in more than 30 sub-Saharan African countries.

We observed "that the best way to manage and supervise the Project would be for Area Advisers to work under the authority of Area Committees made up of representatives of the supporting Churches and Missions in that particular area" (Dretke, 2009).

The relationship between PROCMURA's central office to Area Advisers and Committees is "essentially of an advisory nature" (Haafkens, 2009). The organization's activities are mainly invested in theological training of Christian leaders in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations, conducting intra-Christians and inter-religious conferences on peace-building and conflict prevention, engaging Christian and Muslim youth on HIV/AIDS awareness,

---

[1] PROCMURA'S constituencies are regions that have established Christian area committees for Christian-Muslim relations in Africa. These constituencies include:Anglophone West Africa (Ghana, Gambia, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone); Francophone West Africa (Togo, Senegal, Cote D'ivoire, Benin, and Burkina Faso); Eastern and Southern Africa (Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda, Malawi, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Madagascar). See www.procmura-prica.org

providing political advocacy and religious diplomacy, including inter-religious workshops for women.

Although African Christians and Muslims are living side by side, most of them are still either ignorant of each other, consumed by aggressive preaching against religions, or reluctant to engage in contentious religious issues of common interest. Thus, PROCMURA wants to ensure generational appreciation of Christian and Muslim heritage which was and perhaps shall remain part of African social fabric without illusionary thought of elimination or disappearance of any of them from existence.

**PROCMURA's Conceptual Approach to IRCR**

Sacralisation or "religionization" (Mbillah, 2014) of politics as PROCMURA called it has more to do with non-interference of Christian and Muslim leaders, particularly the ordained and clerics in partisan politics. PROCMURA would want to see ordained or clerics far away from partisan politics. This position apparently addresses the question of who should and who should not participate in partisan politics. But what is the practicality of this approach to IRC? Obviously, the ordained or cleric are top spiritual leaders who, in some circumstances, serve and are respected as both religious and political fathers of a nation.  This understanding depends on political and religious context of every particular country. For example, Robert Aboagye-Mensah (Mbillah, 2013) has made it clear that most peaceful countries in the African continent today are the ones that listen to their religious leaders. Listening to religious leaders in this context has much to do with personalities and the level of their influence on the society. It is not just a matter of being a religious leader that makes difference the difference. Also, the context and approach employed by a religious leader in dealing with IRCR issues matters the most. Religious leaders could be partisan and yet playing less politics than those who are non-partisan.

The issue is how faithful and sincere a religious leader is in holding to his/her religious values and norms in or outside political arena. IRCR is a dynamic process and it needs faithfulness and sincerity to realize genuine and sustainable peace among Christian and Muslim communities in Africa.

Religious interference with politics does not work well sometimes. It can easily slide into a different dimension especially when religious leaders are not on the same political tract. We can find religious leaders in the same country failing to mitigate conflict simply because they were divided along political and religious affiliations (Lartey, 2013). Conflict of political interests is commonly observed among religious leaders in Africa. For example, in Northern Nigeria, Sudan, and other parts of Africa, though some religious leaders are not directly involved in political parties, yet they are accused or blamed of instigating inter-religious conflicts in Africa (Ashafa, 2008). Those accusations and blames could be valid simply because sacralization of politics is beyond isolation of the ordained or clerics from partisan politics. The issue has a lot to do with religion as unavoidable risk in its interference with politics. Therefore, the unity among religious leaders is another value which needs to be maintained in the process of IRCR, because religious tenets are crucial in defusing tensions and commensuration of ideological rivalry. Ultimately, PROCMURA has to identify and conceptualize the type of unity needed among religious leaders to invigorate its political advocacy and religious diplomacy in the process of interreligious conflict mitigation.

Conversely, PROCMURA is cautious and vigorously opposed to politicization of religion, especially when Christians and Muslims abuse religious podiums by propagating political agenda (Mbillah, 2012). The organization would want to see religious leaders executing their spiritual dispensation and to leave politics to politicians. This approach, however, is being complicated by the question of political legitimacy and the place where politics is allowed or prohibited.

To make our religious pulpits free of politics, we first of all need to answer several questions. We need to know our religious regulations, whether politics is legitimized or not?  Where and when should religious leaders play or avoid politics? Should religious institutions formulate guiding ethics which allow or prohibit politics at worship places or in religious occasions? Perhaps, these are difficult questions for PROCMURA to answer because of many realities.

Firstly, those top religious leaders are spiritual fathers who even grace both legitimate and illegitimate political leaders when they are sworn-in into presidential palaces. Secondly, politicians are active members of churches or mosques who fully enjoy membership privileges in their respective religious institutions and at social conventions or occasions. In such circumstances politicization of religion is inevitable. Thirdly, religious leaders have political role on political matters as citizens of their respective nations. We have seen their political roles in decision making during elections, constitutional reforms, or in a referendum as in the case of South Sudan's separation from the Sudan. All those rhetorical questions are neither meant to doubt, refute or undermine PROCMURA's principle stance in politicization of religion. What I need to communicate here is that this approach could produce either positive or negative results. It depends on the conflict's context and its nature. Additionally, political inclusivity and balancing should be preserved to avoid what Fred Nyabera (2008) called "exclusive identity politics". Ironically, exclusive politics is one of the reasons which according to PROCMURA have caused disunity within religious and political circle as well as between religious and political elites who always polarized African communities along ethnic and religious setups in order to control and achieve their personal gains.

The organization has described this phenomenon as "religious tribalism" (Mbillah, 2008). Religious and political leaders are often caught-up along ethnic affiliations, especially during elections. Obviously, the African social fabric is tribal and religious as well.

Therefore, African political and religious sons and daughters could easily find themselves entangled in tribal and denominational politics. But, the reality remains the same that religious interference with politics is inevitable. Nothing wrong with that if religious leaders would be able to maintain their religious values and succeed to stand firm without switching their allegiances to particular political trend for security or material reasons.

Secularism or secularization trend as the third ideological challenge to PROCMURA's approach to IRCR is probably a real threat to religious survival not only in the public sphere but in private as well. The organization believes that this political system cannot be challenged by any religious institution unless both Christian and Muslim communities are together, committed, and effectively involved in peace and social development process in society (Strategic Plan, 2014). PROCMURA believes that the challenges that face the two religions in Africa lie in the failure of Christians and Muslims in living-up to their religious beliefs, disengagement on peace issues, and negative exploitation of religious and cultural differences which they should have taken as an opportunity for engagement on how they could develop their communities collectively (Mbillah, 2013).

Likewise, many Africans believe that Christianity in particular has continued to be one of the factors which contributed to social fragmentation, while it should be a factor of social cohesion and part of political solution (Mugambi, 1999). For example, during Rwanda's genocide, church leaders were undeniably part of political and ethnic cleansing instead of being conflict solvers (Rutikanga, 2003).

The church should lead the struggle against political injustice and suffocation of civil societies and individuals in Africa, even though it has its own short comings when it is trapped in ethnic and partisan politics (Kamaara, 2004).

The role of religious institutions in mitigating conflicts should supersede other interventions which are sometimes driven by political interests rather than aspects of humanity.

**Ideological Discourses**

Purposely, sacralisation of politics is meant to shape people's attitudes, building civic capacities, and to pursue their public objectives through political organizations and mobilization in the context of democracy. For example, in the Sudanese case, religious leaders view the necessity of religious imposition on non-religious practices (Wako, 1994). Those leaders do believe that secular ideologies could be more useful if religious values and norms are adopted in their practices. When religious leaders talk politics they do so within the context of moral questions (McGraw, 2010), such as in the case of abortion, same-sex marriage, justice, etc. It is perceived that moral questions have less to do with science or secular sort of evidence. Only religion is capable to answer what science or politics fail to address. It might be true that a nation state by itself is God's institution of humanity, created in His image to fulfil His purpose in the creation (de Villiers, 2010). This theological conviction indicates the possibility of religious supervision over nation state in a sense that religion is an integral part of human life and all human beings by nature are religious. However, the separatists who see the world through biblical concept of two kingdoms (Jn. 17:14; 18:36) are not of that opinion.

That biblical fact is claimed by many Christians as an indication of total separation between the church and state (Clark, 1991). Ironically, religion and politics are inter-related because of common systems of values and beliefs.

Based on this perception, we find that many religious leaders are involved in social networks in society which allow them to play both religious and political roles spontaneously.

Unfortunately, religious leaders could fall into political conflicts due to social contacts they have within their governments (Eades, 1991). Their involvement in political actions and motives are mostly driven by political justifications which make them active in socio-political approaches with an idea of mitigating church-state ideological conflicts. The extent and levels of religious involvement in politics have been identified by Kalu (2006) in five governance categories of religion and state relations ideology:

(a) A Muslim State, which is governed through Islamic Laws.

(b) Mixed State, where religion is used to instigate political conflict.

(c) Socio-Secular State that alienates religion from public spheres.

(d) Secular-Christian State, which indirectly preserves Christian values.

(e) National Neutral State, which governs through liberal democracy.

The existentiality of these multiple governance systems in Africa is a real challenge to religious institutions including PROCMURA in terms of ideological complexity.

Some religious leaders have refused an "absolute or rigid separation" of religion and politics (Villa-Vicenco, 1992). This position lies in the question of religious neutrality which is facing both religious and secular ideologists today. Religious neutrality or "a neutral attitude, including that towards politics, is impossible" (Banawiratma, 2002). By Contrast, Christians claim for religionization of politics is identical with *sharī'ah* implementation even though Christians have no legal justification for Christianization ideology, apart from their common belief in God's Kingdom or God's reign and His involvement in every particular aspect of human live. Unlike Christian concept of religious supervision over state, traditionally, the *sharī'ah* does not express the will of a state, but of God (Peters, 2003) through rulers.

That is why the ideology of God's rule over nations is literally interpreted by religious violent extremist groups such as El Shabab, Boko Haram, and Islamic State in Syria known as ISIS, and many others to reinstitute Caliphate's (Herbert, 2003) theocratic governance in Africa. These religious and political motives have polarized religious communities in Africa and aggravated IRC because religion has been politicized.

The politicization of religion in Africa is mostly influenced by western socio-political ideologies and black theology of liberation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The black theology of liberation is basically identical with Muslim concept of *tawhīd* in term of religion and state unity. This amalgamation ideology on one hand is contrary to "dualist theology", an approach which views the church and state as separate entities. On the other hand, it has accepted the "holistic theology", a theo-anthropo-centric approach which holds that faith in God and quest for human justice are inseparable in all aspects of human life (Little, 2007). These theological diversities have their own complications on African state-governance identity which needed to be addressed to ensure peaceful co-existence among faith-based communities. It is worth mentioning that many inter-religious conflicts in Africa are generally aggravated by political motives rather than religious ones.

Finally, secularism as an institutional ideology which aims to isolate religion from all aspects of life or to eliminate it all together, is the most dangerous trend not only to PROCMURA but to humanity as well. Although secular political aspirants do not apparently advocate for secularism probably because of fear of religious resistance, their intentions do always emerge through the secularization process. Secularization as a political system of governance in Africa appeared to be challenging to both Christian and Muslim institutions. Some religious groups, especially among Muslim communities see it as of a Christian-making simply because of some good relations it has with Christianity (Hock, *Religious*, 2004).

As a result, the so-called political Islam emerged as a reaction to a secular system of governance in Africa. However, some Muslim majority countries such as Egypt, Senegal, and Sudan would want to commensurate secular with sacred ideologies in form of nationalism or secularism, capitalism, and socialism (Rippin, 2005). All ideological attempts to isolate or to eliminate religion from private and public life have failed to realize in Africa and in human history as well.

> Neither the ideologies of Socialism and Communism, nor those of Capitalism and Liberalism, have managed to eliminate institutionalized religion from the private and public domains anywhere in the world (Mugambi, 1999).

Secularization is an essence of quasi-religious ideology which is mostly favored by pluralistic nation-states as the best political system for an ideal democracy (Buijs, 2010). To most religious groups this pluralistic favouritism is not the good one to religious communities (Tillich, 1994). It minimizes the effectiveness and strength of religious values and norms in people's life.  Unless both Christians and Muslims are united, otherwise religious institutions shall remain prone to secular threat. The reason why these two communities ought to unite against secularism is well expressed by Wiggins (1996) when he described secularization as "radical *presenti*sm", a form of supreme human self-confidence in discovering or inventing things without reference, recognition, or believing in God's mysterious power which is at work in humanity. This human-centered ideology is an issue to both Christian and Muslim adherents who believe in God's sovereignty and His control over human systems. Allowing it to take root in African fraternity would generate more conflicts between Christian-Muslim institutions and quasi-religious systems.

Secular culture ideology was born out of a radical call for a nation-state (Loffler, 1973). In Africa, this call was mostly backed by nationalist political movements that aimed for the change of political systems.

Nationalists' aim was to secularize governance systems and to bring religious institutions under government control. The privatization of religion policy is contrary to religious beliefs which seek for the good of humanity in both private and public sphere. In most cases, we find that nation states are indirectly or directly advocating for isolation of religious practice from public affairs, subjecting the world to rational control through science and technology, and trying to elevate humans over God's power. This negative secular intention to remove religious values and norms from political system is not only opposed by Christian "radicals" if I may call them, but many Muslims have also expressed their discontent of such trend. It is a positive gesture to see Christian and Muslim communities having religious solidarity against any sort of political idolatry in Africa.

African secular ideology is often shaped by John Rawls' concept of "constitutional democracy" and justice as fairness (Rawls, 1992). On his concept of "justice as fairness", Rawls believes that this concept is the sole alternative to "utilitarianism", a moral theory which says "a person should do what creates the most happiness for all concerned, including himself" (Rawls, 1992). Rawls' political theory is perceived by many secularists as "the best moral theory" (Washburn, 2001) because it addresses people's ordinary feelings and judgment about right and wrong on the one hand, and its incorporation of other moral theories which are void of religious elements on the other. All citizens, according to Rawls, regardless of their religious backgrounds, have to abide by two principles of justice, namely; "liberty and equality". This would mean that all religions are unfair and unjust in addressing human liberty and equality which could only be granted by secular institutions.

Rawls' ideology undermines scriptural teachings about these two values. Christianity and Islam do teach about human equality (Dt. 10:17; Mk. 12:31; Eph. 2:14; Heb. 13:16 and *Sura* 49:13) and justice (Isa. 30:18-19; Hos. 12:6; Pr. 21:15; Mt. 5:38-39 and *Sura* 4: 134; 5:8) based on their concept of human beings created in God's image (Ge. 1:26-27 and *Sura* 59:24; 82:7-8; 17:7). The two faiths also teach about human liberty, although they prohibit any type of liberty that goes beyond religious values and norms (Gal. 5:13; Jas. 1:14-15; 2Ti. 2:22; *Sura* 6:104; 17:33; 41:46; 4:111).

However, to Rawls, justice as fairness is not just a theory for epistemological consumption, but it aims at political practicality. It is a common ground through which citizens view themselves as free and equal persons. And to maintain this ground within secular democratic systems, citizens ought to avoid by all means all kinds of contentious philosophical, moral, and religious questions because they do not have political solutions to problems. Rawls is convinced that philosophical ideas, moral order, or religious values cannot provide a workable and shared political concept of justice in a democratic society. It is justice as fairness only which can do that because it begins from an idea of "societal cooperation" between free and equal persons. A "person" is defined by Rawls as "a full cooperating member of society over complete life".

Therefore, persons as citizens according to his argument do not join society voluntarily, but they are born into it to lead their lives as free and equal persons. The duty of these citizens in the state is to fulfil two important moral powers over social cooperation; capacity for a sense of justice (to understand, to apply, and to act out of public concept of justice) and capacity for a conception of the good (to form, to revise, and to pursue one's rational advantage or good). But how could persons as citizens realize or on which basis  would citizens practice liberty and equality in society?

On "original position", Rawls describes it to be an abstract idea which is never affected by contingencies of social world as a result of social, historical, and natural tendencies of the past. The original-position is "a device of representation" or job description for individual responsibilities which ensure people's essential interest on things that are accounted for as good reasons. Rawls has considered it also as means of public reflection and self-clarification for achieving greater mutual agreement and self-understanding of free and equal persons in society.

What the secularists always expect from religious people is to renounce their religious beliefs at political platforms and employ scientific knowledge, neutral discourses, and common language. To commensurate religious elements with political matters according to secular ideology, religious people may not necessarily use their religious worldview in secular state or to question other citizens' beliefs to caution their contribution to public discussions in religious language. Secular reasons ought to supersede religious beliefs, and all religious expression in public discourses ought to be expressed on condition that they recognize the institutional translation provisions (Habermas, 2008). This ideological sovereignty over religious beliefs is viewed by religious followers to be unreliable, especially in dealing with moral questions as opposed to scientific or empirical ones (McGraw, 2010).

That is why some radical Muslim ideologists have levelled all kinds of secular democracies to be a deliberate violation of *sharī'ah* and retrieval of *Jāhiliya* (ignorance era) which lacks moral sanction (Choueiri, 1990). In other words, any secular political system that tries to isolate or discourage religion praxis has become an atheist government, and religious people must fight against those systems to ensure the integration of religious moral values in society. The sense of discontent with secular systems is one of many reasons that led to the rise of violent radical groups in Africa. Worse still, secular ideology *per see* is ambiguous.

It neither wants to put religion in politics, nor advocates for its total separation from state (Hicks (2003).  Not only that, but religious leaders do also fall into secular ambiguity.

Ambiguous secularization systems may not ensure the success and political freedom in secular states. Instead, it will create more hatred and destabilization between government and religious institutions because any attempt to isolate religion from the public sphere may intensify ideological rivalry over public dominion. It is profoundly wise to recognize and integrate Christian-Muslim common values and norms into a secular system. The role of religious leaders in IRCR would only be recognized by citizens when they speak against injustice in state, advocate for rights of victims and the weak, and act as mediators in conflict mitigation (Bombande, 2009). This means, if religious leaders are silent or in solidarity with political elites in the process of national crisis, their religious role would be valueless and politically devastative. Religious values and norms are an integral part of humanity. They are not like our clothes that we takeoff and put-on every day when we are attending certain functions or going somewhere. Those values and norms also demonstrate God's image of love, peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation in us.

PROCMURA has to continue engaging Christian-Muslim experts on two contentious governance systems, namely; *sharī'ah* and secularization issues. As we observed above, African religious nature is of indiscriminative social and cultural setup. We could easily find Christian and Muslim brothers or sisters especially in most of sub-Saharan Africa normally living, sharing and planning together as one family. This kind of peaceful relations is a clear indication that religion is not an issue in people's lives. To maintain such novel virtue, PROCMURA, as it usually does, should continue frustrating all sorts of aggressive radicalization and violent extremism which aim to establish any type of ambiguous theocratic or secular system in the continent.

To win this fight, new common conceptual approaches to *sharī'ah* and secular challenges have to be collectively invented in contextual and inclusive manner by the two faiths to enhance understanding and peaceful resolution of IRC between the two communities. A common conceptual approach could be realized through active participation of influential PROCMURA's inter-religious practitioners in the process of constitutional and educational curricula making at both national and regional levels in the continent.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

PROCMURA's approach to IRCR versus three ideologies of sacralisation of politics, politicization of politics and negative secular trends against religious praxis are of important concern. Indoor conferences or workshops, advocacy, and religious diplomacy ideals that PROCMURA does employ in capacity-building of religious leaders on IRC prevention are indeed educative and helpful. The organization would be at its best if political approach to IRCR is seriously undertaken to address *sharī'ah* and secular challenges to Christian-Muslim relations instead of reservation or avoiding them all together. Countering sensitive and tough issues of common concern enhances good understanding and produces more fruits than avoiding them.

Religious unity among religious leaders which PROCMURA has frequently advocated is absolutely instrumental in realization of IRCR in Africa. However, the intended type of unity among or between inter-faith communities ought to be identified whether it is an institutional, contextual, conceptual, professional, proportional, or ideological unity. PROCMURA may need to develop common contextual and conceptual approaches to IRCR through direct and active participation of its influential inter-religious practitioners in the process of constitutional and educational curricula's making at both national and regional levels to commensurate sacred and secular ideological rivalries in Africa.

This approach would possibly strengthen and harmonize work relations between religious and secular institutions.  PROCMURA has resilience to enhance understating between the two communities to live in peace. Notwithstanding, the sacred and secular ideologies would persist aggravating IRC if overlooked.

**References**

Ali, A. 1983. *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*. Beltsville, MD: Amana
    Corp. Publishers.

An-Naʿim, A. 1987. "Christian-Muslim Relations in the Sudan: Peaceful  Coexistence    at
    Risk". In: K. Ellis, ed., .*The Vatican, Islam, and the Middle East.* New York :
    Syracuse University Press, p. 274.

Ashafa, A. 2008. "Religion, Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Across Muslim      -
    Christian Relations in East Africa: A Muslim Perspective". In: J.   Mbillah, ed.,   *A*
    *Journey of Peace, Report of Conference on Religion and Conflict Prevention,*
    *Peace  building and Reconciliation in Eastern Africa, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania,*
    *2008.* Nairobi : Procmura Publications, pp. 83-86.

Banawiratma, J. 2002. "Contextual Theology and the Dialogical Building Blocks  of
    Democracy". In: A. Race and I. Shafer, eds.,   *Religion in Dialogue: From*
    *theocracy to democracy.* Burlington: Ashgate Publication, p. 59.

Bijlefeld, W. (2009). The Project's Beginnings: A Few Recollections and Reflections     . In:
    D. Bone, J. Mbillah and S. Sicard, eds., *PROCMURA at 50 Anniversary  1959 –*
    *2009*. Nairobi: PROCMURA Publication , p. 26.

Bombande, E. 2009. "Conflict Trends and the Role of Religious Leaders in the    Prevention
    of Violent Conflicts in West Africa". In: J. Mbillah, ed., *Christians and Muslims*
    *Quest for Peace: Report on Proceedings of PROCMURA  Conference   on   Religion,*
    *Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in West Africa, M-Plaza  Hotel, Accra,*
    *Ghana, 20-24 July 2009*. Nairobi: PROCMURA Publications, pp. 48, 51.

Brown, S.  (2009). In Search of Qist. In: D. Bone, J. Mbillah and S. Sicard, eds.,
*PROCMURA  at 50 Anniversary 1959 – 2009.* Nairobi: PROCMURA
Publication, p. 92.

Buijs, G. 2010. "Populism: A Blessing in Disguise for Democracy"? In: H. Jansen, W.
Stoker and J. Gort, eds., *Crossroad Discourses between Christianity and  Culture.*
Amsterdam-New York : Rodopi Publishers, p. 155.

Choueiri, Y. 1990.  *Islamic Fundamentalism*. London: Printer Publishers.

Clarke, P. 1991. "Religion and Political Attitude since Independence". In: J. Olupona and
T. Falola, eds., *Religion and Society in Nigeria: Historical and Sociological
Perspectives.* Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, p. 218.

De Villiers, E. 2010. "The Public Role of Churches in Present Democratic South Africa". In:
H. Jansen, W. Stoker and J. Gort, eds., *Crossroad Discourses Between Christianity
and Culture*. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi Publishers, pp. 199-200.

Dretke, J. (1979). *A Christian Approach to Muslims: Reflections from West Africa*.
California: William Carey Library Publications.

Eades, J. 1991. "Religion, Politics, and Ideology". In: J. Olupona and T. Falola, eds.,
*Religion and Society in Nigeria: Historical and Sociological Perspectives*.
Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, pp. 245, 246, 258.

Haafkens, J. (2009). Some Personal Reminiscences or Years of PROCMURA in Retrospect.
In: D. Bone, J. Mbillah and S. Sicard, eds., *PROCMURA at 50 Anniversary 1959 –
2009*. Nairobi: PROCMURA Publication, pp. 59-60.

Habermas, J. 2008. *Between Naturalism and Religion Philosophical Essays*. Trans. by C.
Cronin. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Haq, M. "Man, Society and State in Islam". In: H. Said, ed., The Islamic Concept of
State. Karachi: Hamdard Foundation Press, 1983, p. 72.

Herbert, D. 2003. *Religion and Civil Society: Rethinking Public Religion in theContemporary
World*. England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Hicks, D. 2003. *Religion and the Workplace: Pluralism, Spirituality, Leadership*. New York:
Cambridge University Press.

Hock, K. 2004. "Religious Foundations for African States? Christian-Islamic Positions".In:  J.
Mugambi and F. Kuschner-Pelkmann, eds., *Church-State Relations: A Challenge
for African Christianity.* Nairobi: Action Publishers, pp. 178-180.

Kalu, O. 2006. *Power, Poverty, and Prayer: The Challenges of Poverty and Pluralism    in
African Christianity: 1960-1996*. Trenton: African World Press.

Kamaara, E. 2004. Religion and Socio-Political Change in Kenya: 1978-2003. In: J.
Mugambi and F. Kuschner-Pelkmann, eds. *Church-State Relations: A Challenge for
African Christianity.* Nairobi: Action Publishers, p. 128.

Kerr, D. (2003). *One Hundred Years of Christian-Muslim Relations: With Reference to  the
Challenge of Theological Education in Africa*. [Lecture] Geneva: WCC Publication.

Lartey, B. 2013. "Presentation on the State of Christian-Muslim Relations in Liberia
Challenges and Prospects for Collaboration for Peace and Development". In: J.
Mbillah, ed. *Addis Ababa Report: Africa Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders*

*Conference on Peace and Development, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 8th-13<sup>th</sup>  January*

*2012*.   Nairobi: PROCMURA Publications, p. 75.

Little,  D.  ed.  2007.  *Peacemakers  in  Action:  Profiles  of  Religion  in  Conflict  Resolution*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Loffler,  P.  1973.  "Religion,  Nation  and  the  Search  for  a  World  Community".  In:  S.

Samartha  and  J.  Taylor,  eds.  *Christianit-Muslim  Dialogue:  Papers  presented  at  the*

*Broumana Consultation, 12-18 July 1972*. Geneva: WCC, pp. 24-31.

Mbillah,  J.  2008.  *A  Journey  of  Peace,  Report  of  Conference  on  Religion  andConflict*

*Prevention,  Peace  building  and  Reconciliation  in  Eastern  Africa,  Dar-es-Salaam,*

*Tanzania, 2008*. Nairob: PROCMURA Publication.

Mbillah,  J.  2012.  "Keynote  Address  Outlining  the  Conference  Focus".  In:  *Capacity*

*Building  for  Christian  and  Muslim  Leaders  on  Conflict  Prevention  and  Peace*

*Building  for  Development  in  South  Sudan,  6-9  Sept  2012,  South  Sudan  Hotel*.

Malakal, p. 3ff.

Mbillah,  J.  2013.  "Addis  Ababa  Report".  In:  J.  Mbillah,  ed.,  *Addis  Ababa  Report:  Africa*

*Christian  and  Muslim  Religious  Leaders  Conference  on  Peace  and  Development,*

*Addis  Ababa,  Ethiopia  January  8th-13th  2012*. Nairobi: PROCMURA Publications.

Mbillah,  J.  2013.  "Concept  Paper  on  Conference  Focus  and  Rationale".  In:  J.  Mbillah,  ed.,

*Addis  Ababa  Report:  Africa  Christian  and  Muslim  Religious  Leaders  Conference*

*on  Peace  and  Development,  Addis  Ababa,  Ethiopia,  January  8th-  13th  2012*. Nairobi:

PROCMURA Publication, pp. 34-37.

Mbillah, J. 2014. "Introduction". In: L. Ezekiel, D. Madsen and  J. Mbillah, eds., *Dar Es*

*Salaam  Report:  Tanzania  Christian  And  Muslim  Religious  Leaders' Initiative  For*

*Peace And Peaceful Coexistence, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, 6-9 October  2014*.

   Nairobi: PROCMURA Publication, p. 3.

McGraw, Bryan T. 2010. *Faith in Politics: Religion and Liberal Democracy*. New York:

   Cambridge University Press.

Mugambi, J. 2004. Religion and Social Reconstruction in Post-Colonial Africa. In: J.

   Mugambi and F. Kuschner-Pelkmann, eds., *Church-State Relations: A Challenge*

   *for African Christianity.* Nairobi: Action Publishers, pp. 13-14 .

Nyabera, F. 2008. "Transforming Armed Conflicts in Eastern Africa: The Role of Faith

   Communities". In: Johnson Mbillah, ed.,  *A journey of Peace, Report of   Conference*

   *on Religion and Conflict Prevention, Peace building and  Reconciliation  in  Eastern*

   *Africa, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, 2008*. Nairobi: PROCMURA Publication, pp. 64,

   66, 72.

 Peters, R. 2003. "From Jurists' Law to Statute Law or What happens When Shari'a is

   Codified". In: B.  Roberson,  ed.,  *Shaping  the  Current  Islamic  Reformation*.

   London and New York: Routledge Publishers,  pp. 82, 84, 86, 92.

PROCMURA.PRICA.org, 2004 . [Online] Available at: <http://procmuraprica.org/en/?page_

   idو419 18>. [Accessed 18 August 2018].

Rawls, J. 1992. "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical". In: S. Avineri and A. De-

   shalit, ed., *Communitarianism and Individualism*. New  York: Oxford  University

   Press, p. 19ff.

Rippin, A. 2005. *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices,* 3rd ed. London and New

   York: Routledge Publications.

===============================================================================

Rutikanga, B. 2003. Rwanda: Struggle for Healing at the Grassroots. In: M. Cejka and   T.

Bamat, eds., *Artisans of Peace: Grassroots Peacemaking among    Christian*

*Communities*. New York: Orbis Books Publications, pp. 141-142.

Strategic Plan 2014-2018. 2014. Nairobi: PROCMURA Publication.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. 2011. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan

Publishers.

Tillich, P. 1994. *Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions*. K. Stendahl, fwd.

Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Villa-Vicencio, C. 1992. *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-building and Human*

*Rights*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wako, G.1994. Interreligious Dialogue in Sudan: Can We Sustain It? Paper presented at:

*Conference on Interreligious Dialogue, Khartoum, Sudan, October 8 to10,*

*1994.*

Washburn, P. 2001. *Philosophical Dilemmas: A Pro and Con Introduction to the Major*

*Questions*. 2nd ed. New York : Oxford University Press.

Wiggins, J. 1996. *In Praise of Religious Diversity*. New  York  and  London:  Routledge

Publishers,