



ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF
CHURCHES (AACCC)
YOUTH PRE-ASSEMBLY

Theme: Respecting The Dignity and God's
Image in Every Human Being
1-2ND JULY 2018

***Islamic radicalisation among youth and the
need for apologetics in youth ministry***

Dr. Joseph Mutei


Monday 2nd July, 2018

• Introduction

Eight-year-old Moses arrived home from school one Friday evening excited by what he had learnt that day.

Moses (not his real name), who attends a private school outside Nairobi, told his mother that his science teacher had taught the class how to dismantle and reassemble a gun. In the same lesson, he also learned how to shoot at targets and practiced firing at the blackboard with a toy pistol.

- According to Moses, the teacher told the class he was preparing them to defend themselves against terrorists.
- “I was shocked,” Moses’s mother said, “I asked my son to tell me exactly when and by whom the lesson was given. He identified a teacher. I took a decision to go to school and talk to the administrators.”
- Another in Nairobi’s Somali-majority suburb of Eastleigh, praised recent attacks carried out by the Islamist group al-Shabab. He told a class of 11-year-olds that it was honourable for them to die fighting.

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- Radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism are becoming common words in the society today. The question is how can we respond as believers and as the church at large.

The **three** concepts

- Radicalisation
- Violent extremism
- Religious Conflicts

- **Radicalisation** happens when a person's thinking and behaviour become significantly different from how most of the members of their society and community view social, cultural, economic, political and the world at large. Only small numbers of people radicalise and they can be from a diverse range of ethnic, national, political and religious groups.

- Extremists tend to argue that salvation is available only to those who ascribe to their teachings and practices and that those who do not belong to their religion do not deserve to be treated as human beings. It is on the basis of such ideology that extremists focus and thereby develop an approach to religion and life. The antagonism they express toward other religions makes it a matter of real concern in contemporary society.


- **Violent extremism** occurs when “a person or group decide that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, religious, political or social change, and acts accordingly”.
- Violent extremism is an extension of radicalisation from a relatively benign expression of a viewpoint to the use of violence to achieve a particular goal.

- **Religious extremism** is a phenomenon found in all religions. There is Christian extremism, Islamic extremism, Hindu extremism and so on. So, at the outset we need to realize that when we talk about extremism, it is not confined to one religion only.


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• ***Religious Conflicts***

- ‘Conflict’ evokes an involuntary ‘gut level’ reaction deep within us, perhaps of pain, or danger or fear. It speaks to us of relationships that won’t heal, of people who won’t listen, of wounds never acknowledged, of conduct never discussed.
- The cause for this conflict could be religious e.g. Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania etc.



In the midst of conflict, we tend to stereotype our adversaries by their worst behaviour. We tend to inaccurately characterize others by deriving from one or more callous acts an all-encompassing negative view of that person or group of people.


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- You know some of the extremist groups as al Shabaab, Boko Haram, AQIM, ISIS, MOJWA, Al Qaeda, etc.

Radicalisation Processes

- ◆ Exclusive [Secret] discipleship
- ◆ Isolation camp
- ◆ Indoctrination procedure:
 - ❖ Outright condemnation of the ordinary world
 - ❖ Psychic manipulation exercises / brainwashing
 - ❖ Intense focus on the hereafter – life after death in all conversations as a reminder


Presuppose Reasons for [Violent] Extremism:

- Perceived grievance (injustice, oppression etc.)
- Quest for relevance
- Self-seeking individuals
- A strong desire for popularity

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- Socio-political conditions
 - Socio-economic conditions and agenda
 - Daring to oppose status-quo
 - Psychological state – personality disorder (illusionary)
 - Searching for the unsearchable

Expression of Violent Extremism

- Provocative sermons
- Hate speeches
- Extreme veneration of leader
- Suicide bombing and terror attacks
- Social actions to polarize human society

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- Honor killing (Killing their own)
 - Demand for debate rather than dialogue
 - Outright condemnation of the 'religious other'
 - Imposition of a particular religious ideology or principle as the most authentic
 - Mercenary action (rebelliousness), etc

Factors that could lead to Radicalisation

Personal, Local, National and Global

a) Personal:

Beliefs, experiences and practices consciously and unconsciously that drive youth radicalization.

Any disconnections that lead to isolation and vulnerability

b) Local:

- Local (community) beliefs, practices and processes consciously and unconsciously that drive youth to radicalization
- The disconnection between the young people and current local (community) beliefs, practices and processes manifest



- **C) National:**

- national policies, practices and processes consciously and unconsciously drive youth radicalization
- In what ways does the disconnection between the young people and national policies, practices and processes manifest

- **d) Global:**

- global policies, practices and processes consciously and unconsciously that drive the youth radicalization
- In what ways does the disconnection between the young people and global policies, practices and processes manifest

Countering Radicalisation And Violent Extremism

Identification and information sharing

Identifying violent extremist ideology at an early stage and sharing information and intelligence

Motivation, recruitment and containment

Understanding the motivations of recruits, methods of recruiters and containing the influence of violent extremist ideology.

Referral and support, diversion and rehabilitation

Establishing appropriate referral mechanisms for services that support individuals to choose non-violent forms of expression and participate in society.

Education

Building community resistance to violent extremism by equipping communities with the skills and resources to understand and address extremism and reduce marginalisation.

Communication

Developing key messages that inform and empower communities to challenge extremist ideologies and support the non-violent expression of views.

Encouraging the dissemination of counter-narratives, and providing appropriate communication channels for delivering them.

Christian Response to Violent Extremism

- *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **5** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. **6** And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. **7** You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. **8** You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. **9** You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

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The Truth

- 4 *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.*
- The truth is this: There is ONE GOD.

2. The Command

- 5 *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

3. The Application


- Example (vs. 6) and Teaching (vs. 7)

Christian Responses


- Proverbs 6:16-19
- Romans 12:19-21
- Psalm 34:14
- Matthew 5:44-48
- Matthew 5:38-39
- Luke 12:4
- Matthew 10:16-24


- *#1 Let's show the world in these desperate days what the love of God is like.*
- The discipline of love in the face of adversity is what distinguishes the Christian from other people ([John 13:35](#)). This is a time for us not only to show Christ's love to our brothers and sisters in Christ, but also to others who need to feel the warmth of that love in the cold aftermath of loss.

- *#2 Let's be much in prayer for the safety of those who are demonstrating love to others by their brave actions.*
- Our military forces, police, firemen, rescue workers, doctors, nurses and volunteers of all kinds are living out Jesus' words, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" ([John 15:13](#)).

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- #3 Let's speak up for understanding, tolerance, justice and forgiveness.

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- #4 Let's be a voice for calm in an atmosphere of hatred and retaliation.

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- #5 Let's be men and women of prayer, both for those who victimized and those who were their victims.

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- The Christian response is always to look for the fingerprints of God in every situation.

CONCLUSION

- Religion has a definite role to play in people's search for world peace. The moral principles and values contained in the teachings of great religious teachers are essential factors for the reduction and ultimate eradication of greed, hatred, and delusion—which form the root cause of various conflicts and wars, both within and without. Within oneself, these three evil or unwholesome roots bring about great unrest in the mind, resulting in physical outbursts of violence culminating in global warfare... ***It should therefore not be implicated***

Questions for Discussion

- Give examples of cases of peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in your context.
- In what areas does radicalisation take place? And what are the enablers?
- Discuss the effects of violent extremism in our society.
- Explain the main ways in which Christians can be involved in countering radicalisation, violent extremism and religious conflicts.
- What can be done to build peace among different faith communities in Africa?

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