

CHRISTIAN ENGAGEMENT WITH MUSLIMS IN GHANA: A STUDY OF THE
CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF GHANA AND GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS'
CONFERENCE

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Abstract: Islam and Christianity are both missionary religions, which often makes interaction between the two difficult. However, in Ghana, there has been constructive engagement between these two great religions, due to the exceptional religious tolerance in the country. This article shows how the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference have been involved in these inter-faith relations. Though they both have different purposes and approaches to Muslims, they both contributed constructively to inter-faith relations in Ghana, with the basic objective of the need for peaceful coexistence between adherents of the two faiths. The current global state of religious intolerance makes this objective more pertinent.

Introduction

The reality of sub-Saharan Africa as a good platform for the constructive engagement of Christians and Muslims – and Ghana is no exception – has long been recognised by scholars. Three factors may play an important role in this. Firstly, as Bediako has noted, because Christianity and Islam in Africa meet on a virtually equal footing for the first time as missionary religions, there is equal opportunity for constructive engagement.¹ Secondly, the pluralistic nature of African society makes it possible for both Christians and Muslims to exist together without major conflict. So, for instance, in Ghana it is not uncommon to find Muslims, Christians and adherents of Traditional Religion living together and sharing their dreams and aspirations.² This is so because of the great value Africans place on family. It is the family ties that bind people together.³ The third factor is the reality of religious pluralism.⁴ In Ghanaian society, it is also not uncommon to find people adhering to more than one religion at the same time. What these three factors indicate is that in Ghana the constructive engagement of Christians and Muslims is not only a possibility, but even reality.

In what follows I hope to analyse the documents of Ghanaian Protestants and Catholics to show how they are constructively engaged with Muslims and in so doing paint a fair picture of the current Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana. It is in no way a critique of their engagement, but simply a documentation. The focus is on two Christian institutions: the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG), a Protestant institution, and its engagement with Muslims through the Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC), which is engaged with Muslims through the work of the Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa—Inter-Religious

¹ Kwame Bediako, 'Christianity, Islam and the Kingdom of God – Rethinking their Relationship from an African Perspective', *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 7, (2004), p. 4.

² Cf. J. Osci-Bonsu's comments on this phenomenon, *Ecclesia in Ghana. On the Church in Ghana and its evangelising mission in the third millennium* (Instrumentum laboris, First National Catholic Pastoral Congress, 1997), p. 157, as quoted by Elom Dovlo, "The Engagement of Muslims and Christians in Post-Independent Ghana", *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 7, (2004) p. 48.

³ Cf. Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity* (Maryknoll: Orbis 1983), p. 221.

⁴ Cf. Elom Dovlo, 'The Engagement of Muslims and Christians in Post-Independent Ghana', p. 48. Dovlo has argued that the terms 'pluralism' and 'pluralistic' both apply to the Ghanaian religious scene. The term Religious pluralism amounts to holding more than one religious belief, while religious pluralistic society refers to the co-existence of more than one religion in a given society without necessarily generating consensus.

Dialogue Commission (AECAWA-IDRC). My choice of CCG and GCBC is based on the fact that these two institutions are not only a fair representation of Christians in Ghana, but have also claimed some successes in their engagement with Muslims. Since PROCMURA and AECAWA-IRDC are the agents of the two institutions' engagement with Muslims, I will be using PROCMURA to refer to CCG's engagement and AECAWA-IRDC refer to GCBC.

I. Inter-faith relations

The engagement of Christians with Muslims is a complex affair due to the exclusive tendencies of both religions. It is situated within the wider discussion of theology of religions and theology of dialogue. These two key concepts are useful tools to help one not only fully participate in the inter-faith relations discussion, but to fully engage with the religious other. Christian Council of Ghana and Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference engagement with Muslims will be discussed through the prism of inter-faith relations, thereby necessarily placing our discussion in the context of theology of religions and dialogue.

Theology of religions

In a multireligious context such as Ghana the theology of religions is a useful tool in trying to participate in the whole question of the existence of other religions and the way to interact with them. In a pluralistic society, three basic options⁵ have been proposed as a way to participate in the theological discussion about other religions: exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. Exclusivism denies the efficacy of salvation and truth in any religion other than one's own religious tradition. This is expressed in theses such as "*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*" for Catholics before Vatican II and "without Jesus Christ, there is no salvation" for Protestants and evangelicals.

Inclusivism, like exclusivism, believes some religious claims are true and others false. However, inclusivists believe that although salvation is found in one's own religion, adherents of other religions can also be saved through some knowledge of the divine within their own religious tradition. Within the Christian tradition this is expressed in concepts such as the *anonymous Christians* (Karl Rahner)⁶, *logos spermatikos* (Justin) and the *preparatio evangelii* and *demonstratio evangelii* (Eusebius).⁷ While some inclusivists are theocentric, who believe that God is present in other religious traditions, others are christocentric, who believe that even Christ is present in other religious traditions and that those religions focus on him without necessarily knowing it.

The third option, pluralism, claims that there is no claim to absolute truth in any one particular religion, but that salvation is possible in all religions and so it does not matter to which religion one belongs.⁸ The so-called Christian pluralist theology is a late modern phenomenon of the theocentric approach to theology.⁹ The whole focus of the pluralist theology is the reinterpretation of the uniqueness of Christianity or Christ in world religions. The uniqueness of Christ in regards to other traditions then means universality, not finality or absoluteness of Christian revelation.¹⁰

Pluralists attempting to cross the barrier of Christianity's claim to absoluteness, find themselves in a dilemma and create an ambivalent situation, which lacks compatibility with

⁵ Perry Schmidt-Leukel, *Theologie der Religionen. Problemen, Optionen, Argumente*, (Neuried 1997), as cited by Volker Küster, 'Who, With Whom, About What? Exploring the Landscape of Inter-Religious Dialogue', *Exchange*, 33 (2004), p. 75.

⁶ Paul J. Griffiths, *Problems of Religious Diversity* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. 160.

⁷ Cf. Küster, 'Who, With Whom, About What?', pp. 75-78.

⁸ Griffiths, p. 142.

⁹ Cf. Küster, 'Who, With Whom, About What?', p. 75.

¹⁰ Cf. Paul Knitter, 'Response II' in Leonard Swidler & John Cobb Jr (eds), *Death or Dialogue?* (London 1990), p. 127.

the claim to truth and the ultimate validity of the other religions.¹¹ Of course, the claim to absolute truth and superiority is a phenomenon occurring not only in Christianity, but also in Islam and other religions as well. As Küster has noted, a theology of religions, which is considered coherent within the religious system, will always encounter the 'exclusivism-inclusivism dilemma'.¹²

Theology of dialogue

There is a distinction between theology of religions and theology of dialogue. While theology of religions operates within the framework of a certain religion, theology of dialogue evolves out of a concrete encounter between adherents of two or more religious traditions. Accordingly, Küster takes the 'of' in 'theology of religions' as *genitivus objectivus*, not *genitivus subjectivus*, which means theology described from within or formulated by representatives of the religions themselves. In other words, while theology of religions is more an internal interaction, that is, it argues coherently within its own system, theology of dialogue is more an external interaction, for it integrates the positions of those engaged in its argumentation.¹³ This means that theology of dialogue presupposes theology of religions, hence one's theology of religions determines one's theology of dialogue.

Theology of dialogue is concerned with how adherents of various religious traditions interact. Some prefer the term inter-faith relations rather than inter-religious dialogue, because inter-faith relations presuppose an interaction between people, not between religions. Throughout the discussion I will opt for the term inter-faith relations rather than inter-religious dialogue as this shows the focus of the two institutions. The question which inter-faith relations raises is: "How can Christians reflect on their faith in ways that will be understandable for others, that will make room for them as they understand themselves, and still keep faith with Christianity?"¹⁴

Inter-faith relations occur in different contexts. In an intellectual context, it is a conceptual matter and understood as a conversation between two equal partners of different religions or ideologies.¹⁵ In a pluralistic context it is pre-conceptual. It is where people from different religions share their lives together, such as in family relations, workplaces and markets.¹⁶ In a context of collaboration, it is more of collaborating for social action. And finally, in a context of sharing religious experiences, which is post-conceptual,¹⁷ it is understood as experiencing other people's religious traditions.¹⁸

Inter-faith relations and Mission

One's theological presupposition of other religions affects how one relates inter-faith relations or dialogue and mission. Dialogue theologians have distinguished four possible relations between inter-faith relations and mission.¹⁹ The four options – 'inter-faith relations is

¹¹ In his inaugural lecture at Kampen University Küster proposed that in order to overcome this dilemma a 'a third space' needs to be created. This third space in-between religions is a "borderland between the different faiths systems, to which each will bring the best of his or her religion has to offer, without sacrificing the sanctuary." Cf. "Who, With Whom, About What?", p. 76.

¹² Cf. *ibid.*, p. 76.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁴ Leonard Swidler (ed), *Toward a Universal Theology of Religions*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988), p. 1.

¹⁵ Cf. 'Consensus Statement' in Swidler & Cobb, *Death or Dialogue?*, p. 146.

¹⁶ Cf. Wesley Ariarajah, *Dialogue* (Singapore 1980), pp. 9-22.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Cf. 'Dialogue and Proclamation' in James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans (eds), *New Directions in Mission and Evangelisation 1. Basic Statements 1974 – 1991*, (Maryknoll: Orbis 1989), p. 187.

¹⁹ Cf. Küster, 'Who, With Whom, About What?', pp. 77-78.

mission', 'inter-faith relations instead of mission', 'inter-faith relations besides mission' and 'inter-faith relations and mission' – are held by exclusivists, inclusivists and pluralists alike.

It is questionable whether pluralists would include mission or witness at all as part of their agenda for inter-faith relations. Pluralists would replace mission with inter-faith relations, since in mission the assumption is that the person from the other religious tradition needs something that his/her tradition cannot offer. Exclusivists and inclusivists, however, do leave room for mission in their dialogue theology. They differ in the degree and purpose for which dialogue is carried out. While exclusivists are usually engaged in inter-faith relations with a pre-evangelistic motive, thereby making their position one of "dialogue is mission", inclusivist engagement in dialogue is not necessarily for mission purpose because in their theology of religions there is the possibility for salvation in other religions.

II. Christian engagement with Muslims in Ghana

A. Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) and PROCMURA

The Christian Council of Ghana as an ecumenical body was founded on 30th October, 1929 as a result of the union of five Churches, which later came to be known as the mainline churches.²⁰ Presently the membership consists of sixteen churches and two Christian organisations.²¹ The Council was formed to strengthen member churches in fellowship and service, to strengthen member churches for witness, to co-operate for the common interest of the churches and to promote certain fundamental human values such as peace, justice, unity and reconciliation.²² Membership is open to all autonomous Christian churches and ecumenical organisations operating within Ghana which confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour of the world according to the Scriptures.²³ However, Pentecostals and the 'Free Independent Churches' are not members of the Council mostly due to doctrinal disagreement on the issue of the working of the Holy Spirit.²⁴

As mentioned already, PROCMURA-Ghana is an organ within the CCG whose goal is to help the Church relate to Muslims. It is an African initiative founded in 1958 as the Islam in Africa Project (IAP) to help the Church in Africa understand its mission in the midst of Muslims. The name was changed in 1987 to PROCMURA (Project for Christ-Muslim Relations in Africa) to reflect its purpose of promoting inter-faith relations in Africa.

²⁰ Cf. Cephas Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2002), pp. 36-37. Omenyo refers to mainline churches as those that are older and generally larger churches instituted as a result of European missionary activities in Ghana in the 19th Century. It should be noted that the old Pentecostal churches such as the Assemblies of God and the Church of Pentecost are sometimes classified as mainline churches due to their relatedness to Western missionary's activity.

²¹ African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church, English Church Mission (Anglican), Ewe Presbyterian Church (now Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana and Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana), Presbyterian Church of Gold Coast (now Presbyterian Church of Ghana), and Wesleyan Methodist Church (now Methodist Church of Ghana), Salvation Army, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Ghana Baptist Convention, Greek Orthodox Church, Evangelical Church of Ghana, Christ Evangelical Mission, Ghana Mennonite Church, Religious Society of Friends, Evangelical Lutheran Church, F'Eden Mission Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. The two Christian organisations are: Young Women's Christian Association and Young Men's Christian Association. The current advertising brochure of CCG gives a summary of their history, mission, vision and activities.

²² Cf. the Preamble of *Christian Council of Ghana's Constitution*, July 2000.

²³ *Christian Council of Ghana Constitution*, July 2000, p. 4.

²⁴ Cf. the newspaper report by A Ghanaian Pastor, "Pentecostals Can't Join WCC Now" in *Christian Messenger*, Vol. 18: No. 4 (Accra 2005), p. 2. In this report (news paper of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana), it is said that one Dr. Hong, Pentecostal scholar claimed that the reason Pentecostal do not want to join the WCC and for that matter CCG is because of the hyper-institutionalism of the WCC, which limits the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Constitutionally, PROCMURA is federal in the way it is organised and so PROCMURA-Ghana is autonomous in its administration, though it is a member of PROCMURA-Africa.²⁵ Since its formation it has worked to educate the Church in Africa by informing it through authentic research into Islam. The aims and objectives of the constitution cover six areas of responsibilities: (i) to understand Islam and interpret the gospel in the midst of Muslims; (ii) to research and educate; (iii) to set up area committees to serve the Churches; (iv) to maintain links with area committees; (v) to set up and be responsible for the study centre for Islam and Christianity; and (vi) to cooperate with other organisations.²⁶ The first two objectives are of particular interest to our discussion since the perception and engagement of PROCMURA with Muslims is understood in light of these objectives.

PROCMURA and Muslims

PROCMURA engagement with Muslims is better understood through its activities, which are outlined in its constitution. Analysis of these activities as reflected in its reports and seminar materials has not only shown how PROCMURA is engaged with the Muslim *umma* in Ghana, but also the purposes for which it is engaged, its approach to Muslims, theology and how it conducts inter-faith relations and mission.

The activities of engagement vary per country, but in each case the purposes are the same. In the case of Ghana, PROCMURA is mainly engaged through research into Islam, organising and running seminars and workshops for Churches in the area of Islam and inter-faith relations, publication of newsletters and occasionally mediating for peace in conflict situations. The main goal of undertaking research is to understand Islam and Muslims. This includes giving its co-ordinators and facilitators the necessary educational qualification in Islamic studies²⁷ in order for them to be able to run the workshops and be equipped with better understanding to deal with cases of conflict between Christians and Muslims. It was directly involved in conflict-mediation in 1995 when there were clashes between Christians and Muslims at Sekondi, Kumasi and Tamale in which lives were lost. In one of PROCMURA's newsletters Samwini reported the clash was the result of a preacher, a convert from Islam, deriding the holy Qur'an in a crusade.²⁸ PROCMURA organised a meeting first of all to talk to churches after which another meeting was organised between Church leaders and Muslim leaders. At the end of this meeting an agreement was made and a communiqué jointly signed by both sides to advise their followers to stop the conflict. And indeed peace was restored.

Purposes of engagement

A careful analysis of the above activities through their documents seems to suggest three broad themes as the motivation for PROCMURA's engagement with Muslims. Firstly, there is an educational purpose; secondly, a missiological purpose; and thirdly, an existential purpose. I will elaborate on each of the purposes.

²⁵ For more on the history, background and constitution of PROCMURA see Abdul Rahman Yakubu, 'Christian-Muslim Relations in Ghana: A Reflection on the Documents of CCG and GCBC', M.Th. Thesis, (Kampen University, 2005), pp. 34-35.

²⁶ Cf. *PROCMURA Constitution* (amended in 1995), p. 1.

²⁷ In Ghana PROCMURA has been very successful in providing scholarships to its co-ordinators to study Islam from certificate up to doctoral level. Johnson Mbillah, John Azumah and Nathan Samwini have all benefited from such scholarships, having all three obtained their PhDs in Islamic or Islam-related studies at the Selly Oak Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (CSIC), University of Birmingham.

²⁸ *PROCMURA* 27 (1996), p. 11.

Educational purpose

Since its formation, PROCMURA has maintained its objective of undertaking research into Islam. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the research is to educate the Church to understand Islam and Muslims through seminars and workshops. This objective as stated in its constitution is "to keep before the churches of Africa... their responsibility for understanding Islam and the Muslims of their region..."²⁹ In other documents of PROCMURA, this is referred to as 'creating awareness of Islam among churches in Africa'.³⁰ The awareness creation is not only for the churches, but Ghana as a whole. For instance, they have sought ways to bring the program onto national TV.³¹ PROCMURA sees this to be of necessity because of the level of ignorance about Islam among Christians and the reality of potential for inter-religious conflicts.

As a matter of fact, the educational purpose has contributed positively to the current inter-faith relations in Ghana. For instance, in the PROCMURA archives there are reports of both change in attitude and perception about Islam and Muslims through their activities, as one official who participated in a seminar is reported to have said: "Actually the course has been very helpful to me. Prior to this program I had different view of Muslims, but now I have seen that they are not violent people."³² Similarly the reports of the facilitators also suggest an increase in awareness and desire to know and understand Islam. The Rev. Samwini report of the first quarter of 1998 reads: "The evaluation of the courses by the participants themselves reveal the churches' level of desire to know more about Islam, motives for the participants may vary but the important thing detected there was that Christians no longer see Islam as a nonentity but a force to reckon with."³³

Missiological purpose

PROCMURA's objective of educating the Church to understand Islam and Muslims is not just for attitudinal change alone. There is a direct relation between understanding Muslims and its mission obligation to Muslims. As its constitution shows, it has set itself the mandate "to keep before the Church of Africa ... their responsibility for understanding Islam and the Muslims of their regions in view of the *Church's task of interpreting faithfully in the Muslim world the Gospel of Jesus Christ*."³⁴ The relation between the educational and missiological is therefore the former serving the latter. Thus equipping the Church to witness among Muslims is realised through educating Muslims to understand Islam and Muslims. A very key resource used for this purpose is a pamphlet called '*Questions Muslims ask*'³⁵ and the seminars. However, the success of this is difficult to evaluate since no monitoring has been done to see how churches use the knowledge acquired from these seminars and pamphlets.³⁶

²⁹ *Constitution*, p.1.

³⁰ Cf. *AWAR Regional Recommendations to Executive Meeting for Consideration: Future for the Project*, (September 1998), p. 2.

³¹ In the minutes of the Committee meeting on 11 March 1996 at 10:00am and 3 April 1997 at 10:00pm, the suggestion to contact Rev. Dr. J.O.Y Mante, Lecturer, Trinity Theological Seminary, to investigate the possibility for PROCMURA to appear on his TV program 'In the Light' was noted. There is however no record on file to show that such program ever took place.

³² *Christian Council of Ghana Inter Faith/Inter-Church Program Report on Lay Facilitators School*, (Sunyani, 3-14 November 1996), p. 3.

³³ *Christian Council of Ghana/PROCMURA Inter Faith Program Report for First Quarter*, (January –March, 1998), p. 1.

³⁴ *PROCMURA Constitution*, p. 1. Italics mine.

³⁵ '*Questions Muslims ask*' is pamphlet that addresses key questions usually asked by Muslims regarding Christian beliefs and practices. The goal is to help Christians give answers to Muslims in the areas of Christian beliefs.

³⁶ When Rev. Dr. Nathan Samwini was asked whether there has been any success in the way Churches use this knowledge in their missionary task, he admitted that there has not been any monitoring so far therefore making it

Existential purpose

PROCMURA's constitution does not mention anything regarding the promoting of peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims. The reason for this is that at the time of writing up the constitution religious violence was not a reality. However, the changing political and religious situation in Africa coupled with the current state of religious intolerance necessitated the addition of the promotion of peaceful co-existence into its new brochure.³⁷ Just as the educational purpose serves the missiological, likewise the existential also serves the missiological, by helping to promote religious tolerance and safeguard against inter-religious conflicts thereby enabling the churches to do witness in a peaceful environment.

Although its constitution is silent on the existential purposes, other documents in its archives show the particular importance of the promotion of peace and peaceful coexistence as a part of its activities in Ghana. For instance, the job description of the co-ordinator of the inter-faith/inter-church programme of CCG, which PROCMURA falls under, reads: "He shall work towards *harmonizing peace, understanding and tolerance among people of different faiths – in Ghana, Muslims and African Traditional believers.*"³⁸ Similarly, in a 'Proposed Plan Ghana Area Committee' the national area committee of PROCMURA is expected "to assist local area committees to organise and run seminars on Islam as well as *foster understanding between Christians and Muslims....*"³⁹ Peace promotion has therefore not only become part of PROCMURA's core philosophy, but one of the activities through which its missiological objective is realised.

Approach to Muslims

CCG's approach to Muslims has been recognized as the *non-confrontational approach*.⁴⁰ However, the term 'non-confrontational' does not appear in PROCMURA's documents. The terms associated with it though are *authentic witness and non-polemic*. These terms convey the concept of *non-confrontation*, which seems to be consistent with its purposes of engagement that is educational, missiological and existential, none of which can be achieved in a confrontational manner. The main feature of this approach is the advocacy of the non-aggressive and non-polemic attitudes to Muslims. This is reflected in the work of early consultants to PROCMURA such as James Dretke, who published a book entitled *A Christian approach to Muslims: Reflections from West Africa* with the view to promoting the non-polemic approach.

Although there is no exhaustive explanation for this approach, two key ideas shed light on its approach. Firstly, the terms 'authentic' and 'non-polemic' as a Christian method of witness⁴¹ suggest an attitude of tolerance and respect towards the religious other, in this case Muslims. Secondly, understanding the religious other is paramount to its approach, as its constitution shows. This understanding goes beyond mere cognitive knowledge. It involves attitudinal and perceptual change. It means Muslims must be taken seriously. Evidence to this is the fact that there is some level of attitudinal expectation of the workers within the project, which shows the content of its approach. The workers should have "... love, respect

difficult to assess how they use this information. He did however say this was being worked on it. Personal interview by the author on 30 June 2005, Accra.

³⁷ Cf. Brochure, PROCMURA, Nairobi Kenya (No date) and <http://www.procmura.org/englishhome.html>, (7 September 2005, 10:36 am).

³⁸ Rev. Dr. Nathan Samwini, *Job description Programme Coordinator Inter-Church / Inter Faith*, no date. Italics mine.

³⁹ *Proposed Plan Ghana Area Committee*, p. 2, no date. Italics mine.

⁴⁰ Cf. Dovlo and Asante, 'Reinterpreting the Straight Path. Ghanaian Muslim Convert in Mission to Muslims' in *Exchange* 32 (2003), p. 219.

⁴¹ Cf. *Church Relations, Theology and Research Department.*, p. 3 and CCG/PROCMURA., p. 1.

and regard with honour the religion of Islam."⁴² In an introduction to his November 1996 facilitators' report, Samwini stressed the need for this attitudinal aspect of this approach. He wrote:

To have good news but not know how to deliver that good news could make it bad news. And for that matter Christians who have such good news, and who are commissioned to bear the message of reconciliation to all men on earth need to know how to present this news to all men *without offending anyone*.⁴³

In this non-polemic approach PROCMURA's goal is to educate Christians to constructively engage with Muslims, taking into account the need to peacefully co-exist with the religious other while at the same time engaging in Christian witness. Any other method that is not in conformity to this goes against its approach as in the case of Rockybell Adaturah whose aggressive and confrontational approach to Muslims eventually brought about his departure from the CCG.⁴⁴

In applying the *non-polemic* approach to Muslims, PROCMURA does not directly engage with Muslims, though in Africa as a whole, PROCMURA has been directly engaging with Muslims. However, in CCG it is indirectly engaged with Muslims through the Church. This application of the *non-polemic* approach to Muslims is an '*indirect engagement*'. Indirect, because PROCMURA is not in the frontline; rather the Church is the agent through which the goals are achieved, it only acts as a catalyst to this effect. Terms that show its catalyst role include 'to assist', 'to help', 'to sensitise', 'to encourage the Church', etc.⁴⁵

Inter-faith relations and mission

As noted earlier, one's theological view of the religious other affects one's relations to the other. The key term that defines their theology is the term 'understanding Muslims'. It is a recurring term in its documents that defines its goals and how to relate to Muslims. It conveys a positive attitude towards Islam and Muslims. However, although the goal of this *theology of understanding* is both for educational and existential purposes, the uniqueness of Christ is still central and this centrality shows how mission and inter-faith relations interface.

The question this raises is, how does CCG conduct mission and inter-faith relations? It is clear from its documents that PROCMURA has given priority to witnessing to Muslims while at the same time leaving room for religious tolerance and an attitude of respect towards Muslims. So, on the one hand, it is not far-fetched to say that witness has priority in PROCMURA's approach above dialogue. But, on the other hand, it is apparent that without understanding Muslims and peacefully co-existing with them, there will not be any effective witness (a reason perhaps that 'understanding' is crucial to its theology). This form of approach to conducting mission and inter-faith relations is what Küster has termed '*relating mission and dialogue dialectically*'.⁴⁶ In this relation, no real witness can occur without real inter-faith relations either in the form of dialogue or constructive engagement. Hence inter-faith relations and mission are not mutually exclusive.

⁴² *Proposed plans*, p. 1.

⁴³ *Report on Lay Facilitators school*, p. 1. Italics mine.

⁴⁴ Adaturah was employed by the CCG to work with the then IAP. However, due to his aggressive and confrontational style, particularly using public debates to witness to Muslims, CCG had to part company with him in 1984. Cf. Dovlo and Asante, "Reinterpreting the Straight Path. Ghanaian Muslim Convert In Mission to Muslims", p. 219.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Write up for the 4th Round Table Conference*.

⁴⁶ V. Küster, 'Towards an Intercultural Theology: Paradigm Shifts in Missiology, Ecumenics, and Comparative Religion' in Viggo Mortensen (ed), *Theology and the Religions: A Dialogue*, (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 2003), p. 179.

B. Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC) and AECAWA-IRDC

The Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, also known as the Bishops' Conference (BC), is the central body of the Catholic Church in Ghana, whose main purpose is to deal with issues of concern to the Catholic Church and to encourage activities in accordance with the need of the times. There are a number of departments under the Conference. The department with which this discussion is concerned is the department of Ecumenical Relations and Inter-Religious Dialogue (ERIRD). Within the ERIRD, the Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa –Inter-Religious Dialogue Commission (AECAWA-IRDC) is responsible for inter-religious affairs of the Bishops' conference.

In a broader sense AECAWA-IRDC was founded to foster dialogue between Catholics and other religions, in response to Pope John Paul II's address to the members for Secretariat for Non-Christians (now Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, PCID) on 3rd March, 1984. In this address he stressed the importance and necessity of inter-religious dialogue. He said: "Dialogue is fundamental for the Church, which is called to collaborate in God's plan with its method of presence, respect and love towards all persons (cf Ad Gentes, 10-12; Ecclesiam Suam, 41-42; Redemptor Homines, 11-12)".⁴⁷ This statement has been the key motivation for Catholic engagement in inter-faith relations. Member countries of AECAWA-IRDC comprise Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and the Inter-territorial Conference (Sierra-Leone and the Gambia). Since its inception it has organised eight study sessions dealing with various themes of concern to Christians, Muslims and ATR practitioners. Our main resource in this discussion regarding its engagement with Muslims is an analysis of its constitution and study sessions.

AECAWA-IRDC's engagement with Muslims

AECAWA-IRDC is engaged with Muslims through two main activities: joint study sessions and research. These activities show its purposes of engagement, approach to Muslims and how it handles mission and inter-faith relations. The joint study session is the primary activity of engagement with the religious other (non-Catholic Christian denominations, Muslims and African Traditional Religion). This is a three-day study session organised by the commission once every year where study papers are presented and discussed by Muslims, Christians and ATR practitioners on issues of common concern to the three religions. The first study session was organised in 1996, subsequently seven other sessions have been organised and the papers of the experts together with the discussion of participants and the communiqué published. The study sessions have covered broad areas such as peace, development, social justice and inter-religious dialogue.⁴⁸ An auxiliary to this research has also been published to inform Catholics on issues on inter-faith dialogue.

Purposes of engagement

Before we discuss the purposes of AECAWA-IRDC's engagement with Muslims, it is worth noting that not all published material of the study session represents the official view of the Catholic Church on inter-faith dialogue. Therefore, our discussion is based on the analysis of joint communiqués issued at the end of the study and papers presented by Catholic Church

⁴⁷ As quoted in the *Constitution of AECAWA Inter-Religious Dialogue*, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Since 1996, the seven themes that have been dealt with are: *African Traditional Religious Movements*, (Lagos, Nigeria, 1996); *Islam and Christianity on Human Development in West Africa*, (Nsawam, Ghana, 1997); *Religion and the Pursuit of Peace and Social Justice*, (Lagos, Nigeria, 1998); *Christians, Muslims and Believers of African Traditional Religion and the Great Jubilee*, (Accra, Ghana, 1999); *Inter-Religious dialogue and Nation Building*, (Ibadan, Nigeria, 2000); *Religion, Violence and Peace in West Africa*, (Accra, Ghana, 2002); *Offer Forgiveness and Receive Peace: A Challenge to Multi-Religious Society*, (Kaduna, Nigeria, 2003); *Peace: Preachers and Politicians*, (Tamale, Ghana, 2004).

representatives in the study sessions. Analysis of the commission's documents show two broad areas of concern to the Catholics in the engagement with Muslims. The first is an existential concern and the second a developmental concern. They are both conceptual since there is no verification as to whether they have actually served those purposes.

Existential purpose

Due to the reality of political, ethnic and religious conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa, coupled with the fact that AECAWA-IRDC engagement with Muslims extends beyond Ghana, peace promotion is of great concern to the commission.⁴⁹ Out of the eight study sessions carried out for the past nine years, five of them are directly aimed at peace promotion.⁵⁰ AECAWA-IRDC is very comprehensive not just in its understanding peace but on causes and how to promote peace.⁵¹ Peace is understood in holistic terms, embodying a personal and communal dimension. In a communiqué issued in Tamale on the November 2004 study session on 'Peace: Preachers and Politicians', participants stressed the holistic nature of peace in all three religious traditions. They stressed the need for peace not just within individual lives but also harmonious relationships with other people including people of different faiths.⁵² Apart from the human relational aspect, there is also a political, socio-economic and religious dimension to peace. For AECAWA-IRDC peace, development and social justice are intrinsically related. As Rev. Fr. Cletus Tanimu noted in his keynote address to the 2003 study session:

...the state of calmness or quietness within a society or place or spiritual and bodily health. Peace is about calmness in terms of security or socio-political and economic security. This is to say that the state in which there is no spiritual and or socio-political and economical progress and calmness, peace is wanting, even when and where there is no bloodshed or rioting. ...peace is only possible where there is justice, and where there is peace and justice it is possible to have authentic development. Conversely, development is an effective means for bringing about true peace.⁵³

With regard to the causes of violence it recognises the role religion and the culture of violence play in fuelling conflicts in the sub-region. Because of this it emphasises the religious dimension to peace promotion by bringing to the forefront the need for peaceful co-existence among adherents of different faiths and curbing of political and ethnic unrests since most political conflicts have a religious undertone to them. The culture of violence such as physical violence, structural violence, economic violence and domestic violence are the areas from which religion should liberate human beings.⁵⁴

There is not one single person or institution responsible for the culture of violence. The failure of governments and politicians to eradicate corruption, exploiting religious and ethnic lineage for political gain⁵⁵ and failure to give equal recognition and respect to all religions are some of the things fuelling the culture of violence.⁵⁶ Religious leaders bear the

⁴⁹ Cf. *Brief information on the National Catholic Secretariat*, p. 13.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Religion and the Pursuit of Peace and Social Justice*, (Lagos, 1998), *Inter-Religious dialogue and Nation Building*, (Ibadan, 2000), *Religion, Violence and Peace in West Africa*, (Accra, 2002), *Offer Forgiveness and Receive Peace: A Challenge to Multi-Religious Society*, (Kaduna, 2003), *Peace: Preachers and Politicians*, (Tamale, 2004).

⁵¹ For the fuller discussion of this see Yakubu, *Christian-Muslim Relations in Ghana*, pp. 52-56.

⁵² *2004 Communiqué*, p. 1.

⁵³ Keynote address on the theme *Offer Forgiveness and Receive Peace- A Challenge to Multi-Religious Society* at the Study Session of the AECAWA-IRDC in Kaduna, (Nigeria, 10-14 November, 2003), pp. 4-5.

⁵⁴ Cf. Communiqué on *Religion, Violence and Peace in West Africa*, (Accra, 7-10 October 2002), p. 95.

⁵⁵ *Peace: Preachers and Politicians*, p. 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* and Communiqué on *Islam and Christianity on Human Development in West Africa*, (13-16 October 1997), p. 88.

bulk of the causes of religious conflicts since they occupy a centre stage in the lives of the followers. Their failure to serve as encouragers and teachers on matters relating to dialogue, human rights and social justice amount to negligence of their core responsibility.⁵⁷ Lack of tolerance and respect for other religions has always played a part in promoting violence.⁵⁸ The failure of religious leaders to co-operate in both physical (such as development) and spiritual matters (praying together for peace and celebration of religious festivals) does not help to promote peace.⁵⁹

The key solution to peace promotion in conflict situations is reconciliation and forgiveness. For instance, in all the papers presented in the 2003 study session on the theme *Offer Forgiveness and Receive Peace: A Challenge to Multi-Religious Society* both Christian and Muslim experts and participants underscore the importance of reconciliation and forgiveness towards achieving a lasting peace on the continent of Africa.

Developmental purpose

AECAWA-IRDC sees inter-faith relations as an instrument for collaborative development. It is both a human responsibility to aid development and a divine mandate. As the Most Rev. E.S. Obot, then Chairman of AECAWA-IRDC, puts it in his welcome address to participants of the 2000 study session, "inter-religious dialogue and national development go hand in hand. One builds or destroys other... this rest on the fact that religion makes a lot of contributions in the making of any society."⁶⁰ Similarly, for him religion's participation in development is a divine injunction on humankind at creation. He adds that no religion is exempt from working towards national development. All religions are by their calling leaven in the society, they are expected to liberate and develop society.⁶¹

Based on this understanding, the commission's perspective of development is understood in integrated terms, which are infrastructure and human development.⁶² The two are interrelated, one is not complete without the other. Infrastructural development targets visible social institutions such as provision of educational facilities, health facilities, agricultural facilities, housing and drinking water⁶³ while human development is concerned with human or man power or capacity building. Not everything in human development is necessarily visible. It identifies education, both secular and religious, as the key to empowering humanity economically and the development of human rights such as religious and political freedom.⁶⁴

The youth and women are the target group in development, since for the commission the youth have always been the ones used by politicians and religious leaders to incite and carry out violence and the women are mostly the victims of various kinds of violence. Another reason for the emphasis on youth is the recognition that they are not only the future

⁵⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, and Communiqué on *Inter-Religious Dialogue and Nation Building*, (Ibadan, Nigeria, 3-6 October 2000), pp. 35-36.

⁵⁸ Cf. Communiqué on *Peace: Preachers and Politicians*, (Accra, November 2004) and Communiqué on *Inter-Religious Dialogue and Nation Building*, (Ibadan, Nigeria, 3-6 October 2000), p. 35.

⁵⁹ *Peace: Preachers and Politicians*, p. 2. It should be noted here that in Ghana this recommendation has always been in practice. For the celebration of any national occasion (such as the Independence Day celebration and Farmers Day celebration) to commence, first the Traditional believer prays by pouring libation, then this is followed by Muslim prayer by an Iman and then a Christian prayer is offered by a Christian minister. It is possible that they follow this sequence in recognition of the fact that ATR is the oldest religion in Ghana followed by Islam and Christianity as the late-comer.

⁶⁰ Most Rev. E. S. Obot, Address in AECAWA Inter-Religious Dialogue Commission papers on *Inter-religious Dialogue and Nation Building*, (Ibadan, 3-6 October 2000), p. 4.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶² Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 3. Italics mine.

⁶³ Cf. 1997 Communiqué, p. 89.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

leaders of the continent but also the religious leaders of tomorrow. Therefore, by educating and empowering them the nation is being built for the future. This is seen as the solution to the problem of religious, domestic, physical, economic and political violence.⁶⁵ Addressing them must be a collaborative effort of both Christians and Muslims.

Approach to Muslims

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Catholic Church has a uniform approach to Muslims and so AECAWA-IRDC's approach to Muslims is not unique to Ghana, but follows the Vatican's policy. The approach to Muslims is through dialogue, understood as both a theological and practical engagement. AECAWA-IRDC's approach to dialogue is based on three presuppositions: theological, existential and ethical. The commission's engagement in dialogue is grounded in the life of the triune God. The theological presupposition takes God as the head of the human family, Christ joining every person to himself and the Holy Spirit working in each individual. Dialogue according to the commission is also grounded on the love for each human person and the bond connecting cultural and religious confessions of people, giving dialogue an ethical basis.⁶⁶ And finally, the common roots both Christians and Muslims have together in Abraham calls for a collaborative responsibility (existential basis).⁶⁷

How this dialogue is engaged in is of particular importance to the commission. Its engagement with Muslims has been termed by some as an institutionalised form of dialogue of life.⁶⁸ Witnessing with the sole purpose of converting the other is not part of the agenda of the institutionalised form of dialogue. In this dialogue the participant retains his/her religious identity and respects the religious identity of the other dialogue partner. This kind of dialogue is conceptual in its approach. The goal is primarily for theological and practical (attitudinal change and perception) exchange⁶⁹ as seen in the manner in which the study sessions are conducted. It combines mutual enrichment and practical action as its focus. Although the commission assumes that the mutual enrichment realised as an institutionalised form of dialogue⁷⁰ will be translated into dialogue of life for its followers, the truth is this is far from the reality.

Inter-faith relations and mission

Because the purpose of AECAWA-IRDC's engagement with the religious other is more existential, its theology on inter-faith relations is more *relational*. One of the key terms that keeps surfacing in the documents in relation to its perception of Muslims is the term 'common' or '*shared humanity*', which is essentially based on the Vatican's documents. As stated earlier, as a catholic institution, there is no difference between the Vatican's view and AECAWA-IRDC's.

Given the focus of *theology of shared humanity* it is not surprising that mission and inter-faith relations are treated as separate entities by the commission. The GCBC has a separate department for evangelisation or mission from the department for ecumenical relations/inter-religious dialogue, suggesting that mission and dialogue are not to be done together but should be kept apart. Having said that, we find that in another sense the Catholic Church sees mission as everything that the church does, so by implication dialogue is part of

⁶⁵ Cf. *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Cf. *Constitution*, p. 1 and Obot's address, 1997, p. 45 and 1998, p. 11.

⁶⁷ Cf. 1997 *Communiqué*, p. 88 and 1998 *Communiqué*, p. 27.

⁶⁸ Vatican distinguishes four types of dialogue: dialogue of life, dialogue of mind, dialogue of hearts and dialogue of social action. This institutionalized form of dialogue of life as it is practiced by the commission is sometimes seen by Catholics as dialogue of action.

⁶⁹ Cf. 2002 *Communiqué*, p. 97; cf. the Address of Bishop Joseph d. Bagobiri, *Religion, Violence and Peace in West Africa*, p. 39.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29, 2000 *Communiqué*, p. 7 and 2004 *Communiqué*, p. 2.

mission (it is in fact listed as one of elements of mission). So, for instance, Anthony O. Okogie, Archbishop of Lagos, comments on the Vatican document 'Nostra Aetate' in the 1998 study session: "... inter-religious dialogue is obligatory for the church as part of her evangelising mission."⁷¹ Also in addressing participants of the 2002 session the then chairman of AECAWA-IRDC wrote: "...interfaith dialogue is seen as one way of fulfilling the mandate given to us by Christ to preach his Gospel."⁷² Again in 2002 it was made clear that "dialogue for Catholics, cannot be separated from the general mission of the church to preach the Gospel to all nations."⁷³

The above seems show some ambiguity in the way the commission relates mission and dialogue. On the one hand, with the separation of departments for mission and dialogue, the relation is one of dialogue separate from mission. On the other hand, with the above statement from its documents showing that mission is not separate from dialogue, coupled with its concept of mission embodying everything that the church does, the relation then is one of dialogue as part of mission. Having said that, it could also be interpreted to mean that mission always involves dialogue, but dialogue is not always used for mission purposes.

III. Comparing CCG and GCBC in terms of their engagement with Muslims

It is obvious from the above discussion that PROCMURA and AECAWA-IRDC as institutions are similar in some respects. At the same time it is equally true that there are differences between them. Our point of comparison is in the areas of their backgrounds, purposes of engagement, approach to Muslims and how they marry mission and inter-faith relations.

Backgrounds and structure

The first thing that is common to both CCG and GCBC as far as their backgrounds are concerned is the way they are constituted. They are both national organisations, which makes their comparison in this paper a fair one. While CCG serves the protestant community in Ghana, GCBC serves the Catholic community.

However, one fundamental difference between them, which in turn affects their approach to inter-faith relations, is the difference in their organisational structures. PROCMURA is an interdenominational institution. Although it is a member of PROCMURA Africa, it does not have any official affiliation with the WCC. Due to its federal system of administration PROCMURA-Ghana is autonomous in how it is structured and so decisions are made from the local level taking into account the local context such as relative peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims. This means that its activities, purposes of engagement, approach to Muslim and even theology are influenced not just by the organisational structure but also the prevailing local context of relative peace.

On the other hand AECAWA-IRDC is a one-church-based institution with a link to the Vatican PCID, where decisions are made that influence its purposes of engagement and approach. Its sub-regional responsibility and context (i.e. Anglophone West Africa) influences its engagement and approach. Therefore, as a sub-regional institution, the issues that influence its agenda of engagement are of sub-regional nature, such as violence, conflicts and development (example in Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone). It also gets its theological support from the Vatican. These two facts explain why it is more comprehensive in its purposes of engagement and approach, particularly in the areas of peace, violence and development.

⁷¹ Most Rev. Anthony O. Okogie, *Welcome Address*, 1998, p. 7.

⁷² Bishop Joseph D. Bagobiri, *Address*, 2002, p. 40.

⁷³ *2002 Communiqué*, p. 96.

Engagement with Muslims

The basic point of parallel between PROCMURA and AECAWA-IRDC in the area of engagement with Muslims is the activities of engagement. Research into Islam plays a very important role in the way they both relate to Muslims. In this regard, they both have a high regard for Islam and Muslims. However, a point of departure in their activities is not necessarily the type of activity,⁷⁴ but the priority and purpose of the activities. Common to both, their purpose of engagement is the existential concern. While for PROCMURA the educational is of greater priority to the existential due to the sub-regional context, for AECAWA-IRDC the priority is in the existential because of the sub-regional context of violence and poverty, which subsequently affects development.

Similarly, there is a difference in the purposes for which these institutions were set up. While AECAWA-IRDC was set up mainly for existential and developmental reasons as observed from study sessions, PROCMURA, on the other hand, was primarily set up for educational and missiological purposes. The existential issue only became necessary due to the change in political climate and the reality of religious intolerance and violence creeping into the sub-region. As noted already, the educational and missiological reasons are so crucial to PROCMURA that the existential reasons for engagement are there to serve both the educational and missiological purposes.

Approach to Muslims

The main similarity in the approach of the two institutions is in the area of attitude towards Muslims. Both institutions respect Islam and have a very positive attitude towards Muslims. In the first place, they are both constructively engaged, which even takes other human social concerns into consideration such as peace and development. In the second place, in this constructive engagement, dialogue plays an important role for both. Conceptually, they have the same starting point of encouraging members to be engaged with Muslims; that is they both start from the perspective of dialogue of life, encourage it and build on it. There are, however, differences in the application of this dialogue.

However similar their starting point is, there are differences in their methods and the focus of this dialogue. In a well-structured and hierarchical institution such as the Catholic Church, it is not surprising that AECAWA-IRDC has opted for a direct and institutionalised form of dialogue of life⁷⁵ or dialogue of social action on both existential and developmental issues. This focus best suits the Catholic hyper-structuralism and hierarchical form of church governance and, of course, the sub-regional context of violence. PROCMURA, on the other hand, is less structured and also federal in its form of governance. Therefore, its engagement is an informal form of dialogue (dialogue of life). It is *indirectly engaged* encouraging informal interaction between Christians and Muslims through the *non-polemic approach*. The focus of dialogue of life is dialogue in the community that not only encourages Christians to live as good neighbours but also prepares them for an intellectual encounter or dialogue of mind with Muslims through its seminars and workshops on Islam.

As far as theology of inter-faith relations is concerned, AECAWA-IRDC has a more clearly defined theology than PROCMURA, due to the difference in structure and availability of international support. Theology in AECAWA-IRDC is defined by the Vatican and so there is uniformity and conformity with Vatican theology. If we look at PROCMURA, lack of written

⁷⁴While PROCMURA is engaged in a broader range of activities such as research, giving seminars and workshops, publication of newsletters and mediating peace in conflict situations, AECAWA-IRDC is mainly engaged in publication/research and study sessions.

⁷⁵Some have opted to call this dialogue of life in its institutionalised form. Others categorise it as dialogue of social action because its focus is on social issues. Cf. Küster, "Who, With Whom", p. 79.

materials and poor documentation in its archives⁷⁶ make it difficult to determine its theology of inter-faith relations. However, with the materials analysed, it is apparent that in PROCMURA theology has to be defined and formulated from the local level. This, of course, is difficult considering the differences in theological perspectives that already exist among members as an interdenominational institution. Again, although there is similarity in their theologies in terms of content, there is difference in the focus. I have used different terminologies for their theologies to show the difference in their focus, not necessarily their contents. *Theology of understanding* is used to describe PROCMURA's theology of inter-faith relations because its focus is on understanding for mission and educational purpose. *Theology of shared humanity* is used to describe AECAWA-IRDC's theology because of its existential focus.

PROCMURA is very christocentric in its theology and so there is the emphasis on the need for witnessing and salvation through Christ, though it has a positive attitude towards Muslims. AECAWA-IRDC, on the other hand, is very theocentric, particularly in its study sessions. As a matter of fact, their theologies of religions regarding the way they perceive truth and salvation in Islam are very similar in that they seem not to resolve the *exclusivism-inclusivism dilemma*. This is because both PROCMURA and AECAWA-IRDC are inclusive in that they both believe that there is some truth in Islam (AECAWA-IRDC believes that Christians and Muslims worship the same God), but the degree of this inclusivism varies. Again, both are exclusive in that they see the uniqueness of Christ in salvation as central to their theology. It is apparent that both AECAWA-IRDC and PROCMURA want to be inclusive, as far as Muslims' relatedness to God is concerned, and yet they both do not seem to compromise on the person and uniqueness of Christ in salvation. This, of course, is an exclusive tendency. Perhaps both need to rethink their view on Islam with respect to either truth or salvation, because if one wants to be coherent in one's theology and attitude towards Muslims then the *exclusivism-inclusivism dilemma* needs to be overcome.

Inter-faith relations and mission

The relation between mission and inter-faith relations is another area where PROCMURA and AECAWA-IRDC differ considerably. As we have discussed already, PROCMURA seems to relate dialogue and witness dialectically. This means that one cannot engage in dialogue without witnessing to one's faith. AECAWA-IRDC, on the other hand, is different in this regard. Not only is mission absent from its inter-faith relations agenda, we noticed some ambiguity in the way it theoretically, combines mission and inter-faith relations. In the first place, evangelism or mission seems to be everything that the Catholic Church does, which means that inter-faith relations is part of mission and yet inter-faith relations is kept separate from mission. Perhaps in AECAWA-IRDC mission always involves inter-faith relations, but inter-faith relations are not always engaged in mission purposes. The bottom line here is that while PROCMURA is very clear and consistent in the way it handles mission and inter-faith relations, in AECAWA-IRDC not only is there some ambiguity but even some ambivalence in the way it handles mission and inter-faith relations.

Concluding remarks

What the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference has shown in their engagement with Muslims in Ghana is that the constructive engagement of Christians

⁷⁶ In going through PROCMURA's archives during the research, one of the main problems encountered was poor documentation. There was no organised filing system and no compiled syllabi for the seminars and workshops or they were not to be found when I requested them. Whereas at the AECAWA-IDRC, not only is there an organised system of filing materials, every study session ever done is either published or the papers of the session are on file.

and Muslims in Ghana is a reality. Though they both have different purposes and approaches to Muslims, they have both contributed constructively to inter-faith relations in Ghana. They have both achieved a basic objective: engagement with Muslims that takes into account the need for peaceful coexistence between adherents of the two faiths. The current state of religious intolerance makes this objective more pertinent.

Having said that, as good and well-meaning as the effort of Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference are, one area of concern in their engagement is the little collaboration between them (if any) in fostering the same goals. While it is true that they are both contributing practically to inter-faith relations in Ghana, their individual efforts could be enhanced through co-operation. More can be done in the area of collaborative efforts which can contribute effectively and efficiently to the educational, existential, developmental and missiological purposes in their engagement.

