



PROGRAMME FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN AFRICA



GENERAL ADVISER'S REPORT

2011

PROCMURA-PRICA.ORG



## PROGRAMME FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN AFRICA

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23) which PROCURA used to illustrate the impact of its work during the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 2009, remains one of the greatest biblical stories that illustrates the work of PROCURA. The relevance of this parable is set against the backdrop of the deteriorating situation of Christian-Muslim relations in the northern part of Nigeria at the time of writing this report.

As history will remind us, Nigeria (the northern part featuring strongly) was the country where PROCURA's pioneering work began in the 1960's and continues till now. To remind ourselves, the first General Adviser of PROCURA, Wim Bijlefeld, the second General Adviser, John Crossley and the fifth General Adviser, Johannes Haafkens all worked in Nigeria to help promote PROCURA's ideals and goals in Christian-Muslim relations. The sixth General Adviser and my predecessor, Stuart Brown also worked in Nigeria prior to his retirement.

For those of our partners from Europe, you are aware that the current moderator of the European Liaison Committee of PROCURA, Klaus Hock, spent a number of years teaching Islam and Christian-Muslim relations at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN). Last but not the least, the current chairperson of PROCURA, Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon of the Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion is a focal person in the work of Christian-Muslim relations in the country.

With all these 'big wigs' (to use the secular term) of PROCURA having worked in that country for several years one would have hoped that the northern part of Nigeria would be one of the areas in Africa where Muslims and Christians will live in peace in spite of the ethnic and political machinations in that region. The current situation impels us to ask the question whether the seeds that PROCURA sowed through its pioneers mentioned above were eaten by birds, falling on rocky ground, squeezed by thorns when they began to sprout etc. etc.





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As these questions keep raging on, we are also aware that some of the seeds fell on good grounds and sprouted. Those are beginning to bear fruits that provide hope for the future - hope that Boko Haram and other related religious extremist cannot destroy. We would also like to say that PROCMURA has taken a serious view of the situation and has been able to get Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders of the continent to issue a statement on it. The statement has been widely distributed among Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders in Nigeria as well as the government and the political class of that country. We have shared the Statement with partners, and hope that you have all had a chance to read it. In the event that you missed out on this please inform us so that we may send it to you or otherwise visit our website to read it ([www.procmura-prica.org](http://www.procmura-prica.org)).

We would like to assure our partners and friends that the chairperson of PROCMURA, together with the General Adviser are monitoring the situation and

continue to engage various stakeholders with the view of coming up with an appropriate programme focus to mitigate this delicate development.

Having Lamented on the situation in the northern part of Nigeria, we now share with you PROCMURA's journey in 2011 which in many ways were bright and very encouraging. We encourage you to make time to read it so that you may be abreast with what we have been able to do (achieve in current language); the challenges we faced and our hopes and aspirations for the future.





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### **2.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We would like to acknowledge the usual support we received from the Executive Committee and the General Council in the performance of our duties. The two bodies continue to provide encouragement and make policy decisions that promote our work.

As usual, we cannot claim any success in the implementation of our programmes without acknowledging the support that we receive from our partners in Europe and North America. We would like to reiterate our gratitude to all of you for remaining faithful to the course of PROCURA, even when the going becomes very tough in financial terms. We are particularly grateful, that in an era when success is measured by achievements, you are able to appreciate that Christian constructive engagement with Muslims in witness and for peace and peaceful coexistence cannot be solely measured in terms of the absence of strife. It has always to be measured in terms of what the situation would have

been without our work – worse to say the least.

We encourage all of you who partner with us to continue to support us in your prayers and all that it takes to make this important vocation viable. This is especially important at this time when many organisations are facing financial difficulties and when Christian constructive engagement with Muslims in witness and for peace and peaceful coexistence are needed most.

### **3.0 UPDATE ON CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF**

The success of any organisation in its service delivery rests on the service and



*Ms Joy Wandabwa at her desk at the Central Office*

dedication of its staff. In the reporting year, our staff have as usual put in their





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best to ensure that we have not been found wanting in the many things that we are engaged in.

We would like to single out the Team Leader; Finance and Administration, Ms. Joy Wandabwa for mention. As partners are all aware, the General Adviser was away at Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto for a period of 4 months and Joy was in charge of the entire administration of PROCMURA. She carried out her duties to perfection. When we met to evaluate her time as the sole administrator and the best that she had done, she was generous when she said that she managed to do what she did because of the full support of all members of staff, “we did it together” she said. This is the spirit of PROCMURA’s Central Office which we all admire – we are each other’s brothers and sisters keeper. We are grateful to God for the team spirit that exists among us.

### 3.1 APPOINTMENT OF NEW STAFF

Following the departure of Peter Lisheiki Leilrdaany, PROCMURA’s well-known driver, we



*Mr. Leilrdaany behind the wheel doing what he does best*

decided not to replace him for the time being and instead appointed a Secretary in the person of Ms. Alice Agunda who also serves as a receptionist.

She has settled in very quickly to the routine of PROCMURA. We welcome her to the PROCMURA family and



*Ms. Alice Agunda*

look forward to her full integration into our pattern of work.





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### 3.2 PROMOTION OF STAFF

#### Gordon Masara: the Accounts Clerk

Mr. Gordon Masara was promoted to the position of Accountant after he had



*Mr. Gordon Masara*

upgraded his training in the accounting profession.

Gordon is a committed worker who has served PROCMURA longer than any of us at the Central Office. We are delighted about his upgrading and have no doubts that he will live up to his upgraded role.

#### Dinah Mombo: the Secretary

Ms. Dinah Mombo, who for many years worked as a secretary was in the



*Ms. Dinah Mombo*

reporting year promoted to occupy the vacant position

of Administrative Assistant. As one who

has worked for several years as secretary, with a Higher Diploma, Dinah had no problem at all settling into her new role since she worked closely with the immediate past Administrative Assistant for several years. We are again delighted that we have such an experienced person to assume this position.

### 4. PROCMURA RECEIVES A PRESTIGIOUS AWARD FOR ITS WORK ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN AFRICA.



*Staff members pose with the award in front of PROCMURA offices*

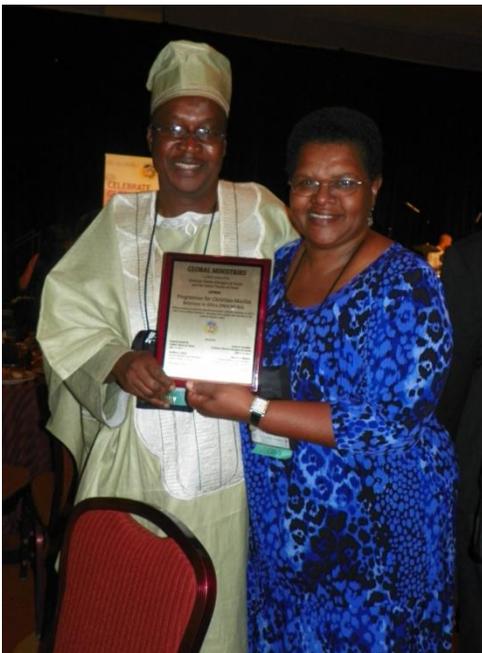
In its 52 year history, PROCMURA has passed through rain and shine, and kept faith with its ideals and goals as well as remain focused on its objectives. In 2009 when PROCMURA was turning 50,





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PROCMURA's mission through its Programme Officer Henrik Peterson recommended PROCMURA to the Livia Foundation to be considered for an award on its work on peace and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Africa. We were pleased to be informed by the Livia Foundation Board that PROCMURA was among the top ten they had shortlisted for the award. This recognition encouraged us even though we eventually were not the winners.



*Rev. Dr. Mbillah (left) and Rev. Gourdet (right)*

In March 2011, however, Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ announced that

PROCMURA had been nominated for a prestigious Affirmation Award. In a background document announcing the award, Rev. Sandra R. Gourdet, Global Ministries Area Executive for Africa, praised the pioneering role of PROCMURA as the only Christian organization in the African continent, "Which is dedicated to building bridges of understanding, promoting mutual respect and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims throughout the entire continent." She further praised PROCMURA for, "...having successfully assisted many of the churches in Sub-Saharan Africa to embark on positive tolerance and - acceptance of religious plurality, as well as providing forums for solving conflicts between adherents of the two faiths." "This award", said the Rev. Gourdet "is an affirmation of PROCMURA's faithful contributions toward peace between the religions and for serving as an effective tool in Christian witness in Africa, often as the unsung hero."

On what apparently endeared PROCMURA to be selected for the award





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in the first place, the Rev. Gourdet made it clear that the Affirmation Award was for PROCURA's "monumental work on Christian-Muslim relations on the continent...and for its outstanding service that goes beyond the call of duty." On the significance of the award, she said that since 1985 when the award was instituted, many of the recipients were persons who walked paths to stand firm on their principles of justice, peace and liberation among other true qualities of Christian witness. On a personal note the Rev. Gourdet said to the General Adviser "Congratulations on your hard work and your faithful commitment. We all count it a privilege to walk in solidarity with you and PROCURA."

The Rev. Dr. David Vergas and Rev. Dr. Cally Rogers-White Co-Executives of Global Ministries presented the awards to the General Adviser at a colourful ceremony in Nashville, Tennessee, on July 11, 2011. The ceremony which was arranged to coincide with the General Assembly of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ took place at an International Dinner held at the Grand

Ballroom of Nashville's Renaissance Hotel. It was attended by over 600 dignitaries of various nationalities from Central America, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, Africa and the host nation, the United States of America.



*Bishop Josiah Idowu Fearon*

The General Adviser on his return to Nairobi briefed his dedicated staff on how he was overwhelmed as never before in his several years of service in PROCURA. He said that in the absence of the Chairperson of PROCURA, Rt. Rev. Dr. Josiah Idowu Fearon who had to cancel his trip to Nashville at the last minute because of a national assignment,





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a strong African contingent from Southern Africa to support him.

We are grateful to God for the international recognition, even as we say thank you to Global Ministries and the two churches, United Church of Christ and the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, for their recognition of PROCMURA's work in the manner that they did.

### **5. THE GENERAL ADVISER MADE ANNE DUNCAN GRAY SCHOLAR**



*Dr. Mbillah*

The General Adviser, Johnson Mbillah was made the Anne Duncan Gray Visiting Scholar of Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of

Toronto, Canada for the autumn term (September to December) 2011).

In a formal announcement of this honour bestowed on him the Principal of Emmanuel College Dr. Mark G. Toulouse wrote: "In addition to bringing an international presence to our campus ...your work on Christian-Muslim dialogue will contribute to our own conversations as we work to solidify the foundations of our new Muslim Studies Program at Emmanuel College...Your presence with us will also provide opportunity for our Canadian Churches and academic community to hear from you.."

Briefing the Executive Committee of PROCMURA during its annual meeting in August 2011, the General Adviser said that the proposal to make him the Anne Duncan Gray Visiting Scholar was first made known to him by Omega Bula, Minister, Partners in Mission (formerly Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations) Unit in February 2011.





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On his return to Nairobi in late December 2011, Dr Mbillah reported that he had a rewarding and fruitful experience. He said that apart from the presentations and lectures he gave at the university, he was also involved in, and made presentations at a number of national and international conferences that had bearing on Christian-Muslim relations. He also took time to do some writing on Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa which will soon be published.

### **6. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT**

PROC MURA's organisational analysis indicates that the achievements and strengths of the organisation are hinged on the development of a human resource pool within the churches that understands the Christian and Muslim faiths and the complex nature of Christian-Muslim relations.

It is in its Personnel Development that PROC MURA arguably, can be described

as an organisation like none other in its history and current outlook.

In the reporting year, PROC MURA through the financial support of ICCO and Kerk in Actie, continues to sponsor the following two students who will in the future serve as Area Advisers and Associate Area Adviser respectively.

- i. Rev. Daniel Dushimimana- Rwanda
- ii. Rev. Canon Richard J Kamenya-Tanzania

#### **6.1 TRAINING OF WOMEN IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIAN MUSLIM RELATIONS**

Plans are now afoot for PROC MURA to identify and provide bursary for the training of a lady in Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, at St. Paul's University in the academic year beginning September 2012. It will interest partners to know that out of thirty (30) students trained at St. Paul's University, nine (9) of them are women and out of the nine (9) women eight (8) are Kenyans and one is a Tanzanian. PROC MURA intends to diversify its training to ensure that





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women from different countries get the opportunity for training so that we will have a truly continental women resource pool, to promote women issues in Christian and Muslim relations.

### **7. PROGRAMME FOCUS**

In the programme focus we intend to provide our readers with what we were able to do in terms of our core business, our focus on peace and peaceful co-existence and other areas that add value to what PROCMURA does best. We will also provide country briefs with the objective of informing our partners and friends about some of our constituencies. The information is aimed at assisting partners who work in those countries to know what PROCMURA's presence is like and the challenges of each Area Committee.

#### **7.1 PROCMURA CORE BUSINESS**

As part of its determination to ensure that emerging new leadership of churches in Africa remain abreast with the ideals that PROCMURA stands for, and to pump new blood into PROCMURA activities around the

continent, we focused our core business activities on the leadership of the churches.

In the year under review PROCMURA through the support of the AACC addressed several leaders of churches who participated in different AACC programmes. In another development PROCMURA's General Adviser was given the opportunity to address the Regional Assembly of the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) Kibuye, Rwanda in August and to lay bare the principles under which PROCMURA operates. Participants who came from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Cameroon, Tanzania, Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, and Rwanda among others, had the opportunity to understand and to have a feel of what PROCMURA is and what it stands for.

Apart from the opportunities offered to PROCMURA to propagate itself as mentioned above, we embarked on programmes at strengthening existing Area Committees and helping the youth





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to reassert themselves in PROCURA's work. We carried out such programmes in Sierra Leone, Ghana and Burkina Faso and intend to continue with that in 2012. It is the activities in these countries that we now proceed to elaborate on.

### 7.1.1 SIERRA LEONE

The Sierra Leone Area Committee in its quest to reorganise itself to face up to emerging challenges in Christian-Muslim relations caused by the re-emergence of polemical preaching and writings, held a day's workshop on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at the Conference Hall of the Sierra Leone Council of Churches. The workshop was attended by 26 Church Leaders from 13 Church denominations.



*Church Leaders pose for a group photo*

The importance of PROCURA's work in promoting peace and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone was attested to by the presence of the Minister of Social

Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, the Hon. Dr. Denis M. Sandy who accepted an invitation from the Area Committee to address the Church Leaders. The Hon. Minister in his address acknowledged the importance of PROCURA's work in the continent and in Sierra Leone in the area of peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims. He urged the religious leaders to continue to promote religious tolerance in Sierra Leone.

Peace, he said, is the key word every country desires to hear and added that without peace there can be no development. He urged the religious leaders to organise such important





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workshops around the country and not to limit it to Freetown since the entire country needed such education.

The General Adviser, the Area Adviser, Rev. Moses Khanu, The Catholic Archbishop of Freetown, Edward Tamba Charles, the President of the Pentecostal Churches in Sierra Leone, Bishop Archibald Cole, and the General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, Mr. Kemore Salia took turns to address the Church Leaders on pertinent issues. Their addresses ranged from Christian faithful witness in an interfaith environment of Christians and Muslims that respect the spirit of good neighbourliness, the importance of intra-Christian engagement to understand themselves as they seek to relate to Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence, guidelines on Christian-Muslim relations, the contemporary situation of Christian-Muslim relations in Sierra Leone and Christian theological strands on interfaith relations.

During the interchanges, Bishop Charles reminded the Church Leaders that to

enter into dialogue for peace, the Christian or Muslim should neither compromise their faith nor attempt to impose themselves on one another. We should enter such conversation with sincerity and faithfulness to what we believe.

The Church Leaders resolved to have regular consultations, workshops and seminars to keep themselves well informed on current issues in Christian-Muslim relations. They urged PROCURA not to relent in its efforts to ensure that Church Leaders come to a deeper understanding of the principles of Christian witness in an interfaith environment and Christian constructive engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence.





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### 7.1.2 GHANA

The Ghana Area Adviser, the Rev. Dr. Nathan Samwini through the Christian Council of Ghana which houses the PROCURA Area Committee brought together 52 Church Leaders (men and women) from the Christian Council of Ghana member churches, the Ghana Pentecostal Council member churches, and the National Association of Charismatic Churches member churches for a workshop. The main aim of the workshop was to spell out PROCURA's core business in terms of what it means by Faithful Christian witness in an interfaith environment of Christians and Muslims that respects the spirit of good neighbourliness and Christian constructive

The workshop took place on March 17, 2011, at the Ampomaa Hotel in Accra with the General Adviser, Johnson Mbillah and the Area Adviser being the principal resource persons. In attendance to address the Church Leaders were the General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana Rev. Dr. Fred Deegbe and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Vice President for West Africa, Most Rev. Dr. Robert



*Church Leaders pose for a group photo*

engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence towards the holistic development of the human family.

Aboagye-Mensah who chaired all the sessions.

In his presentation, the General Adviser provided an overview of Christianity and





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Islam in Africa and highlighted on salient issues on Christian witness and engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence. He reminded the Church Leaders that Christianity and Islam which are world religions with universal claims of all Christians belonging to the Body of Christ and all Muslims belonging to the universal *Umma* (community) required a lot of attention. He emphasised that the churches need to be conscious of the fact that when Christians talk about Christian Mission, witness, and evangelism so do Muslims talk about Muslim *Da'wah* (invitation to non-Muslims to become Muslims). In the same vein when Christians talk about Jesus as the Prince of Peace whose example has to be emulated as we seek to live in peace with our neighbours so do Muslims claim that Islam is a religion of peace and that the very every day greetings of Muslims which is *as salaam aleikum* (peace be upon you) also connotes peace.

The General Adviser explained that the issues, as described, requires the Leadership of the Churches to be more

sophisticated in the Ministry of Christian witness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the Christian quest to live in peace with Muslims and all others. These, explained the General Adviser, can be achieved through the reinvigoration of the PROC MURA Area Committee so as to get its work going as was the case some few years ago.

On his part the Rev. Dr. Samwini Area Adviser of PROC MURA for Ghana traced the foundation and the activities of PROC MURA in Ghana since the 1960's and how the Area Committee worked assiduously across the country to achieve greater understanding between Christians and Muslims. He stressed that through the instrumentality of the Area Committee the Forum of Religious Bodies was formed and hosted by the Christian Council of Ghana. This body, the Rev. Samwini explained, served to mitigate several serious religious misunderstandings and in some cases conflicts in Ghana were resolved. The forum, he explained helped to create a situation of peace and peaceful coexistence between Christians and



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Muslims which Ghana enjoys at this present time. The Rev. Samwini lamented that the present generation of the Leadership of the Churches had taken the situation for granted and there was need to be proactive to maintain the peace and not be complacent.

At the end of the conference participants resolved to:

1. Restructure the Area Committee to make it more viable and proactive in their programme focus.
2. Expand the scope of the committee to include other churches and not only member churches of the Christian Council of Ghana
3. To ensure that similar workshops are carried out around the country  
Participants expressed their deep appreciation to ICCO & Kirk in Actie whose financial support made this eye opening revival workshop a reality. It remained a dream, then a concern and now a reality, they emphasised.

“We are grateful to God who has been with us and enabled us to keep the light of PROCURA burning amidst the difficulties we encountered along the way, and look forward to the formation of a new Area Committee that will reinvigorate the good work in Christian-Muslim relations. We are grateful to the PROCURA Central Office team in Nairobi and the General Adviser, for always working with us to ensure we revive the work of the Area Committee in Ghana concluded the Area Adviser.

### **7.1.3 YOUTH LEADERS SEMINAR IN BURKINA FASO**

As part of its youth empowerment programme, PROCURA organised a Christian youth leaders seminar in Burkina Faso on March 2011 in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. The seminar brought together 15 youth leaders of the churches that form the Area Committee to provide them with training on what PROCURA means by Faithful Christian Witness and Christian-Muslim Relations for Peace. With the assistance of Rev. Angèle





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Dogbé, PROCMURA's Women and Education Programme Coordinator, the General Adviser broadened the focus and took the youth through what PROCMURA is and what it stands for.

The youth showed a lot of enthusiasm and raised a lot of practical questions related to the Islamic and Christian faith.



*Youth Leaders pose for a group photo*

They also raised issues of the Person of Christ in Christian and Muslim teaching. The General Adviser responded to the issues raised and assured the youth that he would take into account the many challenging issues that they raised in a follow up programme.

### **7.2 FOCUS ON CONFLICT PREVENTION, PEACE AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE**

In 2011, PROCMURA continued with its Pan-African advocacy for conflict prevention with a focus on Christians and Muslims working towards peace in

society and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims with two Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders conferences in Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso. In this part of our annual report, we produce the highlights as we already circulated detailed reports earlier in the year.

#### **7.2.1 SIERRA LEONE**

Peace is not something that you wish for and have it. It is something that you relentlessly work for and get it. And when you get it you have to keep the momentum going so that you do not lose it. This view which I have coined speaks for Sierra Leone as much as it speaks for





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other countries where Christians and Muslims strive for peace and peaceful co-existence towards the holistic development of society.

Sierra Leone which is one of two countries (the other one being Liberia) that Muslims and Christians are often credited with having worked tirelessly together to bring about peace during the civil war, came to realise that they cannot rest on their achievements over the years but have to work to keep the momentum going. It is in the light of the above that PROC MURA organised a two day conference on Christian and Muslim Leaders Collaboration for Peace in Society and Peaceful Co-existence between adherents of the two faith communities.

The conference took place in a conference hall known and called the National Stadium of Freetown on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Over 40 Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders participated. The Hon. Dr. Denis Sandy, Minister of Social Welfare and Children, and Gender Affairs, on behalf of His Excellency the

Vice President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, addressed the Religious Leaders. He made it clear that Christian and Muslim Leaders hold the key to the peace of the land since Christianity and Islam wield a large following in the country. He praised PROC MURA for its work in Africa and entreated the Religious Leaders to live up to the ideals of their religions which speak about peace and promoting peace in society.

The General Adviser provided the key note address while the Christian and Muslim leaders engaged in frank discussions on incidents in the past few years that have tended to disturb peaceful co-existence between the two communities in different parts of the country.

Following the in depth and frank discussions on the past and contemporary situation of Christian-Muslim relations in Sierra Leone and critical examination of issues that militate against peace and peaceful co-existence between adherents of the two





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communities participants came up with the following observations:

1. That working towards Peace and Reconciliation was a complex issue that required dedication, commitment and prayer.
2. That Christian-Muslim relations in Sierra Leone is not at its best and certainly cannot be said to be at its worst.
3. That clear examples of positive experiences of good and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in most parts of the country provided hope for participants while negative experiences of bad relations and conflicts ignited a cause for concern.
4. That the emerging unethical methods employed by some Christian and Muslim groups and individuals, to propagate Christianity and Islam, call for proactive measures by the leaders of the two communities to curb the situation.
5. That the media is culpable in promoting religious intolerance by what it disseminates to the public.

Having made those observations the participants declared that in pursuit of

sustainable Peace and Reconciliation they resolve:-

To advocate for the recognition of the divergent beliefs of the two communities and respect each Community's places of worship.

b). To uphold religious and moral values without compromising our respective faiths.

To embark on regular dialogue and consultation to promote peace and reconciliation.

d). To act responsibly and promote civility among our members especially the youth.

To translate the good precepts of Christianity and Islam as it relates to Peace and Reconciliation, into good practice in everyday living.

To provide orientation on a regular basis for youth in inter-faith relations for peace and peaceful coexistence.

To ensure that our Sermons/Khutba are non-provocative and free of offensive language.

To work together to formulate a Code of Conduct to govern the activities of all religious groups operating in Sierra





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Leone with the express objective of self-censorship of polemics and provocative statements from both sides that may disturb the peace of the land.

- i). To partner with government to institute policies to promote Religious Tolerance, Peace and Reconciliation in the country
- j). To urge the electronic and print media to be circumspect in what they disseminate so as to ensure they do not undermine the moral values of the people of Sierra Leone.

They concluded their resolve by a declaration that read: “We as Muslim and Christian Leaders here gathered, commit ourselves to promote good relations between Christians and Muslims for Peace and Reconciliation and urge PROCURA to continue to accompany us in this process.

The General Adviser was invited by the national television for a live interview on the conference and on PROCURA. The conference was valuable as it helped the people of Sierra Leone to recognise that the peace they enjoy has to be maintained and to do so requires commitment.

### 7.2.2 BURKINA FASO

For those of us who are unfamiliar with the name Burkina Faso, the name is



*Christian and Muslim Leaders pose for a group photo outside the Churches Development Office*

derived from the Mòoré and Dyula languages and mean People and Land of integrity. Among the People and Land of





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integrity, PROCMURA organised a two day (14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March) Peace Conference that brought together 40 Christian and Muslim religious leaders, youth and women.

The conference which took place at the conference room of the Churches Development Office (ODE) had the theme Christian and Muslim Leaders Collaboration for Peace and Development.

The PROCMURA Area Committee under the leadership of Pastor Flavien Tabsoba who is also an Executive Committee member of PROCMURA welcomed participants to the conference. He then proceeded to invite two national religious leaders of the Christian and Muslim communities, Rev. Pastor Samuel YAMEOGO and El Hadj Baba Sidiki KONTOGOMDE respectively, to address the conference.

The Rev. Pastor Samuel YAMEOGO, Chairperson of the Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions (FEME) in his address emphasised the

importance of the conference and said that even though Burkina Faso has no history of violence between Christians and Muslims there was need to work together to maintain the peace. “We cannot take things for granted when we are aware that neighbours such as Nigeria have serious problems between Christians and Muslims. “It is when we are far from each other that we throw stones at each other. But, if we move closer to each other, we would understand each other better and better, and be tolerant of each other”, he emphasised. He praised PROCMURA for organising the conference and assured the General Adviser that they as religious leaders will do all that they can to ensure that Christians and Muslims continued to live in peace.

On his part, El Hadj Baba Sidiki KONTOGOMDE, Deputy General Secretary of the Muslim Community in Burkina Faso (CMBF) expressed his appreciation to PROCMURA for organising “the important conference” and assured that the Muslim community will work together with the Christian





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community to maintain and promote peace and development. He emphasised that the importance of peace is sometimes not recognised until you lose it and urged Christians and Muslims to continue to work together to maintain the peace that we all enjoy.

The General Adviser made series of presentations outlining areas of potential conflicts between Christians and Muslims which the religious leaders need to take cognisance of in their mosques and churches.

He talked about polemical preaching, importation of religious extremism from the neighbouring countries, allowing ethnicity and partisan politics to find allies in religion and the religious leadership among others. On peace and peaceful co-existence, the General Adviser highlighted teachings in Islam and Christianity that denote peace and explained that people who are determined to be negative will find cause for doing so in the Bible and the Qur'an. He explained that such people conceived what they need to do and seek justification from the scriptures.

“Africans and for that matter Burkinabe’s listen to the religious leaders”, said the General Adviser, and it is incumbent on the Christian and Muslim religious leaders to preach peace and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims.

During group discussions participants outlined analysed the situation of Christian-Muslim relations in Burkina Faso and provided a lot of insight on areas that PROC MURA needs to work on in that country. For a fully view of this refer to the PROC MURA website.

An important aspect of conference was the media coverage that enabled Burkinabe’s to have briefing on the conference proceedings and the contents of communiqué that was fully covered by the national television. The General Adviser and number of the religious leaders were interviewed by the national television and radio stations.

The seed that PROC MURA sowed in Burkina Faso in 1990 is definitely bearing fruit and we look at the situation of





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Christian-Muslim relations in that country with a lot of satisfaction.

### 7.2.3 CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE JUSTICE

In the reporting year, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), PROCURA, and the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI) teamed up to organise an African Religious Leaders Conference on Climate Justice and Sustainable Peace.



*Christian and Muslim Leaders pose for a group photo at the UN Offices in Kenya*

The conference took place in Nairobi, Kenya on 7th and 8th June 2011 at the United Nations Complex. The religious leaders deliberated on the devastating

effect of Climate Change on Africa and demanded and pledged to make their voices heard at the Conference of Parties (COP17) meeting in Durban, South Africa in November 2011. True to their pledge, religious leaders from around Africa were present in their numbers at the COP 17 meeting in Durban and made a strong presentation to the world leaders.

As result of the experience of the Nairobi conference the General Adviser, (during

his time at the University of Toronto, participated and made presentations at the Canadian National Dialogue Conference on Climate Change with Canadian faith leaders and Members of Parliament on 22<sup>nd</sup>

to 25<sup>th</sup> October at Parliament Hill in Ottawa. He did the same at a related conference of the World Council of Churches (WCC) North American Forum





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and Hearings on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology which took place in Calgary from 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011.

These two conferences helped to prepare the North American religious leaders to join their African counterparts in Durban to advocate for climate justice.

PROCMURA is indeed delighted to have made contributions in the organisation and content of the Nairobi Conference, and also through the General Adviser, made presentations in Ottawa and Calgary, all of which were aimed at religious leaders preparing themselves to influence the COP 17 meeting in Durban.

### **8. LITERATURE DEVELOPMENT**

PROCMURA's booklet with the title 'Questions Muslims Ask' Vol. 1, which is aimed at explaining in a non-polemical manner, essential Christian teachings on issues that Muslims seek to know about the Christian faith is now available in Amharic.

The Area Committee of PROCMURA in Ethiopia, under the leadership of Mr.

Belay Abakiya and Rev. Jorgen Klein held discussions with the General Adviser in 2010 on the possibility of getting the book translated. They were given the go ahead to do so and Mr. Abakiya went ahead and did the translation and subsequently had it published.

In another development the Rev. Anderson M'nthambala Area Adviser of PROCMURA for Malawi is in the process of translating the booklet into Chichewa. The booklet is currently also available in French and Swahili.

### **9. BRIEFS ON AREA COMMITTEES**

A number of our partners have requested that we provide briefs of each Area Committee so as to assist them to have some understanding where PROCMURA is active and assist such committees wherever possible. We do hereby provide such information.





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### **9.1 The East and Southern Africa Region**

The East and Southern Africa region of PROCMURA, which has structured Area Committees, are: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Malawi. Countries with provisional Area Committees within the region and which are active in PROCMURA's programmes are: Burundi and the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar. Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan which had one Area Committee based in Khartoum has to transit into having two (2) Area Committees that would reflect the new situation. We shall return to this later.

Generally speaking the East and Southern Africa Region has potential for expansion if resources allow. Countries such as South Africa, Zambia, Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique and Angola have participated in PROCMURA's programmes and continue to contact us about the possibility of beginning PROCMURA's work in those countries. We hope to do so in the future – but not yet. We remain committed though to

invite them from time to time to participate in our programmes.

With this background we would like to run a commentary on the countries that are actively structured in PROCMURA's work.

#### **i. Kenya**

Kenya where the PROCMURA Central Office is based does not have an active Area Committee. Attempts to get the National Council of Churches (NCCCK) which in the past was very successful in carrying out PROCMURA's programmes have not been successful yet. The NCCCK member churches, however, actively participate in PROCMURA's programmes.

During the General Council meeting in August 2011, the Deputy General Secretary of the NCCCK, Mr. Oliver Kisaka, participated fully at the meeting and has since been working towards the reactivation of the Area Committee. The Acting Area Adviser for Kenya Mr. Titus Kazungu has been doing his best under the circumstance to get Kenya actively involved.





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We live in hope that the Area Committee of Kenya will sooner than later be reactivated.

### **ii. Sudan**

Following the referendum towards the self-determination of the South and the subsequent vote for secession, PROC MURA is yet to establish itself in that country. Admittedly, it will take some time for PROC MURA to consider reactivating its programmes there since discussions are ongoing on what the role of the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) will be like in the two countries. This is so because the weight of the Sudan Council of Churches (with all the problems it currently has), rests more on South Sudan even though the headquarters remain in Khartoum.

### **iii. The Republic of South Sudan**

The Republic of South Sudan, the newest country in the world today is the prime focus of PROC MURA's activities now and in the very near future. The focus on this country is informed by the presence of a large majority of Christian and non-Muslim populations who are determined

to work with minority populations of the South, who share a history with the majority of Southerners but a religion with the majority of the Northerners.

We are pleased that Mission 21 has a particular focus on the Republic of South Sudan, and have provided us with the financial resources to implement a number of programmes in the country. Partners will remember our high profile programmes in Malakal and Juba in the past years.

We will accelerate our programmes in South Sudan this year and explore possibilities of moving into the north as well.

### **iv. Tanzania Mainland**

Tanzania remains arguably one of the most active Area Committees in the East Africa Region of PROC MURA.

The Area Adviser of Tanzania, Canon Thomas Godda, who is also the Regional Coordinator of East and Southern Africa, is one of the most active persons in PROC MURA's work. The country is able





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to raise its own funds to implement its programmes.

### **V. Zanzibar**

Through the support of Danmission, Zanzibar has been very active in carrying out programmes in Christian-Muslim relations for many years now. They have had active interchanges with Egypt and remain focused on Christian-Muslim relations programmes.

### **vi. Rwanda**

Rwanda joins Tanzania in being one of the most active Area Committees in the region. They continue to raise funds on their own to implement programmes in Christian and Muslim relations for peace and development. The most active person who implements these programmes, the Rev. Désiré Rutaganda retires in the early part of 2012. This will be a great loss to PROCURA. We are encouraged that the Rev. Dushimimana who is under training at St. Paul's University will assist Rev. Rutaganda's successor to implement PROCURA's programmes.

### **vii. Uganda**

The Uganda Area Committee continues to lag behind in implementing PROCURA's programmes. The General Secretary of the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), the Rev. Dr. Fr. Silvester Arinaitwe A. J. has pledged to actively work towards the reconstitution of the Area Committee in 2012.

The most active person in the Area Committee, Sister Mary Goretti Kisakye, a Catholic nun, continues to be the symbol of PROCURA's active presence in that country. We very much look forward to reinvigorating the Area Committee of PROCURA in Uganda.

### **viii. Ethiopia**

The Ethiopia Area Committee of PROCURA continues to be housed by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). The appointment of Mr. Belay Abakiya and Rev. Jürgen Klein to take charge of the Christian-Muslim relations programme has given the programme new impetus.





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In the year under review, PROCURA organised a Christian and Muslim women conference in the country. The call for this conference was necessitated by the violent confrontations in some parts of Ethiopia. For a detailed report of the conference see the Women and Education Programme Coordinator's report.

We are at the moment taking measures aimed at broadening the membership of the Area Committee to include other churches.

### **ix. Malawi**

The Malawi Area Committee continues to experience serious financial constraints which are worsened by the fact that the Malawi Council of Churches, itself is not financially strong enough to sponsor the work of the Area Committee.

We have had meetings with the chairman of the Malawi Area Committee, Rev. Ted Mwambila, and the General Secretary of the Malawi Council of Churches Rev. Dr. Osborne Lukiel Jodah-

Mbewe, on the possibility of organising a national church leaders conference on PROCURA, to see how we can give that committee a new lease of life. The conference was scheduled to take place in October 2011, but had to be postponed because of circumstances beyond our capability to control. We shall do so in early 2012.

### **9.2 Francophone West Africa**

The Francophone West Africa region has had its ups and downs in the implementation of PROCURA's programmes. The challenges the region continue to face rest on the difficulty of finding training centers for prospective students to study Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in French. This has hampered the Personnel Development of the region. We are pleased to report, however, that the Rev. Adama Faye of the Lutheran Church in Senegal has been offered a bursary from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) to pursue a Masters Programme at St. Paul's University, in Limuru, Kenya and has since began his studies. The countries





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that currently have substantive Area Committees brief write-ups about them are as follows:

### **i. Côte d'Ivoire**

The Côte d'Ivoire Area Committee suffered some set-backs as a result of the political crisis which plagued the country as a result of the impasse following the presidential elections in 2011. All attempts to implement any programmes were hampered by the political situation.

The polarization of the Ivorian society, as a result of the political impasse which pitched Alhassan Oattara, a Northerner, and Laurent Gbagbo, a Southerner against one another nearly gave the conflict a religious colouring. We are pleased that the situation has stabilised and there is the possibility of the Area Committee becoming active again.

### **ii. Togo**

The Togo Area Committee joins Burkina Faso and Senegal to become the most active Area Committees in the region. The Area Adviser, Rev. Dr. Désiré who until the General Council of 2011, was also the Regional Coordinator of

PROCURA, continues to work with the Area Committee to promote PROCURA's activities in that country.

Barring financial difficulties, the committee has the potential of keeping PROCURA's mission and vision very much alive in Togo.

### **iii. Benin**

The Republic of Benin Area Committee will very soon suffer immensely for the lack of leadership. Mr Paul Saï a veteran of PROCURA for many years and his wife Mrs. Christine Saï, who has always been a lead person in the Women's Programme have aged. In fact, Mr. Saï told us during the last General Council meeting of August 2011 that this was going to be his last meeting outside Benin. The situation is complicated by the fact that Rev. Essaïe Daoudou the Area Adviser is also aged and there is no immediate replacement as a result of the language barrier mentioned earlier.

The good side of the Area Committee is that there are upcoming young people who would be able to stand in if there





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will have the possibility of training. We are working on this.

### **iv. Senegal**

The Senegal Area Committee is arguably the most vibrant in the region in terms of generating funds to implement its programmes. The Area Adviser the Rev. Joseph Diouf is a tireless and committed worker who whole heartedly dedicates his time and energy in the service of PROCMURA. He was recently appointed the Regional Coordinator for the Francophone West Africa Region.

PROCMURA's programme focus for Senegal shall be on the youth. We are optimistic that when the Rev. Pierre Adama Fayé completes his course at St. Paul's University and returns to Senegal, the Area Committee's work will be further enhanced.

### **v. Burkina Faso**

The Burkina Faso Area Committee has surprised everyone in their zeal and commitment to live up to PROCMURA's principles. This is especially commendable when one recognises that all the churches that participate in the

programmes of Burkina Faso are the so called Evangelicals in Africa.

The Rev. Flavien Tapsoba, an Executive Committee member of PROCMURA, is the lead person in the implementation of PROCMURA's programmes.

For the first time in the history of Burkina Faso, PROCMURA organised a Christian and Muslim Religious Leader's Conference on Peace and Development in the reporting year. The importance of this conference which is extensively reported above has to be seen in the light of the fact that a few years ago this would not have been possible. This was so because the Christian community had seen no need to hold joint sessions with the Muslim community.

### **9.3 Anglophone West Africa**

The five Anglophone West African countries that participate in PROCMURA's programme and have substantive Area Committees are: Nigeria (North and West Area Committees), Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Gambia.





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The Anglophone West Africa region has Area Advisers in each country except the Gambia. It also has active leadership capable of carrying out PROCURA's programmes. The problem in the region is that some of the National Councils of Churches are involved in their own internal problems that sometimes render them not active in promoting PROCURA's agenda as one would have wished.

Having said these, we would like to provide a brief synopsis of each country.

### **i. Nigeria West**

The Nigeria West Area Committee has its Area Adviser as Rev. Dr. Fola Lateju. The committee programmes tend to be uncoordinated, apparently because of the vastness of that area.

At the last PROCURA Executive Committee meeting in August 2011, it was decided that the Area Committee should have a team of five (5) Area Advisers so as to improve efficiency. The decision is due to be implemented in

2012 when the General Adviser visits Nigeria to inaugurate the team of already trained Area Advisers.

### **ii. Nigeria North**

The Nigeria North Area Committee suffers the similar fate as the Nigeria West Area Committee. A similar decision was taken to form a team of 5 Area Advisers that would enable us to cover that region. The General Adviser together with the chairperson of PROCURA, Bishop Josiah Idowu Fearon, will inaugurate those committees in 2012.

The complexities of the situation in the Northern and Middle Belt Areas of Nigeria would make a team of Area Adviser's work have more impact than if we were to have only one Area Adviser.

### **iii. Ghana**

The Ghana Area Committee in the reporting year embarked on a process of bringing in new members to replace the rather dormant Area Committee. As part of the reinvigoration exercise, PROCURA organised a Church





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Leader's Conference with specific objective of reorganising the Area Committee. A detailed report of this conference and decisions arrived at are in the PROCMURA Core Business section of this report.

### **iv. Sierra Leone**

The Sierra Leone Area Committee under the leadership of the newly appointed chairman, Bishop Emmanuel Tucker of the BO Diocese of the Anglican Church, and the Rev. Moses Khanu, the Area Adviser and Regional Coordinator of Anglophone West Africa, have begun to put some life in the work of the Area Committee. The Area Committee had suffered a number of setbacks as a result of difficulties the council of churches in Sierra Leone is (was) facing.

In the reporting year, PROCMURA organised a Church Leader's Conference to help reposition the work of the Area Committee. A Peace Conference for Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders was organised. Detailed reports of these are captured on the Core Business and

Peace Conferences sections of this report.

### **v. The Gambia**

The Gambia Area Committees has had its ups and downs as a result of the lack of an Area Adviser. The commitment of the Anglican Bishop of the Gambia, Bishop Tilewa Johnson, to the course of PROCMURA is helping immensely to make the Area Committee work go forward.

During the General Council, the Bishop offered to donate part of the churches vast land to PROCMURA, so as to develop it for its financial sustainability.

The Team Leader - Finance and Administration travelled to the Gambia and together with Ms. Pamela Annie-Belle a PROCMURA Executive Committee member, inspected the land. We shall consider developing it in the future when finances permit.





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### vi. Liberia

The Liberia Area Committee continues to do good work, although under difficult financial situations.

The commitment of the General Secretary of the Liberia Council of Churches Dr. Benjamin Lartey, who is also an Executive Committee member of PROCURA, is commendable. We are working towards assisting the Area Committee to reorganize itself to improve on its efficiency.

### 9. CONCLUSION

We have in this report attempted to compress our many activities of 2011 which are associated with the General Adviser's Office for you our partners and friends to have a gist of what we have been up to in the reporting year. As mentioned in the report, persons who will want to know more about the PROCURA Women and Education Programme need to read the separate report of that programme.

We are confident that this report, brief as it is, provides sufficient information for those who would wish to understand what PROCURA has been involved in during 2011. Detailed reports of some of the activities mentioned here can be read from the PROCURA website ([www.procmura-prica.org](http://www.procmura-prica.org)).

**MAY GOD ASSIST US EVEN AS WE  
ENDEAVOUR TO SERVE HIM AND  
HUMANITY, IN THE BEST WAY  
POSSIBLE**

**HUMBLY SUBMITTED**

Johnson Mbillah  
General Adviser.

