When Religion Becomes a Source of Conflict: *Inter-faith Relations in the 21st Century Tanzania*

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Abstract

The social functions of religion in a society are well known in the academia and policy making circles, and thus it is expected that the society would embrace them. Religions are expected not only to bind the people together, but also to energize believers never to give up and work hard to attain set goals. Religion is also expected to improve the sanity of the general population and help them live healthy social lives. In Tanzania, a new reality with regard to inter-faith relations is unfolding. Christians and Muslims relations have, in recent times, seen setbacks in the levels of inter-faith tolerance, a situation that is clearing a new trajectory. The political stability of the country in the past fifty years, together with recent economic and political developments, suggests that the country has the potential for major socio-economic development in the future. However, recent inter-faith conflicts are endangering this potential by sowing seeds of chaos in the country. The question this paper aims to address is: *why all these?*

Keywords: religion, peace, conflict, development, Tanzania