

Education can end religious strife

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Was the issue really one of interfaith dialogue, or were concepts such as territory, power or nationalism more important behind the scenes?

Moderate leaders gave moderate messages at the conference and all the participants departed in a happy state of mind.

One participant said: "Coming together, discussing and debating all these matters and finding ways of establishing peace is a very good thing. We hope to hold these conferences in other countries, too." It is impossible not to share the participant's optimism. Of course coming together and exchanging ideas on these problems and building friendships in that context is a healthy thing; yet although this is an important step in developing unity, it is not enough to bring conflict between faiths to an end because the real cause of conflicts is

being ignored and misdiagnosed, and time is being lost.

We need to know that the real problem in any of the countries where conflicts are taking place in the name of religion is not really religion, land, power or nationalism. There may well play a triggering role within the conflict, but the real cause is an erroneous belief system produced in the name of religion that is, quite bluntly, a totalitarian, atheistic and reactionary sociopolitical ideology.

Although an erroneous way of thinking may be equated with a faith, it actually represents an ideology that has turned away from real religion and regressed toward various extreme and atheistic views outside that religion, and that has become radicalised, sly and loveless. That danger applies to all religions and beliefs, by the way; every true belief that abandons its roots will lose its direction and turn into a frightening, oppressive and extremist ideology.

To take the example of the Central African Republic, Muslims and Christians who lived as brothers in the area for many years suddenly adopted a policy of enmity that led to them killing one another in the most barbaric ways.

Although most of those carrying out the slaughter in question are gangs having nothing to do with religion, it is a radical and fanatical system of beliefs seeking to divide Christians and Muslims that represents the basic cause of the conflict. The idea of "the brotherhood of religions" at the heart of all sacred texts has been abandoned for various forms of nonsense. The notion that religions are invariably hostile to one another has been widely propagated and people who used to regard one another as brothers have now become enemies.

Islam, for instance, commands Muslims in the Quran that Christians and Jews are to be treated with friendship, brotherhood and protection; but the false and reactionary faith that has developed in its place has spread the idea that all Christians and Jews are our enemies. That is the main reason for the burning of churches in Egypt and the increasing anti-Semitism in the Arab world.

That is also the reason why some Christian circles propagandise against Islam and exhibit a prejudiced attitude toward Muslims. They have adopted a fanatical way of thinking that has turned away from the very essence of

Christianity so much so that some are awaiting a war in which Muslims and Jews will be slaughtered with ill-concealed glee.

Rather than conferences dedicated to identifying causes, the solution as the pseudo-religion of nonsense spreads savagery, terrorism and lovelessness across the world, and as people turn away from true religion en masse, lies in education.

That is because the religion of fanaticism is the product of a false education; many people who follow that distorted faith are quite unaware they are doing anything wrong. The damage caused by this false education can only be put right by true education. That is why action is urgently needed, rather than time-wasting initiatives.

Moderate and peace-loving religious leaders and representatives must seek ways of reaching out to these falsely educated communities at consciousness-raising meetings among themselves.

They must start educating people, particularly in areas where radicalism is widespread, with books, brochures and speeches describing true religion. For example, they must use verses from the Quran to show that war, killing and hatred

are a sin in the Muslim faith. They must set out with supporting evidence, the weaknesses and illogicality of the fanatical ideology that has come to the fore.

If comprehensive peace is desired across the world, the way to achieve this is through bringing about a correct conception of religion and eliminating the false one. A major responsibility therefore falls upon everyone who holds a correct, and therefore moderate, conception of religion.

Countries can be encouraged to spend the money that currently goes to weapons procurement on the mobilisation of such an educational effort instead, and civil society organisations and media organisations can be brought in to that end.

It must not be forgotten that it is far easier to disseminate what is true and accurate. Therefore, instead of leaving communities in a state of enmity and bigotry stemming from ignorance, the correct thing to do is to eliminate that ignorance by spreading the truth, which is widespread, with books, brochures and speeches describing true religion. For example, they must use verses from the Quran to show that war, killing and hatred

HARUN YAHYA
Islamabad, Turkey



40% of the migrants found in dollar bars hold regular jobs in Singapore and earn between S\$2,541 and S\$3,123 each month.

Kids these days are antisocial

AS a teenager, I wonder what happened to the days when kids will just go out to play and make friends. I had a great time growing up despite the many bruises I got while playing with friends. Today, more and more kids are becoming antisocial and staying indoors. We can't really blame them because of the increasing numbers of kidnapping cases like the recent one in Kota Raya shopping centre. Parents should always be around their kids even though they're just a few feet outside their home. Police should also be stationed around every playground to increase security.

NOOR DANIAL NOOR AFFANDY
Kuala Lumpur

Hide and seek game by staff

ONE of the reasons I enjoy a weekly trip to Ultrama shopping centre in Petaling Jaya is the convenience of having many facilities under one roof. This includes stopping by the post office to send letters and pay some bills - or so I thought. The post office closes at 6pm. Around 5pm every day, with people coming from work, many Ultrama patrons understandably flock here to do their postal matters. Sadly and irritatingly, this is precisely the time the post office staff go into the "You ready to go home?" mode. This means loitering in the storage rooms or sitting, heads down, behind the counter, engrossed in some imaginary but apparently urgent task. On my visit last Friday, there were three staff members behind the counter. As usual, two of them shielded themselves from those pesky customers with a "Go to the next counter" sign. This left only one staff attending to customers at that hour.

Depending on whether the ticket machine is faulty or otherwise, the result is either a proverbial ananoda of a queue, or taking a queue number that shows there are 30-plus people waiting ahead of you! This lackadaisical attitude may also explain why the air-mail letters and postcards I sent to Europe from this particular outlet on March 5 this year arrived at their destinations only on May 24. It is hard to imagine the mails took two months and 16 days to reach its destination! In this kind of service we, busy urban professionals, deserve? Are there no supervisors or managers at these main post offices? Pos Malaysia should kindly look into their staff recruitment and monitoring practices so that customers don't have to deal with front-line staff who love to hide from their customers?

SHEHZAD MARTIN
Gombak

Allow school heads to take disciplinary action

I REFER to the report "Police probing bullying case" (The Star, June 3) regarding a 77-second clip of a group of female students attacking their schoolmate which went viral over the internet.

The brutal attack, the recording and the subsequent posting on the internet showed blatant disregard for school rules and the deteriorating discipline in our schools today.

Instead of pushing the entire responsibility of the whole incident to the police, I believe the Education Ministry should play a bigger role in stamping out such horrendous acts by these students.

It is about time the ministry should delegate more power to the school authorities to end such misdeeds.

Nowadays, schools are too restricted in meting out disciplinary actions against recalcitrant students and parents are too protective over their pampered children.

With teachers and headmasters given the authority to mete out suitable punishments for offences committed, I believe, students will be more disciplined and well behaved.

As a student myself, I truly believe in the saying "spare the rod and spoil the child" and it is very disturbing to see fellow students being bullied by their peers.

I hope the ministry will act fast and eradicate such incidents from happening.

AWI KAR-ETHI
Kuala Lumpur

A conference on interfaith dialogue at which important issues were raised was held in Qatar recently. The aim of the conference was to examine conflicts between Muslims and Christians in the Central African Republic, the Buddhist-Muslim conflicts in Myanmar, the Israeli-Palestinian tensions and the uprisings in Northern Ireland, and to reveal the true causes of conflict. Was the issue really one of interfaith dialogue, or were concepts such as territory, power or nationalism more important behind the scenes?

Moderate leaders gave moderate messages at the conference where these matters were considered, and all the participants departed in a happy state of mind. One participant said, "Coming together, discussing and debating all these matters and finding ways of establishing peace is a very good thing." She then added, "We hope to hold these conferences in other countries, too."¹

It is impossible not to share the participants' optimism. Of course coming together and exchanging ideas on these problems and building friendships in that context is a healthy thing; yet although this is an important step in developing unity, it is not

enough to bring conflicts between faiths to an end because the real cause of these conflicts is being ignored and misdiagnosed, and time is being lost.

We need to know that the real problem in any of the countries where conflicts are taking place in the name of religion is not really religion, land, power or nationalism. These may well play a triggering role within the conflict, but the real cause is an erroneous belief system produced in the name of religion that is, quite bluntly, a totalitarian, atavistic and reactionary sociopolitical ideology.

Although an erroneous way of thinking may be equated with a faith, it actually represents an ideology that has turned away from real religion and regressed toward various extreme and atavistic views outside that religion, and that has become radicalized, sly and loveless. That danger applies to all religions and beliefs, by the way; every true belief that abandons its roots will lose its direction and turn into a frightening, oppressive and extremist ideology.

To take the example of the Central African Republic, Muslims and Christians who lived as brothers in the area for many years suddenly adopted a policy of enmity that led to them killing one another in the most barbaric ways. Although most of those carrying out the slaughter in question are gangs having nothing to do with religion, it is a radical and fanatical system of beliefs seeking to divide Christians and Muslims that represents the basic cause of the conflict. The idea of "the brotherhood of religions" at the heart of all sacred texts has been abandoned for various forms of nonsense. The notion that religions are invariably hostile to one another has been widely propagated and people who used to regard one another as brothers have now become enemies.

Islam, for instance, commands Muslims in the Qur'an that Christians and Jews are to be treated with friendship, brotherhood and protection; but the false and reactionary faith that has developed in its place has spread the idea that all Christians and Jews are our enemies. That is the main reason for the burning of churches in Egypt and the increasing anti-Semitism in the Arab world.

That is also the reason why some Christian circles propagandize against Islam and exhibit a prejudiced attitude toward Muslims. They have adopted a fanatical way of thinking that has turned away from the very essence of Christianity so much so that some are awaiting a war in which Muslims and Jews will be slaughtered with ill-concealed glee.

Rather than conferences dedicated to identifying causes, the solution, as the pseudo-religion of nonsense spreads savagery, terror, enmity and lovelessness across the world, and as people turn away from true religion *en masse*, lies in education. That is because the religion of fanaticism is the product of a false education; many people who follow that distorted faith are quite unaware they are doing anything wrong. The damage caused by this false education can only be put right by true education. That is why action is urgently needed, rather than time-wasting initiatives.

Moderate and peace-loving religious leaders and representatives must seek ways of reaching out to these falsely educated communities at consciousness-raising meetings among themselves. They must start educating people, particularly in areas where radicalism is widespread, with books, broadcasts and speeches describing true religion. For example, they must use verses from the Qur'an to show that war, killing and hatred are a sin in the Muslim faith. They must set out, with supporting evidence, the weaknesses and illogicality of the fanatical ideology that has come to the fore.

If comprehensive peace is desired across the world, the way to achieve this is through bringing about a correct conception of religion and eliminating the false one. A major responsibility therefore falls upon everyone who holds a correct, and therefore

moderate, conception of religion. Countries can be encouraged to spent the money that currently goes to weapons procurement on the mobilization of such an educational effort instead, and civil society organizations and media organizations can be brought in to that end. It must not be forgotten that it is far easier to disseminate what is true and accurate. Therefore, instead of leaving communities in a state of enmity and bigotry stemming from ignorance, the correct thing to do is to eliminate that ignorance. When that occurs, guns and wars will lose their meaning virtually overnight.

1. <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2014/03/religion-source-unity-division-2014327161222765229.html>

Adnan Oktar's piece on The Star:

<http://www.thestar.com.my/Opinion/Letters/2014/06/04/Education-can-end-religious-strife/>

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HARUN YAHYA
Istanbul, Turkey

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Published: Wednesday June 4, 2014 MYT 12:00:00 AM

Updated: Wednesday June 4, 2014 MYT 7:22:43 AM

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